UNDERSTANDING WELFARE PRACTICES:

ESSAYS OF INVOLVEMENT AND DETACHMENT

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This is dedicated to Anne, who always believed it was possible.

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There are two immediate intellectual debts behind this accumulation of published works. Firstly, Pauline Hardiker, with whom I worked as a fellow sociologist for twelve years at the School of Social Work at Leicester University, showed me how sociology might engage with social work in a way which lent worth and dignity to both enterprises. Secondly, Robert Harris, then too of Leicester, now at the University of Hull, has over the years been both a friend and an appropriately demanding collaborator in several joint ventures.

There is an art to the compilation of a submission based upon publications, particularly when expectations, and the rules of engagement, are not too well established. Added to this is the biographical complication which arises when a candidate's position is out of time with what is being sought. With some considerable sensitivity - and proper forthrightness - Stephen Chan has given guidance and direction in this enterprise. Its eventual *form* owes almost everything to him, though there is the usual disclaimer about *content* being attributable to me and me alone.

David Webb

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The selected publications

1. Explaining Deviant Behaviour: The social context of 'action' and 'infraction' accounts in the Probation Service (with P. Hardiker). Sociology, Vol. 13, No. 1 (1979).

2. 'Themes and Continuities in Radical and Traditional Social Work'. British Journal of Social Work, Vol. 11, No. 2 (1981a).

3. 'A Forgotten Radical: Dennis Chapman and the New Criminology in Britain'. British Journal of Criminology, Vol. 21, No. 2 (1981b).

4. 'More on Gender and Justice: Girl offenders on Supervision'. Sociology, Vol. 18, No. 3 (1984).

5. 'Social Work and Critical Consciousness: rebuilding orthodoxy'. Issues in Social Work Education, Vol. 5, No. 2 (1985).

6. 'The mezzo level: conduits of care, welfare organisations and the supervisory state'. Chapter four of Harris, R. and Webb, D. Welfare, Power and Juvenile Justice. London: Tavistock (1987a).

7. 'The micro level: the experts at work'. Chapter five of Harris, R. and Webb, D Welfare, Power and Juvenile Justice. London: Tavistock (1987b).

8. 'Puritans and Paradigms: A speculation on the Form of New Moralities in Social Work'. Social Work and Social Sciences Review, Vol. 2, No. 2 (1991a).

9. 'A Stranger in the Academy: A reply to Lena Dominelli'. Social Work and Social Sciences Review, Vol. 2, No. 3 (1991b).

10. 'Competencies, Contracts and Cadres: common themes in the social control of nurse and social work education'. Journal of Interprofessional Care, Vol. 6, No. 3 (1992).

11. 'Regulation for Radicals: the State, CCETSW and the Academy', in Nigel Parton (ed) Social Theory, Social Change and Social Work. London: Routledge (1996).

12. 'A 'Revenge' on Modern Times: Notes on Traumatic Brain Injury'. Sociology, Vol. 32, No. 3 (1998).

13. 'A Balance of Possibilities: Some concluding notes on rights, risks and the mentally disordered offender', in Webb, D and Harris, R. (eds), The Mentally Disordered Offender: Managing People Nobody Owns. London: Routledge (1999).

Appendix 1: List of author's publications

Appendix 2: 'What's in a Name? A comment on 'Puritans and Paradigms', Lena Dominelli, Social Work and Social Sciences Review, Vol. 2, No. 3 (1991)

More themes and continuities[i]: involvement and detachment in the sociology of welfare practice

'...to those who are regularly without such power, and whose awareness is confined to their everyday milieux, (the sociologist) reveals by his work the meaning of structural trends and decisions for these milieux, the ways in which personal troubles are connected with public issues...' (C Wright Mills, 1975: 205)

'The problems confronting those who study one or the other aspects of human groups is how to keep their two roles as participant and as enquirer clearly and consistently apart and, as a professional group, to establish in their work the undisputed dominance of the latter'. (Elias, 1956, cited in Webb, 1991b: 240)

Context and content: an introduction

This particular prologue is both an introductory essay - a preliminary discourse - to that which follows, as well as something of an editorial overview. It furnishes – with a measure of abstraction - the generality that lies within the selection of material that has been assembled here. It also identifies for the reader, through brief summary, the main points that might be found contained within each of the contributions.

The collection is organised temporally, reflecting when projects were worked on, when they were written up and when they were eventually accepted for

publication, the assumption here being that the reader will thereby be able to discern some kind of developmental progression or sequencing, an orderliness that points to the fruitful accumulation of intellectual capital over the years. The engagement with how best to understand (and sometimes promote, sometimes chide) welfare practice may indeed have - we might hope - a sufficiently strong set of 'domain assumptions' for the same narrative to be tracked across a period that opens in 1979 with the neo-liberal triumphalism of Hayekian economics, and ends two decades later with an administration intellectually indebted to the sociologically-derived third way communitarianism of Etzioni and Giddens. This introduction articulates (and even sustains) that narrative, despite a certain 'post-modern' caution towards an epistemology that seems to be content with authors retrospectively rendering their own works for the purposes of a plausible tale. In any event, it goes without saying that however well the authorial duty to set context and summarise content has been discharged, the reader too will still have ample scope to make their own, personal, interpretation of what follows in the body of this collection – the 'text' as nowadays we are all so knowingly aware, no longer exists as the product of the writer's intent.

These reservations aside, embedded within this collection is an approach which alternates – or perhaps more accurately, equivocates – between subjecting social work and welfare practices to the explanatory, and affirming the normative; between on the one hand a detached pursuit as to how best comprehend the 'actual' nature of the enterprise, and on the other hand (and, it is true, less frequently) offering some proposals for new practice possibilities.

As ought to become clear (and it will do so through a separate, later, section in this *prolegomena*) these two ambitions – creating explanatorily adequate accounts of the fluid and ideologically susceptible nature of social work, and intervening normatively in the direction that it might take – could be seen to reflect the aspirations of the social work academy (or at least one particular

branch of the social work academy) at one particular period. The specifics here are with Leicester University's School of Social Work, which gave between 1973 and 1985 the more specifically biographical pre-conditions – or permissions - for both involvement and detachment, looking as it did to the scholastic conventions of the academy as well as to social work as an activity with the moral purpose of service to vulnerable and socially excluded citizens.

Sociologist know thyself - The Sociology of the Sociology of Welfare Practices

Within the project given by sociology to social work is its contribution to a 'theory for practice' based on the connections between biography and history - what elsewhere has been called 'client-centred sociology' (Webb and Evans, 1978), resonating importantly not with some new radical departure in social work, but listening for and amplifying those 'traditional' social work affirmations of commitment to the *person-in-situation*, or the *psycho-social* (Webb, 1981; 1985).

The analytical framework that sees welfare practice as a product of the complex interplay between historically 'laid down' structures and the actions of individual welfare workers is one that bears in on the present enterprise, folding back reflexively in on itself in order to generate a situated account of the sociology of social work. This has its own 'socio-genesis', emerging from its own specificities of time and place, with its own history and biography: consistency with the obligations of important equality principles, this is a case of the even distribution of sauce between goose and gander.

Ideas, as we are often reminded in these times of high modernity, are socially located. Perhaps we may choose to see what passes for a legitimate contribution to knowledge as framed within the taken-for-granted intellectual conventions of what Thomas Kuhn (1962) called 'normal science'. Others may make a more political, Gramscian, reading of this, seeing an articulation and interdependence between the domains of 'authenticated' ideas (as well as

other cultural expressions) and the material interests of dominant social groups. As a marker of this, the entry of 'paradigm' and 'hegemony' into everyday vocabulary – less perhaps in the service bay at the local Ford dealers, but certainly wider than the circle of Hampstead literati - points to a resonance between the intellectual mood of deconstructivism and a wider cultural trajectory of popular scepticism towards the certainty of received ideas.

This selection is no exception to the setting of its creation within a particular time and place. But equally, since it is time and place that both frames and shapes the form taken by our identity, then it is unremarkable that however much we may work to objectively situate the products of our intellectual labour within its social context, in almost all respects it will be experienced as deeply personal, and with having some biographical significance. To paraphrase the classic aphorism of W I Thomas, just because something we do is socially located, it does not make this any the less real for us. In what was both passionate advocacy for his discipline, as well as a set of worries about the intellectual compromises to which it (like, in truth, any subject) is vulnerable, Alvin Gouldner (1971) talked about the way in which sociology can address matters that are personally real to us, things that we experience simply by being members of this or that society or a group within it. This 'insiderist' motivation is, of course, something that has more recently lent so much energy to feminist and black scholarship, though the impact that a consequential 'standpoint' epistemology may have for explanatory adequacy is prompted by this departure from the hoped-for guarantees that 'objectivity' might give to scientific endeavour.[ii] In fact the connection between social experience and the selecting of the intellectually interesting has always has a strong presence within sociology. For example, there can be little doubt that it was this sense of wanting to understand the times through which they were living that led Durkheim to address the ramifications of the division of labour, or Max Weber to the role of bureaucracy in legitimating the authority of an emergent modernity. Doubtless too the natural scientist may approach this or that research topic as a result of experiencing its everyday form - the cell

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biochemist whose research interest is prompted by witnessing lymphoma in a loved one, or the neuroscientist having seen in their family the human consequences of Alzheimer's disease.

It is only towards the end of this collection (Webb, 1998) that there is an acknowledgement – an admission even – that what animates the academic undertaking is often the investigator's need to lay some sort of ghost, or at the very least to make a connection between what is personally real - the lived experiences of everyday life - and what is lent to our understanding of that experience by scholastic endeavour or insight. That particular stepping back from the usual distancing conventions of academic formality was prompted by research into the aftermath of head injury, and the realisation that with so many speed-obsessed young men vulnerable to this particular symptom of modernity, I could have easily been a parent-respondent had not good fortune smiled on the road-going experiences of our son.

This is sociology – here judged in terms of the object of its enquiry – in a state of considerable moral engagement, singular in its choice of research and (in this case) blending the psychodynamic with the social structural in order to 'get close' to the circumstances in which the head injured and their carers find themselves. What was produced is a piece of academic knowledge that was initiated by some deeply personal concerns, leading to the (in retrospect surprisingly demonstrative) declaration that '(t)here but for the grace of God' might never feature in the catalogue of reasons for 'doing sociology', but for good or ill this happens to be the sentiment which lies behind what follows'. (Webb, 1998: 542)

Because confessing to this personal motivation comes late in the pages of this compilation, the reader might be left with the impression that matters earlier in time were not so influenced. This is far from the case, even if there is an absence of comparable openness. There is an inevitable intersection between biography, the everyday contingencies that bear on this, and the broader

historical and social forces that shape - and sometimes may go so far as to determine - the direction taken by any one academic's (and in this case, my) intellectual labour.

The time...the place

The intellectual and moral pre-conditions for this collection were laid down at Leicester University's School of Social Work, which had been formally inaugurated in 1970. Its foundation Director, Derek Jehu, established the protective shell of reputation, a commitment to evidentially secure research, exemplary professional training, and a curriculum that sought self-consciously, if sometimes painfully, to integrate social science and social work knowledge against the ultimate test of practice relevance. The engagement of specialist social scientists, who were not necessarily experienced or qualified social workers, might have run counter to one professionalising tendency within social work. This however, was offset by the expectation that there would be no shirking by these recruits of involvement in the everyday tasks of professional social work education, such as the arrangement of placements, the visiting of students during their practice training, the management of admissions and an involvement in practice teacher training events. Coupled with an assumption that research, writing and publication was to be undertaken by all staff irrespective of their disciplinary origins, the organisational preconditions for a *rapprochement* between sociology and social work were being laid down. So it was that the materiality of engagement with social work education, the inescapable fact that it is through knowledge they see as relevant that social workers acquire the explanatory tools for the narratives they construct about their clients, and the puritanical sentiment that it would be unseemly to bite the hand that fed, all made for a receptivity to the idea that somehow sociology should – and could - play a more engaged role than were it more organisationally marginalized than at Leicester.

A secure reputation for professional training as well as academic strength both within the University of Leicester itself and in the firmament of the national social work academy lent an institutional confidence to the School, one in which risks could be taken with what emerged under its auspices. With a more or less explicit commitment to professional knowledge as being constituted not solely from within social work itself, but of necessity drawing eclectically from other quarters, the School fostered a tolerant and catholic orientation to what it was willing to support and endorse. A consistent – and often definitive – output of research and innovative texts on the articulation of practice theories (see for example, Jehu *et al*, 1972; Monger, 1972; Haines, 1975; Curnock and Hardiker, 1979) meant there was a demonstrably 'powerful' – and self-assured - social work core to the intellectual life of the School. Those social scientists of us slightly beyond the perimeter of all this (though certainly, and generously, not beyond its pale), posed no threat with our occasionally outrageous flourishes.

Wider developments within the paradigmatic base of social work were occurring at the same time – the middle of the nineteen seventies - and these were to advance the case for sociology having a legitimate and active place within the theoretical and practice base of the profession, and professional training. 'Integrated', or 'unitary' methods (Goldstein, 1973) or systems theory (Pincus and Minahan, 1973), presented a multi-dimensional modelling of the social work task, in which targets for intervention reached well beyond what was then regarded as the conventional focus on individual clients. Borrowing liberally from ecology, organisational analysis and structural-functional sociology, this approach offered the prospect of taking welfare practice ahead of what was seen as the moral and political bankruptcy of psychodynamics, whilst simultaneously keeping it within the parameters of agency function, something it did by its emphasis on middle range technical resolutions to system malfunctions.[iii] Nevertheless – and allowing for the fact the politics of the new approach were hardly revolutionary – systems thinking and integrated methods opened out a space for those sociologists who were

looking for engagement with social work that was neither hopelessly destructive, nor no more than a subservient adjunct to 'social influences on behaviour'. The new paradigm took social work's original, tentative, acknowledgement of 'the social' into a far more emphatic phase, and offered the prospect of insinuating sociology into the epistemic core of social work, taking either a 'radical', Marxist, turn in which change and change agency suggested one thing only (Leonard, 1975), or a more humanist direction of the resolutely 'client-centred', which if it owed anything to politics it was ethical socialism and the sociological expression of this in the thinking of C Wright Mills (Webb and Evans, 1977; 1978; Webb, 1981; Webb, 1985).

Sociology: putting 'the social' in Social Work

In Britain at least, the relationship between sociology and social work has often been a difficult one. Historically they have been institutionally close, often sharing moral and organisational origins within Fabian reformism. The university social science departments renowned for their administrative, empirical sociology in the early and middle decades of the last century - like LSE and Liverpool - were also the places where social workers were trained in the application of carefully acquired knowledge about social problems and personal pathologies. So long as social problems were seen as being resolved through technical or administrative device, then the presumption of social work as the practical application of social science knowledge was sustainable. But once social problems become attributable to forces beyond the capacity of mere individuals to influence, then the scope for academics to chide social work (and social workers) for a combination of hubris and naiveté became almost irresistible. Taken with the paradigmatic shifts in sociology that were associated with the disruptions to the post-war intellectual consensus in Britain during the late 1960s, the preconditions for an unhappy separation were all there. In short, the legacy of this 'new sociology'- whatever its intellectual enhancements and achievements might have been to itself - was for social work to stand as an exemplification of the yawning gap between the good

intentions of social actors and the 'real' consequences of their actions. Though dismissive of the seductive pull of positivism and scientism that had hitherto characterised sociology, this new wave variant - which was composed of Marxist realism and labelling theory determinism - constituted an iron cage of conceptual faith, in which the *a prioris* of standpoint drove analysis beyond consideration of complexity, fluidity or ambiguity. If there has always been the two sociologies of structure and agency lurking within the discipline - and the thematic continuity of this is clearly traceable from Weber to Giddens - then there was a moment in the subject's recent history (somewhere around the early nineteen seventies), when the causal uncertainty arising from the transactional dynamic between the two domains was overwhelmed – temporarily, as it happens – by the conceptual priority given to the determinist synchrony of structuralism.

Despite this emergence of gloomy functionalism, sociology remained on the curriculum for social work education, its place assured by the legacy of an earlier confidence that sociology would provide 'really useful' guidance in the pursuit of professional goals. The subject was still part of the profession's 'knowledge base'; sociologists (like me) continued to be employed to teach would-be social workers. But the thesis that personal problems were attributable to social malaise had a considerable impact on a profession still attached to the reformist sentiment of 'doing good' – but which was not insulated from the unsettling cultural eruptions of the nineteen sixties. In short, the critique of the individualising of social problems was to end up slighting the entire moral basis of social work.

Ironically, the sociological commentary on social work and its illusions – activated by the materialist and realist project of high structuralism - opened up the welfare enterprise to a phase of what in retrospect is quite remarkable idealistic (and analytical) naïveté. The injunction for social work to become aligned with those oppositional forces working against the state, jettisoned the very materialism upon which the analysis has been originally built. So whilst

this collection certainly looks on occasions to identify the humanising possibilities of what Mispelblom - in an surprisingly overlooked paper (1985) – refers to as 'low key' radical practices immanent within social work, it does not abandon an attachment to identifying the structural stipulation behind the charter that 'defines not only the framework of rights and duties which constitute agencies sanction, but also a set of roles they must play and judgements they must make' (Harris and Webb, 1987:97). Thus it is that central to the thesis embedded in this collection is the very limited autonomy state social work has from the interests which also exert dominance over the administrative and legislative apparatus of that state. The origins of welfare work and its continuing presence have to be seen as inevitably articulated with those structures. It is this that sets the limit on social work being able to step outside a certain 'logic of place', and which needs to be remembered before enthusiastic, but naïve, idealists seek to propel it off into active opposition to the very state within which its charter is set.

This collection refers to - and is very much part of - originating moves to take sociology out of a parasitical dependence on social work, and to set down a new agenda for how the two discourses might engage in a more constructive intellectual and pedagogic relationship. Early work undertaken with Evans (Webb and Evans, 1977; 1978), as well as the contribution to the social work theory text edited by Hardiker and Barker (1981), identified some of the elements for a *rapprochement*, including the idea for a 'client centred sociology'. This maintains that the narratives which social workers construct must perforce be about individuals, and the remedying of these individual problems or misfortunes is the source of the social work mandate. But for the narrative to move beyond a mere tale, for it to become 'true' understanding with demonstrable empathy, the full nature of the impact on individuals of social arrangements, the limitations and exclusions that these engender must be considered for anything which is to encompass a *social* work assessment. In some respects this is the practical application of what in *The Sociological Imagination* C Wright Mills said is at the core of sociology itself, which is

explaining and uncovering the connection between individual biography and the shaping, often constraining forces of history.[iv]

This is sociology *for* social work. It is a perspective and commitment that looks to important resonances between two domains, in which some sort of reconciliation could be effected. Sociology *for* social work constitutes a strategy for recasting social work's relationship with this particular social science. It is an engagement with how sociology might offer *theories for practice*. The impetus here - as the earlier allusions in this prologue to the exercise of 'proper' empathy suggest - is informed by the imperative that insofar as social work has any transformative role, this is around its *radical humanism* - its attempt to account with proper fidelity the nature of what Florence Hollis, once called 'the person in situation' (see Webb, 1981a).

Matters of method, methodology and commitment

When the subject of our interest is social work - its role within society, its relationship to the state, the manner by which those who practice social work discharge their duties - then there is a particular difficulty in deciding where the commitment to analytical detachment ends and a normative allegiance to something which Paul Halmos once referred to as 'altruism under social auspices' begins. Now of course it is not necessarily the case that the second of these concerns - the value driven - need to long detain the sociologist, whose inclination may be with exploring the configuration between welfare work and other social institutions (the state for example, or with the wider cultural trajectories known as modernism or post-modernism, or with the sedimentation of gender or race in institutional form), or with simply accounting for the ways in which social workers deal with the practicalities of reconciling their agencies mandate with personal or professional ideologies. The demeanour of detachment that lies behind these fields of enquiry, can, as it happens, all be found in this collection – for example, on the gendered nature of youth justice (Webb, 1984); on the articulation between welfare

practice and the state (Harris and Webb, 1987); on the restructuring of social work around a modernist agenda (Webb, 1992), and on the practices of probation officers making decisions with wider juridical and welfare frames of reference (Hardiker and Webb, 1979).

But - and this is an elementary point in the matter of scholarly enquiry - there is always a danger that we might find our personal commitments interfering with the 'internal' conduct of enquiry, leading us to select data or draw inferences to which we have a personal attachment. Although this is not a tendency to which those of us engaged in the social sciences are alone subject - after all, the history of science is replete with examples where experiments are rigged or data used selectively to support this or that position - there is a particular vulnerability when the gaze of the social investigator turns to matters which he or she might see as marked by injustice, social exclusion or personal misfortune. We may still, of course, want to put the results of our investigations to the betterment of humanity, this motivation reflecting the sense of duty that accompanies the power arising from the holding of specialized and arcane knowledge, but the bearing this commitment has on the conduct of the scientific enquiry itself is at best problematic and at worst corrupting. It is the possibility of this that necessarily animates the stance of continuous reflexivity to the enterprise of social investigation.

Methodological concerns arise in the collection, as they should do, given the dependency of what we discover as (social) scientists on the methods we employ to secure that knowledge. Drawing on empirical 'data' (however problematic these may be as a basis for 'truth') alongside clearly stated theoretical or conceptual explanatory anchorages is one way to secure a fix on social reality. Alongside this stand explicit theoretical reference points, which serve as the explanatory frame within which the subject is set. It is true, this is not an especially formal (or deductive) method of 'doing sociology'. It relies on beginning with some general hunches or conjectures about the issue at hand and then using available data to refine and illustrate those hunches. It could be

seen as investigative pragmatism, caught as it is between the attractions of pure reason, and the positivist inclinations of self-evident truth revealed by 'the facts'. This strategy is unsurprisingly, not without its problems, that of circularity being the most notable. Data can too easily be selected in accordance with the *a prioris* of one's conjectures, or theories are adopted for their compatibility with 'findings'. No science though, is exempt from these temptations, making the sceptical stance essential; accordingly, we need to ask repeatedly whether these data stack up against our reason. Further: can we assess the empirical as well as theoretical significance of what it is we are collecting? Where do the data come from? Are the data used to merely illustrate a theory (which makes for low-level refutation), or do they have a stronger part in *driving* an explanation? What about what counts as knowledge; the social location of time and space within which it is generated, and the context that makes for its being heard?

A distinctive theme within this collection is with the generating of empirically grounded sources to explain how welfare (and social work specifically) is practised - and sometimes how it is experienced by those on the receiving end of that practice. The approach here strives towards being 'objective', attempting as it does to generate an 'appreciative' and non-judgmental understanding of the social work task. On occasions the focus has to be on the 'social location' of social work as an institution, in order to better grasp the defining context within which that work has to take place and what practical accomplishments have to be made by those engaged in doing the job. A component part of this is a necessary engagement with the academic discourses - such as criminology - which make claim to shape the representations of those about whose lives social work has to tell a tale. If social workers are biographers of a sort, then what they look to include - or exclude - as relevant source material is shaped by, even if not determined by, ideational reference points such as these, and it is for this reason that there are occasional forays into considering the 'knowledge' upon which welfare

practices are constituted, such as criminology (Webb, 1991; Harris and Webb, 1987), and law and psychiatry (Webb and Harris, 1999).

All this expresses a commitment to *detachment,* which struggles for some form of 'truthful' (or at least explanatorily adequate) account of this particular corner of social life, echoing perhaps something of Max Weber's claim for science as a vocation, or 'calling'. Alongside - and sometimes implicated in - such an ambitious goal is the other *motif* running through this collection, namely that of *involvement.* Here sociology plays its own part in contributing to the furtherance of the social work project as a moral endeavour, claiming to have some expertise in laying out the connections between personal troubles and public issues, or between history and biography - the very domains to which social work (or at least a form of it) perforce needs to turn its gaze.

Matters more particular

Context and narrative set matters within the broadest of perspectives, providing its own kind of assistance to the reader who can thereby place what may appear, on the face of it, to be a less that coherent collection within a common referential framework. This may be the easier if not just the *form* taken by the work (encompassed as it is within its 'meta-narrative'), but its *content* too is given comparable signposting. Accordingly, what follows draws out connections between the particularities of individual contributions and the more general themes addressed within the opening pages of this prologue. The orderliness of time - and the temporal sequencing of the contributions – has been largely set aside here, as some further conceptual effort is put into supporting a number of thematic continuities. However, consistent with the muted radicalism (of politics, or method, of social work) that the astute reader may already have uncovered so far in this prologue, we shall start at the beginning, with the first contribution to what follows in the body of this collection.

The paper (**publication 1ᵛ**) with Hardiker (Hardiker and Webb, 1979) provides an account - and a situated understanding - of probation officer practices. The analysis locates their approach to decision making not just within the exigencies of 'doing the job', but also within the structure of contemporary juridical-welfare ideology. Reflecting what was earlier said about an attachment to the reassuring comfort of some 'facts', the paper is empirically driven, employing (for example) tests of statistical significance in order to verify (or refute) initial propositions or conjectures. Alongside this are various explicit theoretical reference points (the juridical and welfare ideologies within which probation activity is set) serving as the explanatory frame – the conceptual anchor - within which the subject is set.

Other contributions reflect the broad methodology of this paper, namely that data and theory are in an inevitably tensile relationship, and that if done properly investigations can take an 'appreciative' and non-judgmental stance towards social work practice, understanding it as neither marked by wilful control of the oppressed nor as simply an arm of the state. Work (**publication 4**) that appeared in *Sociology* (Webb, 1984), in the co-authored work with Harris in the *Home Office Research Bulletin* (Harris and Webb, 1983), in the *British Journal of Social Work* (Webb and Harris 1984), and in the research monograph (**publications 6 and 7**) <u>Welfare, Power and Juvenile Justice</u> (Harris and Webb, 1987) was part of a project investigating certain aspects of youth justice. Its substantive focus was on the way in which probation officers and social workers enforce what could be seen as a form of social control, or censure, requiring of them as it does the imposition of certain curtailments on the freedom of young offenders, albeit under the auspices of a form of supervisory welfare tutelage. Theoretically - and empirically - the work fills out in some detail the modest proposition that the way in which welfare workers operate in their routine practices and everyday occupational 'accomplishments' (the exercise of Foucauldian 'micro-power') cannot be understood without an analysis of the social, political and ideological contexts within which are located their jobs, the expectations

made of them through statute, and the welfare organisations which process 'clients'. Some of the practices identified by this research - and in particular the seemingly casual, idiosyncratic and often unplanned nature of welfare work with young offenders – drew the conclusion that the exercise of power need not necessarily operate through its overt application, but through the inadvertent consequences of uncertainty.

The reflexive stance towards the act of social research and its products makes rightly problematic explanatory certainties, and anyone pretending to 'construct' knowledge ought to be aware of the materials and design that go in to its creation, mindful that 'fabricate' has two usages, one of which means 'assembly' or 'construction', the other 'invention'. In this collection reflexivity is generally secondary to the impatience of dealing with the substantive matter at hand, but the paper **(publication 3)** in the *British Journal of Criminology* (Webb, 1981b) demonstrates an approach that is explicitly framed within the sociology of knowledge. Since it is upon the circumstances facing the criminal and the deviant that social welfare has to work, social work has therefore to take account of the representations made by criminology of waywardness and wickedness. As this contribution shows, just as the traditional criminology of correctionalist positivism was socially located (seen to be within the state apparatus of ameliorist social engineering), so too was 'new' criminology, which looked more to understand the expressive variety of social deviance than to presume an ambitious restoration of wrongdoers to utility. This 'celebratory' tendency within criminology - which leaked across to shape thinking about welfare practices - certainly augmented social work's inclinations towards non-judgementalism, but with the unanticipated consequence of diminishing the resolve to intervene in the 'facticity' of deviancy, the integrity and authenticity of which denied intervention.

This collection has its own methodological heterodoxy, perhaps reflecting high modernity's cultural plurality. One of the more recent papers **(publication 12)** in the compilation uses qualitative data in a way that is more

illustrative than generative. (Webb, 1998) Reading and reflecting on the transcripts of interviews with head injured people and their carers prompted, inductively, the particular interpretation that emerged, and a series of conceptual fixes were created to provide some sort of location of what otherwise would have been a set of free floating 'data'. As it happens – and consistent with the precepts of what were set out in the earlier transactional model of client-centred sociology - this piece blends the psychodynamic with the structural in order to 'get close' to the circumstances in which the head injured and their carers find themselves, and the meanings that they attach to social situations of catastrophe and psychological rupture.

The substantive, and the methods for its uncovering, run through work on the form taken by the rhetorics of social work in the 1980s, which saw both training and professional practice characterised by an increasingly vigorous adherence to anti-discrimination. In the contemporaneous authoritarianism of Thatcherism, there was an ironic structural resonance between the two domains. The theme embedded within 'Puritans and Paradigms' (Webb, 1991a) speculates that the 'progressive' moment of the one was made possible by the 'doctrinaire permissions' granted by the other **(publication 8)**. This argument was 'difficult', since it set the emergence of indisputably good intentions within a cultural setting which on the face of it was the very antithesis of all that social work held dear. The approach is something of a test for the scientist's resolve, a concrete instance of what was earlier introduced as the Weberian imperative of the scientific vocation or 'calling'. Not surprisingly, given its various juxtapositions and allusions, the paper drew some criticism. One particular instance of this (by Lena Dominelli) is included in this compilation as Appendix 2, the reply to which **(publication 9)**, amongst other things, stakes out a claim for the independence of the social work academy (Webb, 1991b).

The thematic concern with 'welfare practice in action' has some continuity in this collection. Even so, publications have not always relied upon what might

be seen as the conventionally empirical. The closing overview contribution (Webb, 1999) to the *Festschrift* dedicated to Herschel Prins - a former senior colleague at Leicester – considers complexities in managing the mentally disordered offender **(publication 13)**. In doing so it seeks to bring together a set of synthesising observations about mind, disorder and crime. The waywardness of the seriously disturbed presents a series of dilemmas for a civilised society, just as it does for welfare workers charged with holding the ring between the preventative compulsions of what is sometimes called 'incapacitation' and the wish that the troubled should not be punished for afflictions which are not of their making. Not for the first time, the message is that the doing of welfare is often a messy and far from straightforward business. This is in large part because the frailties or failings of those in need of either care or control (or for that matter both) do not fall conveniently within the mandate of this or that welfare profession.

The social 'framing' of what constitutes social work and the organisational and professional boundaries within which it is set, the institutional defining of its 'charter' and the role of regulatory bodies (such as what was the Central Council for the Education and Training of Social Workers) in assuring that it discharges its mandate, are all elements involved in understanding the fluid and complicated nature of welfare practice. Aspects of interprofessional working between nurses and social workers are particularly important, if only because of the demonstrable links between health and welfare in the origins of personal problems. An emerging overlap between the professional domains associated with delivering services to people having what would now be called learning disabilities pointed to the first stages in occupational restructuring, with moves to harmonise aspects of training and occupational accountabilities (Webb, 1989). The subsequent contribution **(publication 10)** which appeared in the *Journal of interprofessional Care* (Webb, 1992) takes up some further issues around the likely restructuring of professional social work, and in particular the connections between work-flexibility and restrictions on professional autonomy that interprofessional working might

presage. Underlying this is the argument - more explicitly stated in the later 1992 contribution to this collection - that social work will be pressed to alter its working practices in a way that marks an increasingly regulatory and authoritarian intervention of the state in professional training.

The subordination of social work to the regulatory culture is developed further in 'Regulation for Radicals' (Webb, 1996) **(publication 11)**. This was the culmination of a series of papers that tries to establish the direction being taken by social work as an enterprise operating under the auspices of the state, setting as this does limits on the idealistic ambitions of those who saw welfare as a bridgehead to wider political transformation. This revisionist approach (and the febrile political 'leftist' excitements of the time need to be recalled to put this in context) began with the paper in the *British Journal of Social Work* (Webb, 1981a) on the structural resonances between social work orthodoxy and what in the late seventies stood as a radical socialist affirmation of social work's possibilities **(publication 2)**. This contribution is a careful examination of the limits and possibilities of this assumed mutuality. It is an articulation of just why this 'programme' was not analytically sustainable. In a more normative piece **(publication 5)**, but reflecting this earlier analytical work on the synchronic 'structural' regularities in social work, the paper in *Issues in Social Work Education* (Webb, 1985) offers a conceptual bridge - and some suggestions for the social work curriculum - between the therapeutic legacy of traditional social work and 'consciousness-raising', which was one of the new methods to which 'progressive' social work was then turning.

Identifying continuities like this within social work is a way to establish the enduring strength of an enterprise that is buffeted by fads, fashions and diversions. What are often heralded as paradigmatic departures - for which sometimes ambitious claims are made - are shown as little more than variations on a theme. This is not to deny that diachronous changes to vocabularies and methods in welfare practice have not taken place, but that despite this there is a constancy in the meta-narrative within which all these

novelties are set. In part this collection both sets out and defends that narrative, which revolves around the centrality of the connections between the social or 'structural' origins of individuals' troubles and the subjective understandings (or meanings, or consciousness) that they have of their predicament. Sociology as knowledge and social work as practice are inextricably linked, just as they when social work education first entered the academy.

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[i] The careful reader will note the borrowing of parts of this title from an earlier paper (Webb, 1981)

[ii] For an instance of the debate between standpoint and objectivist epistemology within social work, see Webb (1991) and Dominelli (1991) in this collection.

[iii] The structural connections between post - Seebohm Social Services mega-departments, the grand narrative of systems thinking and the technical and social engineering ambitions of fordist high modernity ought not to be lost from sight.

[iv] Recognition of this legacy is emerging from what on the face of it is an unlikely quarter. The sociology/ social work textbook by Cree (2000) is a case in point, where a broadly feminist perspective looks to an accommodation with what in earlier, more excitable times, would be seen as the 'malestream' heritage of C Wright Mills.

[v] The parenthetic numbering of the publications refers to the ordering shown on the contents page of this collection.

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EXPLAINING DEVIANT BEHAVIOUR: THE SOCIAL CONTEXT OF 'ACTION' AND 'INFRACTION' ACCOUNTS IN THE PROBATION SERVICE

PAULINE HARDIKER AND DAVID WEBB

Abstract The most familiar sociological image of the probation officer sees him firmly committed to some variant of a psycho-pathological view of deviancy in which both society and volition are disregarded. It was from this assumption that the research sprang, the purpose being to examine the treatment ideologies held by probation officers. But from focussed interviews, it was clear that explanations of deviancy offered by the probation officers were wider than anticipated, encompassing both determinist and voluntarist accounts of behaviour. It is suggested that the structural context of probation work – utilitarian justice and casework treatment notions – creates more 'space' for offering a greater variety of explanations than has often been appreciated. And, in offering these explanations probation officers do not necessarily reinterpret their clients' accounts which were somtimes accepted and at other times rejected.

How the cases were explained appears to depend on the circumstances of the case. The more serious the offender's criminal history or his personal or social problems, the more likely it was that the probation officer thought in determinist terms offering an 'action' account. But equally, the respondents recognised the sometimes voluntary nature of delinquency, though this was generally in less serious cases.

THE conventional sociological image of the social worker lays great emphasis upon the way in which a highly simplified a-social model of personal malfunctioning is imposed on a client whose own explanations of his predicament are rarely heeded and hardly ever believed. Typically the social worker is regarded as studiously playing down his clients' social situation which is sacrificed to the professional dictates of a psychodynamic mode of viewing human action; for example, a criminal offence or request for financial aid is interpreted as the 'presenting symptom of an underlying problem'.

There is a certain amount of evidence to support this familiar motif, and in some instances clients' accounts of their actions probably are reinterpreted to accord with the social workers' paradigm of problem definition.[1] And, indeed, it was from just such a perspective that the current research emerged, the initial purpose being to examine the 'treatment' ideologies held by probation officers towards their clients. The assumption was that probation officers would be likely to view deviant behaviour as constrained by psychological or social forces, his offence being a 'cry for help'.[2]

In fact, probation officers sometimes do think along these lines but the prevalence of such an approach appears to be much less extensive and more discriminating than we had originally supposed. We, therefore, take as a starting point Cohen's observation that 'control agents have simply not been won over to the positivist

ideology and in their day-to-day work and reflections about delinquency use a much more common-sense model which is hardly deterministic at all'.[3] The very wide range of explanations offered by probation officers when reflecting on delinquency suggests that they do not employ an all embracing monolithic model of deviancy; probation officer's explanations range from traditional quasi-medical notions of 'inner drives' to quite radical ideas about contingencies and even an occasional hint of political economy. There are, we feel, good structural reasons to explain this variety. Broadly these can be seen as (i) the social work context, and (ii) the judicial context.

The Social Work Context

Probation officers are trained as social workers not as penologists and thus are not *solely* sentencing experts to the court. Certainly, they occupy the role of professional advisors and in their social inquiry work it is this advisory function which is regarded as the most important component of their job. Thus, Monger in his seminal book 'Casework in Probation' comments that 'the principal objectives of a probation officer in carrying out a social inquiry report should not be that of helping the accused with his personal problems, rather it should be that of assisting the court in reaching a decision'.[5]

Individualised justice underpins the very existence of professional advice on sentencing, and is intertwined with the revisions to classical justice which were necessary, given the manifest inadequacies of the Social Contract premises upon which such a system was founded. The universalism of the classical approach in which all offenders were judged from the same standpoint 'appeared to contradict widely held common-sensical notions of human nature and motivation'.[6] Thus, these neo-classical revisions make it possible for individual differences between offenders to be taken into account – differences which 'might alter or marginally affect the exercise of voluntarism'[7] – either in mitigation or as a pointer to rehabilitative measures. For example, the age, 'mental condition', criminal record and personal/social situation of an offender may be thought to indicate that he needs 'treatment' for his problem (rather than punishment for his offence), since 'these considerations (are) held to be important in modifying the ability of the individual to exercise his free will'.[8] Probation rather than a custodial measure may be recommended accordingly, and thus the probation service is involved in tempering the 'almost exclusive concern with outcomes which is characteristic of classical justice'. Hence, a social work service annexed to the administration of justice and which has the formal goal of investigating constraints on free will, is the natural accompaniment of neo-classicism. And if assessing the 'degree' of responsibility serves to soften the full impact of a 'punishment to meet the crime' then it is churlish to complain, though we should not assume that individualising justice makes things easier for the client. As several writers have pointed out, 'treatment' for individual problems can simply be a euphemism for indeterminate (though allegedly humane) systems of punishment.[10] For example, probation officers may recommend longer custodial sentences if they believe in the value of institutional 'treatment'.

So, one of the demands facing probation officers is to inquire into the characteristics of offenders as a means of understanding the behaviour that led them to appear before the court.[11] This is predicated on the assumption that 'social problems' should be explored as a possible cause of delinquency. The probation officer's legitimacy stems from the recognition that he is able to carry out this task and provide mitigating evidence which 'reasonable' lay people (such as the Bench) can understand and which strike a chord of relevance for them. The probation officer thus catches, amplifies and articulates the recognition that utilitarianism offends common-sense. His is a quest for factors which make for less rational and more determined behaviour. On the other hand, if his explorations into the client's world fail to reveal 'problems', then a greater degree of freedom can be imputed; classical justice will be a more appropriate framework for sentencing, either in the form of a straight tariff or a 'reduced' fine, given the offender's economic circumstances.[12]

The social work context of Probation may legitimate the search for personal problems which are seen to constrain the freedom of the person to act rationally. Probation officers employ a repertoire of 'likely problems' in their task of decoding the world of the offender. Using an eclectic range of aetiologies,[13] they test out these possibilities against the individual client. In this way, the probation officer's assessment of his client's problem is the *practical accomplishment* of a theory – it is not theory *per se* devoid of any empirical content.[14] This is one of the reasons why 'motivational accounts' must be examined in relation to the welfare context in which they are used rather than as free-floating ideas inside a probation officer's head.

The Judicial Context
Like the social work context of probation, the other dimension within which they habitually carry out their daily tasks – the judicial context – also contributes to a wide range of explanations for deviant behaviour being advanced. It is difficult to separate judicial and welfare dimensions, since the latter must be seen as in part a response to the former. Certainly, utilitarian law offends both reasonableness and common-sense, but its material base is also vulnerable to exposure. Universalist assumptions about equality simply do not square with manifest *inequality* in the distribution of property and the opportunities for rewards in society. Thus, a rigid adherence to utilitarian justice is in danger of becoming transparently a law designed to punish the poor. Legality resting upon more or less shared norms is dissolved into a coercive set of 'rules' which are seen as enforced rather than emerging from any tacit social contract.[15] Consideration for the circumstances of individual offenders thus becomes 'necessary'.

Accordingly, two components of sentencing policy are now firmly consolidated – if somewhat uneasily – into the parameters of judicial decision making.[16] First is the notion of responsibility: the utilitarian axiom that all action is willingly and voluntarily entered into, a rational calculus in which consequences are anticipated and acknowledged. But, secondly, there is the revision to this classical approach

brought about by a conception of circumscribed rationality (the 'exceptional instances' of neo-classicism), and more latterly by that of determined behaviour (contained in the positivist 'revolution'). For example, the very young or the 'mentally abnormal' offender may be assumed to have less free will than most adults, and in this schema, the offender is generally considered to the exclusion of his offence.[17] Just as the social work context of probation practice equivocates between the psychological-determinist model of action and one which takes clients behaviour as contained in its own integrity, so is this paralleled in the legal parameters of determinism versus freedom. Of course, these legal parameters are themselves to a certain extent the outcome of the contribution to sentencing made by professional advisors, so it would be wrong to see the two contexts as completely autonomous.[18]

There seems to be a certain openness to that frame within which probation officers think about behavioural explanations for their clients' misdeeds. It is this ideological space — greater than has been perhaps appreciated — which partly explains why there was not a totally determinist paradigm amongst the probation officers who were interviewed. As Taylor *et al* have noted,[19] the positivist ideas of determinism have never been absolute, for the degree of determinism lies somewhere along a continuum; the equivocal setting in which probation officers work may explain this paradox. Just as the classical utilitarian ideas of justice have been tempered with 'common sensical' notions of human nature in which full accountability for action cannot automatically be assumed, so too have ideas of psychodeterminism been held at bay by the core assumptions of classical justice. Accordingly, it seems doubtful if that subject of some misconception — the psychiatric deluge in social work — could ever have become as fully blown as has been suggested.[20] If the dominant ideological constituents of western culture are utilitarian,[21] then it would be surprising if the motivational explanations offered by probation officers were totally devoid of the notion 'responsibility'. But this is more than a cultural trace: rather their proximity to legal considerations of *mens rea* serves as a constant reminder that there are boundaries to determinist accounts of delinquent human behaviour

The probation officers we interviewed assumed that, sometimes, action could be freely and knowingly entered into, and in so doing they discounted the possibility of circumscribing forces limiting choice. There were instances where the probation officer repudiated the client's own determinist account, endowed him with free will and place him at the mercy of the classical dimension of justice. Whilst it is true that such a tactic was only followed in specific instances (as when he decided there were no obvious 'problems'), it does nevertheless serve to illustrate our theme about the welfare and judicial contexts within which probation officers reflect on their clients' deviancy.

METHODS[22]

The research was designed *to explore* probation officers' ideologies of crime which we saw as being partly operationalised as motivational explanations. We aimed to

elicit detailed information from a few respondents rather than superficial data from many. There were eighteen probation officers in the sample, which was stratified by agency, since it was felt that organisational factors might have a bearing upon social inquiry practices. One agency was in a city and the other in the adjacent county. Ten officers were selected from the city agency representing an appropriate range of age, sex, training and experience; the eight from the county comprised the whole team in one area.

Each probation officer selected the last five social inquiry reports in which he had recommended conditional discharge, fine, probation, custody or made no recommendation, respectively. There were thus ninety reports (five from eighteen probation officers) which were examined and used as the basis of a tape recorded interview with the officer concerned.

This interview was based on a semi-structured schedule, and the probation officers were asked to elaborate on the circumstances of the offence, their social work views about the case, their aims in making particular recommendations and the resulting sentence. For each case, a Likert Scale was completed in order to elucidate their treatment ideologies.[23] *For the purpose of this present paper,* they were specifically asked the following questions:

(i) Their views on why the offender committed the offence.

(ii) The offender's account of this action, and

(iii) The extent to which there was any discrepancy between the offender's account and that of the probation officer.

FINDINGS
The Range of Explanations Probation Officers Use

The first question clearly addresses itself to the overall model of deviancy employed by the probation officer – for example, 'action' and 'infraction'.[24] Probation officers did sometimes use 'action' explanations, which considered offence behaviour as springing from their client's life situation. They did not appear to refer to 'pure' *biological* factors such as constitutional or genetic sources of criminality. The nearest they came to such an explanation was to refer to either an offender's poor health (hysterectomy or menopause) or low intelligence.

They did use a variety of *psychological* explanations in their work. Sometimes this was of a *psychodynamic* kind, when for example a probation officer thought a young man charged with trespass and damage was 'acting out what was going on at home', the implicit judgement being that what was going on at home was unusual because relationships were impaired.[25] In other cases, a more *behavioural* learning theory explanation was used, when for example a subnormal youth was charged with theft of ladies' underwear and it was thought that this was fetishistic behaviour because more acceptable ways of getting sexual release had not been learned. Psychological accounts might also consider the offender's *personality.* For example, one probation officer thought that an offender, charged with assault, had 'hit the bloke because he had a lot of aggression and anger in him which had been brewing

up'. Similarly, the offender's *life cycle* might be used as an explanation of the offence; a theft by a teenage girl was thought to relate to her difficult adolescence because she was 'trying to find her own identity'. It appeared from these examples that probation officers resorted to a variety of psychological factors — psychodynamic, behavioural, personality, life cycle — in their attempts to explain their clients' offences.

Probation officers also appear to have been influenced by some of those *criminological* theories which have cited *social,* rather than psychological, factors in their search for the causes of crime.[26] Sometimes they mentioned peer group pressures to which an offender was subjected whilst in other cases they related an offence such as 'abstracting electricity' to a family's real material poverty. Social explanations might be rather more sophisticated. For example, a man was charged with embezzlement and the probation officer related this offence to his cultural situation of race, marriage and employment, which had pressured him, inevitably, into particular offence behaviour. This still contains a positivist germ, since the factors once present commit adherents to lines of action, but it is a beginning recognition that links and contradictions exist between a sub-culture and the wider society which pose a subjective problematic for the person.

The tendency in these 'action' cases is for the probation officer to have been successful in his professional quest for problems.[27] This in turn implies that 'infraction' ones will be presented in other instances. Our original assumption was that this would not be the case, and that a more or less blanket application of biological, psychological or social notions of determinism would be employed. Was there, then, any evidence that the probation officers in our sample thought in 'infraction' terms at all? That is, did they regard the offence and circumstances as having more significance than the offender. We did find that opportunity, for example, was sometimes seen as important, precipitating the individual over the invitational edge. A case in point, such as a railway worker taking axle bearings from the local goods yard, is viewed as tempting a reasonable man who knew what he was doing: what characterises him is his proximity to the bearings, not his character. There was also a recognition by the probation officers that 'everyone's at it', which again served to contextualise the offence and not mark the person off from non-offenders. Similarly, police practices, labelling and discretion were sometimes acknowledged as being relevant to apprehension and prosecution.

Probation officers are certainly not incapable of providing accounts of actions which contextualise their client's deviancy, and in some of these instances the probation officers do really seem to be listening to and accepting their client's own viewpoint. When they do this, they may get clues too about the origin of a deviant act.[28] For example, this sometimes emerges as a quite anti-positivist notion of delinquency as 'Drift', as in the case of a youth charged with trespass and theft, who explained how he had missed the school bus, walked towards town, met his friends who had invited him to join them in their activities.

What the offenders said might also point to why they continued in their criminal activities. For example, a youth charged with theft had become unemployed. He

lived in a so-called 'delinquent area' where his mates introduced him to thieving opportunities, and 'they quickly found this a profitable enterprise'. Similarly, what an offender says may tell us something about his cultural location; one man charged with allowing his premises to be used for drugs had philosophical reasons for smoking cannabis even though he was aware of the criminal nature of his activities; the probation officer sympathised with him and thought a man of his age ought to be able to make up his own mind about such things.

It seems then from these examples that probation officers did sometimes 'appreciate' the origins of a deviant act, the reasons why people continued their criminal activities, and thought that crime related to cultural norms as well as the offender's personality. In this sense, they did adopt more than a common-sense model and, indeed, sometimes thought fairly abstractly about the nature of the crime. But again, it must be emphasised that we think these infraction accounts are only invoked when the probation officer decides that problems are not great enough to indicate 'need' according to his definition.

Probation officers *do* then employ accounts which recognise that behaviour is sometimes determined and sometimes freely and knowingly entered into. These explanations must be situated in the judicial and social work contexts of their daily work.

The Status of Offenders' Accounts

The second and third questions we asked were related to assessing the probation officers' views about the status of offenders' own accounts, and we shall outline some of the ways in which these accounts were handled. This is obviously important since the probation officer may be granted the legitimacy to admit or exclude certain vocabularies of motive to everyday folk currency. But their reactions are also important since they describe practical ideologies about what constitutes a reasonable account.

(i) Translation

It has often been assumed that social workers do not typically take the client at his word, but interpret his behaviour in terms of their own particular determinist paradigm of practice, whether this be psychoanalytic, behaviourist or sociological. In our sample, there were indeed cases in which the probation officer re-interpreted the offender's explanation for his offence. For example, a man charged with theft said that he had done it because he had no money for food; the probation officer thought that was only a surface explanation because the 'deeper reason was that he was an inadequate person'. There was also a more sophisticated version of this process in a case in which a man charged with theft said he had stolen for money; the probation officer thought that the 'real' reason was because he was with his friends and wanted a bit of excitement and status recognition from his peers – being articulate the client was rather offended at this quasi-determinist notion of 'affiliation'.[29] Sometimes the real, objective material stress offenders faced was not accepted as sufficient explanation of their behaviour; a petty theft for food was

thought to be tied up, for example, with a couple's depression and marital problems rather than their abject poverty alone.

'Translation' finds ample scope for application in situations where the clients offer no account whatsoever; because of this, 'imposition' is perhaps a more accurate way of describing the process where the element of actual *negotiation* is fairly limited. Thus, one middle aged woman charged with shoplifting could offer no explanation of her behaviour. The probation officer, nonethless, thought that the offence arose from her being confused and under a lot or pressure at home.

These are, of course, the typical instances of re-interpretation which bring forth the predictable (and perhaps justifiable) howls from the more sociologically minded radicals, always on the lookout for a bit of 'deflection' of *social* problems back into the cul-de-sac of the individual psyche. But, as we have already suggested, there are occasions where integrity, far from being repudiated, is emphasised, and this too involves translation, though away from positivist assumptions of determinism and in the direction of classical voluntarism.

The following case illustrates this point. A man, charged with breaking and entering, told the probation officer that he had been drawn into those offences without fully realising what he was doing. His account was thought to be 'rather lame because he is by no means stupid, was fully aware of what he was doing and the consequencies, and he had plenty of time to show his disapproval and withdraw from the activities which took place over about a year'. In this case, the offender appeared to be providing an 'action' account portraying his lack of free will whereas the probation officer refused to see his behaviour in these terms and held him responsible and accountable for his criminal activities.

This reaction to the offender's account – a repudiation which *cancels* out a possible explanation for a client's behaviour – is clearly brought out in the following two examples. Both cases emphasise the primarily *legal* rather than symptomological status of the offence. They echo some of our introductory points concerning the responsibility-treatment dimensions of the justice and social work context of the probation officers' occupational world. Example one: a teenage girl was charged with theft from the shop where she worked. Even though she had quite a few problems related to a handicap for which she had to spend periods of time in hospital, the probation officer ruled this out as a pressure on her because she thought the offence was 'quite a deliberate action of dishonesty'. Example two also illustrates this point: an elderly woman was charged with a petty theft from a store, and though she had recently experienced a variety of personal and social stresses, it was thought the offence was entirely unrelated to these 'problems'. It appears then, that probation officers did not simply search for problems in the offender's life in order to support a pre-existing notion that all offences were a 'cry for help' because in some cases they identified stresses but did not connect them causally to a particular offence.

These cases illustrate some of the ways in which translation operates through interpretation, imposition and cancellation. As we have stressed this was not simply in the direction of depicting the client in 'pathological' terms. Sometimes, the

opposite was the case, and classical justice was invoked. We now turn to varying degrees of acceptance by the probation officer of the offender's account.

(ii) *Acceptance*

Sometimes probation officers did believe what the offender said and also found it an acceptable explanation for their behaviour. Some examples follow. A woman was charged with assault related to a domestic quarrel. The probation officer accepted the story and felt some degree of sympathy for the offender. In other instances, an offender's account was only partially accepted. Thus, in the case of a man charged with unlawful and malicious wounding, the probation officer agreed that the offender had acted in self-defence. He *added* however, that the offence had also to be seen in the context of a man who carried a knife as was the custom in his delinquent peer group, so that self-defence was not a sufficient explanation for his actions. So probation officers did sometimes take the offender at his word even though they might also add their own version of the offence.

Sometimes the very presence of a probation officer provides a legitimate opportunity for apparently inarticulate clients to offer some account of their actions. Of course, it may well be that the probation officer would still reject this explanation, and there is no *necessary* guarantee that what is revealed in the social inquiry stage will be regarded as acceptable by the officer concerned. But it *does* happen. For example, a 'subnormal' man was unable to give an account of himself when he was charged in court with theft of ladies' underclothes. He was remanded for reports and told the probation officer that the offence happened when he was on holiday and went out for a drink with his friends; he drank too much and as he went home in a confused state saw the underclothes, took them and wished he hadn't. Even though the offender was still embarrassed and nervous during his interview, he was able to provide a much more contextualised picture of his offence to the probation officer compared with his 'muteness' in court. It appeared (not surprisingly) that some offenders were able to give a 'better' account of themselves in interviews with probation officers than in the formal court setting. It seems then that offenders' accounts were sometimes accepted either totally or partially, especially once they could articulate their stories in an interview.

We have, so far, described a number of ways in which probation officers handle the accounts offered to them by clients – although intepretation sometimes took place, this was not necessarily so in all cases. But the processes described still need to be explained. It seems likely that the idea of 'action' emerges when common-sense is offended at the underlying rationalist assumptions of utilitarianism. Thus, 'action' accounts will be advanced by the probation officer when he identifies factors of a biological, psychological or social nature which he regards as being sufficiently severe to have 'pushed' the person into delinquency. This does, of course, imply a yardstick of normalcy, and this may be as much cultural as 'scientific'. In the next section, we shall attempt to show that probation officers are likely to employ 'action' explanations in serious rather than trivial cases.

The Circumstances in which Different Accounts are Employed

Probation officers explain offence behaviour in a variety of ways. Were such explanations used in a relatively random manner, or did there appear to be particular reasons why one account rather than another was proffered?

(i) *The Offender's Criminal History*

There were variations in the relative gravity of the offences committed; some were trivial, such as theft of oranges, whilst others involved several hundred pounds. It did appear that the more serious the offence, the more likely it was that the probation officer would explain it in 'action' terms such as psychological or social pressures, whereas 'infraction' accounts were more typically used when the offence seemed relatively trivial. Of course, other things being equal, with minor offences it is easier to appreciate the invitational edge of rule breaking which is expressed in the layman's word 'temptation'. Everyday familiarity with routine enticements finds infraction accounts appropriate when the nature of the offence behaviour is trivial. The figures in Table 1 make this clear, and this would seem to accord with the classical notion that no reasonable man would undertake action which he knew would be met with a severe sentence. Any reasonableness is, therefore, suspended and he is seen as determined.

TABLE I
*Gravity of Offence and Accounts**

| Offence Rank | Type of Account | |
	Action	Infraction
Low	11	13
Medium	26	9
High	12	2
	—	—
	49	24

$$X^2 = 7.5 \quad df\ 2 \quad p < 0.025$$

* N = 73 rather than 90 in most of these tables, because in eleven cases both 'action' and 'infraction' accounts were given and in six cases the probation officers could not provide an explanation.

This revision to classical justice once again emerges when the offender's criminal record is considered. Constant reappearance before the courts casts doubt on the efficacy of punishment, and since the individual does not seem to be responding to deterrence – which he would do if rational – then his free will is again held in question.

TABLE 2
*Gravity of Criminal History and Accounts**

| Tariff Rank | Type of Account | |
	Action	Infraction
Low	8	8
Medium	14	10
High	15	2
	37	20

$$X^2 = 7 \quad df\,2 \quad p < 0.050$$

* There are even fewer cases here, because a 'tariff rank' could not be assigned for eighteen of the ninety cases. In twelve of these, 'action' explanations were given, whilst in four of them 'infraction' accounts were used. In the two remaining cases, both types of account were proffered.

Table 2 shows that the probation officers in our sample were more likely to offer action accounts when the offender's criminal history was relatively serious. In these instances, behaviour was viewed as determined with 'treatment' as the recommendation for disposal. (See Tables 3 and 4).

TABLE 3
Probation Officers' Ideologies and Accounts

| Ideology | Type of Account | |
	Action	Infraction
Non-treatment	15	19
Treatment	34	5
	49	24

$$X^2 = 17.0 \quad df\,1 \quad p < 0.001$$

TABLE 4
Probation Officers' Recommendations and Accounts

| Recommendation | Type of Account | |
	Action	Infraction
No recommendation	9	5
Conditional discharge	7	8
Fine	5	7
Probation	14	3
Custody	14	1
	49	24

$$X^2 = 15.0 \quad df\,4 \quad p < 0.005$$

(ii) *The offender's personal and social situation*

Some offenders in the sample experienced personal and social stress, such as housing and financial worries, life cycle crises or broken marriages; as such they were identified as being characteristic social work problems, and therefore people in need of someone whose task is statutorily defined as to 'advise, assist and befriend'. And, since problems are seen to interfere with one's capacity to function rationally, the identification of difficulties with living was significantly associated with a probation officer's account which laid some emphasis upon determined 'action' (see Table 5).

TABLE 5
Offender Need and Accounts

| Need Rank | Type of Account | |
	Action	Infraction
Low	6	15
High	43	9
	49	24

$X^2 = 22.0$ df 1   p<0.001

'Action' accounts, therefore, are associated with a serious criminal history, high social need, and in *these cases,* probation officers typically hold a treatment ideology and recommend either probation or custody.

The circumstances of the cases — seriousness of the criminal history and social need — were associated with the type of account employed. There were no significant differences between either the probation officers (in terms of their age, training or experience) or the two agencies in the range of explanatory models deployed.[30] If the officer explained a case in 'action' terms, he was likely to recommend either probation or custody, and there were no significant differences between probation officers in this respect.

DISCUSSION

What seems crucial in shaping the nature of the account provided by the probation officer — 'infraction' or 'action' — is the officer's individualised assessment of the seriousness of the offence and criminal history and his view of the problems facing the client. *These are, of course, structurally located, given the role of the probation officer in sentencing*, but this does not deny the fact that the officer's view of his client is the outcome of pitting his theories against the 'data' of any one offender. 'Action' or 'infraction' are in this way models of deviant behaviour which are practical accomplishments of theory. Whether the offender is seen as determined or freely acting does not follow from the personal ideology of the probation officer *per se*,[31] something neatly parcelled before the client is even seen. We would, therefore,

question Bean's[32] assertion that offenders should choose their probation officer carefully; rather, given the legal and social work parameters which inform probation practice, we would say, "choose your offence and social problems". It is these which appear to be crucial factors in explaining how probation officers think about offenders' actions. This takes us back to the manner in which probation officers react to client accounts. We outlined some of the ways in which this happens – re-interpretation, acceptance, etc. – although this does not appear to be a random process dependent on the individual predilections of the officer concerned. Rather, the crucial thing in the type of motivational account offered is the degree to which an offender's behaviour is assessed as 'determined'. This, in turn, depends on the seriousness of the offender's criminal and personal history.

Do probation officers, then practice according to some kind of model which assumes that criminal behaviour is a 'cry for help' and that the offender is pushed into his actions rather than freely engaging in them? That probation officers even have to think about free will and determinism at all stems from their structural position which straddles social work and judicial organisations. It is not therefore surprising that their professional ideas contain a mixture of utilitarian justice and casework treatment notions. One means of exploring these complex issues was by asking probation officers to give reasons for their clients' behaviour, and to reflect on their own and their clients' accounts accordingly. It seems that *when* probation officers do think in terms of offences being a 'cry for help' and 'determined', they are very discriminating in their explanations, which relate to the circumstances of the cases they handle more than anything else.

We have attempted to illustrate the variability of probation officers' explanations of criminal behaviour, to describe the decision-making processes at work and the particular circumstances in which different motivational explanations are proffered. We now think that Cohen's[33] view that, 'control agents have simply not been won over to the positivist ideology and in their day-to-day work and reflections about delinquency use a much more common-sense model which is hardly deterministic at all', is over-simplified in several respects. It seems to convey an all or nothing picture of determinism which leads one to miss some of the complexities of the phenomenon. Further, the opposite of positivism seems to amount to more than common-sense, for on many occastions probation officers demonstrated a measure of 'appreciation' (in Matza's terms) which was certainly more sophisticated than everyday common-sense. Moreover, the circumstances of the case itself appeared to have an important bearing on the *type* of explanation employed. In order to explain this variability we referred to the social work and judicial contexts – the structural frame – within which probation officers carry out their daily tasks.

Although we have made considerable reference to formally identified philosophical or sociological propositions such as voluntarism, determinism, action and infraction, we are not thereby suggesting that probation officers themselves think in such abstract terms. Rather we use these as second-order constructs of the 'everyday' accounts we elicited in our interviews with the probation officers. They are not, of course, professional sociologists, even though on occasions they may

draw fairly obviously on sociological theories of crime and delinquency to understand some of the offenders with whom they work. But generally their daily activities proceed .on the basis of implicit (and sometimes explicit) 'practice theories',[34] which help them in explaining the 'reasons' for the deviant behaviour of their clients.

In describing the constituent elements of these guidelines for practice – which are rarely articulated by social workers themselves – we have tried to make the connections between everyday work and the nature of the theoretical repertoire upon which probation officers are perforce obliged to draw.[35] And, in documenting and describing the kinds of motivational explanation employed by probation officers we would hope to have moved beyond blank assertions that 'social workers are agents of social control'. In attempting to situate this within particular social contexts we have offered an interpretation of why they explain deviant behaviour in the way they do.[36]

Notes and References

1. See, for example: Handler, J. F. (1973). *The Coercive Social Worker*. Chicago; Rand McNally; Rock, P. (1973). *Making People Pay*. London, Routledge, pp. 277-8; Hardiker, P. (1972). 'Problem definition: an interactionist approach', in Jehu D. *et al. Behaviour Modification in Social Work*. London, Wiley, pp. 99-125. Taber, M. (1970). 'Social work as interference in problem definitions', *Applied Social Studies*, 59-68; Mayer, J. E. and Timms, N. (1970). *The Client Speaks*. London, Routledge; Matza, D. (1964). *Delinquency and Drift*. New York, Wiley.
2. May, D. (1971). 'Delinquency control and the treatment model: some implications of recent legislation'. *British Journal of Criminology*, 11 (4), 359-370.
3. Cohen, S. (1974). 'Criminology and the sociology of deviance in Britain', in McIntosh, M. and Rock, P. (Eds). *Deviance and Social Control*, London, Tavistock, p. 32. We think, however, that the argument in our paper will be clarified if we assume that Cohen was referring to psychodynamic determinism because as our data and arguments seem to indicate, determined behaviour may be seen to be relatively rational given an offender's personal *and social* situation. We think that Matza's distinction between hard and soft determinism is helpful here (op. cit. p. 5 passim).
4. Probation officer's reflections during the interview should not be confused with the motivational accounts they provided in their social inquiry reports, because our respondents did not always explicitly provide an account to the court. When they did so, this was sometimes a faithful presentation of their clients' views and, at other times, a retranslation for the purposes of the sentencers. The connection between accounts provided during interviews and those proffered in reports is, of course, problematic, but we are unable to explore it in this paper. However, if there are discrepancies, these should be explained in terms of the structural postion of probation officers in court rather than by simply indicting them for using casework terminology as a euphemism for social control.
5. Monger, M. (1972). *Casework in Probation*. Second edition. London, Butterworth, p. 18.
6. Taylor, I., Walton, P., and Young, J. (1973). *The New Criminology*. London, Routledge, p. 7.
7. *Ibid.* p. 9
8. *Ibid.* p. 8.

9. Clarke, M. J. (1975). 'The impact of social science on conceptions of responsibility'. *British Journal of Law and Society*, 2 (1), 32-44.

10. Bean, P. (1975). 'Social inquiry reports – a recommendation for disposal'. Part I, *Justice of the Peace*, 11th October, 568-9. Part II, *Justice of the Peace*, 18th October, 585-7 Wheeler, S. (ed), (1968). *Controlling Delinquents*. New York, Wiley.

11. Davies, M. (1974). 'Social inquiry for the courts'. *British Journal of Criminology*, 14 (1), 18-33; *The Streatfeild Report*, (1961). Report of the Inter-departmental Committee on the Business of the Criminal Courts. Cmnd 1289. HMSO, London.

12. We are aware that strictly speaking consideration of individual financial differences offends the moral calculus that is utilitarianism. But even the classical criminologists were aware that pecuniary punishments may increase the number of poor, and may deprive an innocent family of subsistence. See Taylor, Walton and Young, *op. cit.*, pp. 1-7.

13. This eclecticism is typified with some clarity in what is virtually a handbook for those working with offenders: Prins, H. (1973). *Criminal Behaviour: An Introduction to Its Study and Treatment*. London, Pitman.

14. Zimmerman's article on rule used helped our thinking here. See Don Zimmerman (1971) 'The Practicalities of Rule Use' in Jack Douglas (Ed) *Understanding Everyday Life*, London, Routledge.

15. See the discussion in Carson, W. G. (1974). 'The sociology of crime and the emergence of criminal laws', in McIntosh and Rock, *op. cit.*

16. Clarke, *op. cit.*

17. Matza, *op. cit.*

18. This is clearly illustrated in the discussion following the Maria Colwell case. In her book on child care policy, Jean Packman took issue with Olive Stevenson's argument that social workers are the victims not the perpetrators of the legal and social system which assumes that parents will resume care of a child if their circumstances improve. She reminded us that social workers have made important contributions to the very legal and social system which they then find themselves in and so, to an extent, shape policy by dint of being 'professionals'. See Packman, J. (1975). *The Child's Generation*. Oxford, Blackwell, p. 175.

19. Taylor, Walton and Young, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

20. We are not denying that in some circumstances the psychiatric deluge has been used in social work as a seductive euphemism for social control. See Cohen, S. (1975) 'It's all right for you to talk: political and sociological manifestos for social action', in Bailey, R., and Brake, M. (Eds). *Radical Social Work*. London, Arnold, 76-95.

21. Gouldner, A. W. (1970). *The Coming Crisis of Western Sociology*. London, Heinemann, Chapter 3.

22. The methods are described in greater detail in, Hardiker, P. (1975). *Ideologies in Social Inquiry Reports*. Final Progress Report to the Social Science Research Council.

23. Hardiker, P. (1977). 'Social work ideologies in the probation service.' *British Journal of Social Work*, 7 (2).

24. These concepts of 'action' and 'infraction' are taken directly from Matza's critique of the American juvenile justice system (in *Delinquency and Drift, op. cit.*). 'Action' explanations of crime refer to a wide range of ideas within which offence behaviour is seen as a reflection of a person's biological, psychological or social situation which makes law-breaking inevitable. Given these underlying problems, the offence is refracted as a 'cry for help'. 'Infraction' explanations echo the classic character of utilitarian justice in which criminality is thought of as a legal status rather than a personal characteristic; people may embrace this status in specific situations either because they are caught on the invitational edge of opportunities to commit crimes and/or because they happen to have

been caught by the police. We built these two concepts into our coding frame and analysed the data accordingly. Because in many cases both 'infraction' and 'action' accounts were offered, we also had to devise a code of "both" to deal with this.

25. Friedlander, K. (1947). *The Psychoanalytical Approach to Juvenile Delinquency.* London, Routledge.

26. Cloward, R. W., and Ohlin, L. E. (1960). *Delinquency and Opportunity.* New York, The Free Press; Wolfgang, M. E., Savitz, L., Johnston, N. (eds.) (1970). *The Sociology of Crime and Delinquency.* New York, Wiley.

27. We think it is problematic whether some probation officers presume there are problems unless persuaded otherwise whilst others presume there are no problems unless they find them. Complex negotiations are likely to operate in this respect, but our research on treatment ideologies may provide us with one clue (Hardiker: 1977). Experienced officers trained on Home Office courses may be more likely to *presume* problems than their less experienced colleagues with sociology qualifications. Even so, it is unlikely that probation officers fit into a neat dichotomy in this respect.

28. See Taylor, L. (1972). 'The significance and Interpretation of Replies to Motivational Questions: The case of sex offenders'. *Sociology*, 6 (1). Also Brian Taylor (1976) 'Motives for guilt-free pederasty: some literary considerations'. *Sociological Review*, 24 (1).

29. See Matza, D. (1969). *Becoming Deviant.* Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, Prentice Hall, Chapter 6.

30. Hardiker, (1977).

31. *Ibid.*

32. Bean, *op. cit.*

33. Cohen, (1974).

34. See Evans, R. (1976), 'Some implications of an integrated model of social work for theory and practice'. *British Journal of Social Work,* 6, (No. 2.).

35. This is attempted in greater detail in Curnock, K. and Hardiker, P. *Practice Theories in Social Inquiry Reports.* (In preparation).

36. We add this footnote by way of a personal postscript. The paper has been concerned with sharpening our appreciative understanding of probation officers through situating their approach to clients within a judicial and social work context. However, it will not have escaped notice that the evident preference for action accounts in the more serious cases may be congruent with particular interests within society. To think in terms of individual treatment is to supply a refracted explanation for a group that in reality constitutes a 'redundant domestic population'. The category 'seriousness' – in both its welfare and judicial senses – is directly attributable to the generating of problem populations by the class structure. And, as Spitzer reminds us, this applies as much to the actions of the individuals within these groups as to the definitions of deviancy employed. (See Steven Spitzer (1975), 'Towards a Marxian theory of deviance', *Social Problems,* 22 (5)).
Thus explaining behaviour in terms of 'action' and recommending 'treatment' to meet particular 'needs', may indeed be a euphemism for social coercion. This, of course, is the gist of the 'sociological' critique of social work, though to balance this a little, it is perhaps worth considering that there are clients who are 'fundamentally and irremediably socially incompetent', for whom 'need' is an unavoidably appropriate way of describing their circumstances. (See Michael Clarke (1976), 'The limits of radical social work', *British Journal of Social Work,* 6 (4) (1).

paper from our colleagues Derek Jehu, Herschel Prins and Martin Herbert. Accepted: 17.8.77.

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Themes and Continuities in Radical and Traditional Social Work

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SUMMARY

Traditional and radical social work are amongst the principal combatants in the paradigm-crisis that is alleged to characterise contemporary social work. In considering the way in which these two theoretical stances approach one of social work's central problems—the relationships between the person and society—it is argued that what is revealed is as much overlap as disagreement. This is in part through the subdued radicalism of a traditional approach which struggles to comprehend the effects of society on clients' lives, and in part because radicalism is incorporated into prevailing ways of thinking through having to answer the same questions as social work orthodoxy. It is because of this that Marxist social work is shown to be inevitably compromised, though this is not to deny the important contribution of radicalism in providing more satisfactory answers to crucial social work problems.

This paper attempts to examine traditional social work theory and its radical and Marxist alternatives. My intention has been a critical yet sympathetic appraisal of each, pointing not only to major rifts but also to significant overlaps which suggest a continuity in commitment and concern within which both might be united. I am, in fact, sceptical that radicalism represents the paradigmatic departure with orthodoxy that it is often alleged to be, and it is along these lines that I later criticise Corrigan and Leonard's attempt to articulate an identifiably Marxist social work. This is not to deny, though, radicalism's conceptual advance in theorising one of the core problems for social work, namely the connection between personal troubles and public issues, and I refer to this thoughout the paper.

The following brief discussion of how traditional and radical themes might be defined serves to outline the ideal–typical properties of each, rather than provide an all-encompassing discussion. For heurisitic purposes it necessarily glosses over the very real differences that exist within each of the two forms.

Contrary to a good deal of received wisdom, traditional social work is not irrevocably intra-psychic, swamped in a psychiatric deluge. It is marked by a consistent history of referring to factors external to the

individual—the situation or environment—and invites consideration of how these affect an individual's functioning. Nevertheless, it is the vagueness with which the environment is regarded and the failure to specify the social situation in terms of political and economic structures which a number of critics regard as the major defining feature, and at the same time inherent inadequacy, of traditional theorising.

Galper sees this conceptual shortcoming as far more important than the supposed weakness of the practice methods of traditionalism. Although it is a convention to regard the conservatism of social work as attributable to casework and individualised treatment, traditionalism is more than its methods. For example, the apparently progressive method of community work is no guarantee of radicalism, for as Galper and others[1] have argued, the community sociopathy of the inadequate locality shares too many questionable properties with the reactionary ideas of the psychologically deficient individual which it is intended to replace.

If traditionalism is not defined by its methods but more correctly in terms of how it conceptualises the relationship between the person and society, it is important to recognise that it does this under circumstances of ambiguity and uncertainty. In particular, there is an indecisiveness towards social criticism—that characteristic equivocation of reformist liberal thought. This is clearly demonstrated in the psycho-social writing of Florence Hollis and it is for this reason that I have used here work as a paradigm case, typifying a genre which has attempted to move beyond crude psychological reductionism.[2] In its—albeit vague—acknowledgement of the situation, her psycho-social approach represents a critical instance of traditionalism confronting its own contradictions, and in so doing revealing a train of thought which is, somewhat paradoxically, capable of being both conservative and radical.

As with traditionalism, radical social work possesses no clearly articulated and unitary paradigm, except that of being opposed to the conservatising impetus of orthodoxy. For the radical, traditional social work both in its preference for individualised casework and its failure to specify the structural origins of personal problems, has been fully, if unwittingly, incorporated into the state apparatus of social control. Hence notions of mental health are covert ideologies of adjustment to capitalism that are merely the scientifically presented equivalent of the Charity Organisation Society's pursuit of moral rectitude. Radical social work on the other hand, is the elimination of any form (casework) or content (sexism, racism) of practice which serves to endorse ruling class hegemony, and to this end it looks to the establishment of counter-systems that resist the dehumanisation of the capitalist social formation (Bailey and Brake[3]).

A distinction within radicalism requires some brief mention if only because of a tendency to use radical and Marxist interchangeably, when in

fact they represent rather different projects. Whereas Marxist social work is certainly radical, the reverse is not necessarily the case. Radical social work emerged from that cluster of sociological ideals associated with phenomenology, labelling theory and the new criminology. With its emphases on subjectivity and voluntarism, it lends weight to a critique which regards social work as engaged in the imposition of unwarranted moral and behavioural standards in a monolithic and totalitarian fashion which overrides the pluralism of a society marked by diversity rather than consensus.[4] Radical social work often suggests that practitioners should stop doing—that is to say, it advocates non-intervention—rather than offering a more positive or programmatic framework for action. Politically, radicalism leans towards libertarian socialism; philosophically it is idealist.

Marxist social work is anxious to proclaim its difference to the generically radical label applied to it; indeed in their advocacy of a Marxist social work practice Paul Corrigan and Peter Leonard seek to demonstrate the superiority of Marxism over the inadequacies of a theoretically unsound radicalism rather than against something hopelessly reactionary. How then do they theorise about the form that a Marxist social work would take? It is difficult to establish this from a textual inspection of their book, and the nearest I could find is unsatisfyingly vague, and reveals that recurring tendency to see Marxist social work not so much to do with practice *per se* (the title of the book notwithstanding) but with practice somehow made Marxist through the specific context of a Marxist *frame*. Thus they write that '[A] Marxist analysis should put social work practice in a much wider context of practice in that society. This context provides the basis for the most important aspect of Marxist theory for social workers, its capacity to relate the small scale practice to a much wider analysis' (Corrigan and Leonard[5]). This disjuncture between the theory of the one (Marxism) and the practice of the other (social work) runs throughout their project despite strenuous attempts at effecting the link; as I later argue, it is an elision which is less a question of oversight or intellectual shortcoming than it is of logic.

COMPARING THEORIES: A NOTE ON METHOD[6]

It is most important to emphasise that the focus in this discussion is with social work theory, and is not concerned with the form that either traditional or radical social work may take in practice, which is another, more empirical question. The charge might of course be that the analysis of ideas says little about social reality, and that an examination of how social work is done would be preferable to looking at the rhetoric of what is said. But a consideration of theory may in fact tell us a good deal about the

relationship between social work as ideology and the society of which it is a part, since in so doing there is the advantage of being able to discount the effect of practitioners in contaminating the essential qualities of social work theory. Most critiques of traditional social work, for example, assume an equivalence between what practitioners do and the conservative theories they are allegedly employing, whereas the relationship may be rather more tenuous. Going back to theory therefore provides us with the laboratory conditions in which ideas can be assessed as ideas rather than indirectly through how they appear in practice.

We require then some way of understanding this theory—'a theory of social work theory' which enables us to think about the circumstances which led a writer to think in this or that way, neglect one possible idea and develop another. Circumstances are important because ideas do not just emerge according to the internal dynamics of intellectual discourse but within the context of a certain social, economic and political climate.[7] For example, I hope to show that in the case of traditional social work, a consideration of these contexts in terms of contradictions and uncertainties can give us a rather different picture of that knowledge than if we were merely to read the surface of the text or accept the conventional wisdoms about traditionalism's irredeemably conservative nature.

In methodological terms an examination of theory must offer more than comparative quotations, for although these are necessary for illustrative purposes—and indeed I employ them for just this—on their own they stand for little and can lead to the charge of spurious selectivity. After all, given that most theories contain ambiguities and contradictions, other phrases could probably be cited to entirely refute what was allegedly revealed by the initial selection. Rather, we require a method which works though a theorist's writings and substantive propositions to reveal the assumptions upon which their work is founded. We need, in other words, to go beyond the text and place the theory in some sort of social, cultural or professional setting. This is not to suggest that the content of theories in social work reflects in some crude way the interests of dominant classes; rather it is helpful to think in terms of the manner in which ideas developed within social work resonate with the social and economic circumstances within which they were, and still are, operating.[8]

Since the person–society connection is the substantive focus of this discussion I also need to explain why this review of traditional and radical social work theory revolves around the way in which the two approaches deal with this relationship. For Siporin[9] the manner in which this might be accomplished should be the central debate in social work. He argues that an unresolved dualism between the person and society can no longer be maintained, pointing out that it is a fallacy to regard personality and social structure as somehow mutually exclusive concepts or targets for interven-

tion. Rather, both must be accorded equal weight in a model which should see the links as both reciprocal and dynamic.

Similarly, though from a more politically radical standpoint, we have already seen that Galper argues that social work is not so much conservative because it is wedded to the methodological axiom of casework, but rather by the inadequacy of how it approaches the environment, a weak concept which represents the mere surface of social existence. For Galper, the impact of the environment should be re-cast as the impact of capitalism on individuals, and the vagueness of 'person-in-situation' replaced with 'an integrated analysis of the psychic manifestations and the social roots of people's problems', together with an insistence on '... focussing on the particular problem that the client experiences'. He continues (and cautions) that '[r]adical casework must be of concrete service to individuals ... responsive to people's real needs' (Galper[10]). In so doing he stresses the necessary importance of the individual to radicalism, implying that neglect of this is to lose sight of that with which social work is rightfully concerned.

Whether it is radical or traditional, social work can overlook neither the person nor society, and to talk of the configuration between the individual and social structure is to speak within the rules of formation that lend the distinguishing characteristics and constraints to the social work discourse. The heritage of philanthropic humanism gave to social work the right to speak for the deviant, and Fabian social science legitimated the quest for the determining influences of the environment. These are the historically constituted rules that society lays down for social work to operate within[11] and to step outside them it can no longer be social work.

Both traditional and radical theorists are therefore engaged in the task of articulating the links and interdependencies between the individual and society, and in seeing how each accomplishes this it is possible to assess the degree to which there are similarities and differences between these two paradigms.

What I am suggesting then, is that there exists a relatively high degree of determinism over the limits and possibilities contained in the conceptual and practical category *social work*. In outlining the way in which radical social work is constrained in its endeavours to break out from this discourse, and how a certain reading of conventional approaches reveals the radical kernel of something hitherto regarded as irredeemably conservative, I want to point out that not only is traditional social work more radical that the various representations of it would suggest, but also that radical and Marxist approaches are more conventionally inclined than either their adherents, or their critics, allege. But such a reading is dependent on some consideration of the context in which this theory both emerges and is received.

DAVID WEBB

THE CONTEXT OF THEORY

I have already suggested that ideas, including social work ones, cannot be isolated from the context—or circumstances—in which they are produced. A number of commentators argue that this context is so specifically capitalist and that social work is so closely articulated with the preservation of class interests that the limits to what is permissible thinking are very highly circumscribed indeed. Because the historical mission of social work is to mediate between the casualities of capitalism and the society which blindly creates the conditions for social work problems, anything else that social work theory says is possible is simply fraudulent idealism. There is, in such a schema, no possible way in which social work theory can break new ground since it is determined by a logic of place, the position of which in the structure of class relations determines both practice and beliefs of the individuals concerned.[12] Social work is therefore hemmed-in as it struggles to offer newer, or better, or more comprehensive theories; it just cannot avoid the fact that its place is that of an integral functional component of capitalism. Thus Skenridge and Lennie imply a hopeless futility in social work pretending it can be anything other. than the hand-maiden of bourgeois ideology.

. . . production of social work theory, the ideologies through which social workers reflect their position as agents within a state apparatus, is not a function of the agent's subjective consciousness, but of the place these agents occupy in the social formation.[13]

Once we can establish the nature of social work—its pre-given determinate characteristics *vis-à-vis* the requirements of capitalism, then we lose the separateness of various theories or paradigms within social work. Instead of the concentration on the mere *content* of theories, we arrive at an emphasis on a form whose nature is determined by the function social work performs. Now if this is the case then it is indeed very bad news for radicals and Marxists since it forecloses on the possibility of ever being able to think in other than specifically determined categories. Although the determinist approach of those commentators who would deny that social work can step outside what it is structurally limited to being may have its weaknesses, not least of which is the mood of crushing pessimism it fosters, it does at least remind us that we cannot merely preface social work with any radical adjective and thereby *guarantee* a new theory.

However, it is important to appreciate that class hegemony is not necessarily automatic nor is it always too easily secured, and that just as economic and social relations are fraught with antagonisms, so too the ideals linked with that class may be marked by ambivalence and their own mental contradictions. A familiar example of this would be the way in

which the Charity Organisation Society become progressively more isolated as a vehicle for the bourgeois approach to poverty as the importance of state intervention became increasingly viewed as the only way in which the necessary social pre-conditions for capitalism could be secured. Although dubbed with the dismissive epithet 'Cringe or Starve' by working class recipients, who thereby conveyed their own particular rejection, it was by the middle and professional classes that the ideological and practical challenge to charitable philanthropy was mounted. The welfare state not only made legitimate the intervention of government in the economic and social fabric of society; it also made possible the break with a moral individualism which had hitherto dominated the approach to personal failure.[14]

Like its nineteenth century forbear, modern social work has also been close to the contradictions in the economic arrangements of capitalism. If it *is* indeed bourgeois ideology, then the extent to which social work is totally insulated from the manifest irrationalities of that system is perhaps less than for other components of the 'Ideological State Apparatus'. Just as bourgeois ideology equivocates between the competitive individualism of utilitarianism and the social intervention of corporatism,[15] so do the constituent elements of social work theory waver between the person and society. As Brown observes in a paper significantly titled 'A review of *casework* methods' (my italics): 'During the decade 1929 to 1939 social workers in Britain and the United States were largely preoccupied with problems of unemployment and financial insecurity resulting from the economic depression. . .'[16] In speaking for the people who constitute this problem, social work may not necessarily be representing them as the casualities of the specific social formation capitalism, but it may at least be suggesting that all is not well in society—its voice of criticism is subdued, but certainly not still.

Because of this, it would probably be unjust to indict conventional social work thinking for skirting the social to the extent that it reifies society to the point of total neglect, where intervention '. . . is directed wholly inward . . . (T)he attempt to change the world at its only remaining free point, namely man himself' (Lukacs[17]). Of course, critiques of traditionalism argue that this is precisely what it does do, though this grants a closure to the conventional model, which—as I have suggested—overlooks the very real economic and social contradictions within which the knowledge base was incubated. If this was so for early developments in Britain,[18] it was not less the case in the United States, where successive waves of immigration, urban poverty and cyclical unemployment found expression in (an admittedly tentative) acknowledgement that somehow society was an important source of personal troubles. Given their historical location, we should not expect those early theorists to have been fully fledged in their espousal of

structure, but amongst them there were writers who sometimes advanced considerably expanded models of the individual which reach well beyond the psyche; Mary Richmond, for example, urges in 1922 that '. . . family caseworkers should be making social discoveries as a by-product of successful casework. They should be bearing faithful witness to the need for social reforms whatever their daily work reveals the need.'[19] The psycho-social approach that exemplifies traditionalism is thus in its somewhat muted, and frequently (but not totally) reified recognition of the social, testament to the ambivalence held by bourgeois society towards the problem of its own social and economic formations, and the emerging recognition that state interference is necessary to manage the contradictions.

My reading of traditional social work texts is thus informed by the context within which they are produced, a context marked by a far from smooth progression in the forces and relations of production, nor at the level of ideology, in the comfortable supremacy of laissez-faire individualism. That, in the resulting inchoate representation of society, this could be taken as the 'quiet radicalism' of social work orthodoxy, may not therefore be too strong an assertion, despite what others have detailed as its profound conservatism.

FOUR DIMENSIONS OF THEORISING THE PERSON–SOCIETY CONNECTION

I have attempted to suggest that there is something more to traditional social work than 'meets the eye', and that equally radicalism is less of a theoretical break than its partisans would have us believe. It is in how these theories have approached the central social work problem of the person-in-situation that we may be able to adduce some of those signs which point to a degree of convergence between radicalism and traditionalism. Four separate dimensions of the individual-society relationship are identified and assessed in this section, though it should be remembered that this is an analytical and not an empirical distinction—the dimensions are not identified and discussed as such in the various texts to which I refer.

(i) *The contributing role of society to personal problems*

The consideration of social structure is conventionally taken as the *sine qua non* of radicalism. In attempting to de-particularise problems which present themselves to social workers as a sequence of discrete cases, and which are thereby susceptible to an individualisation which neatly side-steps any indictment of society, the radical social worker is looking to a means of more adequately grasping the totality of the client's life. Bailey and Brake exemplify this: 'Radical social work . . . is essentially understanding the

position of the oppressed in the context of the social and economic structure they live in.'[20] In this reference to oppression, and the location of personal troubles within the economic and social relations of capitalism, radical social work goes beyond vague talk of situations and refers to the specific role of capitalism in generating social problems.[21] The radical is not merely content with cook-book assemblies of social influences on behaviour but seeks to meet the call for politically significant conceptions of the social situation that reach beyond the surface of social existence implied in words like 'environment.'

Against this it is tempting to set a traditional social work which consistently and assiduously ignores the social. This is an image probably more apocryphal than true, and traditional writers are prepared, on occasions, to grant society a degree of quasi-causal significance in shaping personal troubles. As Hollis (admittedly rather circumspectly) puts it: '. . . to be understood, the person to be helped—or treated if you prefer—must be seen in the context of his interventions with the external world; and the segment of the external world with which he is in close interaction must also be understood. This may be his family or particular members of it, his social group, his educational milieu, his employment milieu or some other social system of which he is a part.'[22]

This may not, it is true, mark a profound shift in the direction of radicalism for one of social work's allegedly conservative thinkers, though Hollis's reference to systems of interdependencies and tensions marks something of an epistemological closing with the structural insistence of radicalism, despite substantive differences in content. In talking more openly and more specifically about the environment, traditional social work may thereby find itself able in turn to speak to radicalism.

(ii) *The capability of man to act back on society*

The critique of traditional social work theory has alleged that because of an inability to step outside the particular place it occupies within capitalism and confront the real nature of the environment, it has been forced to adopt a psychologically determinist model of man in the pursuit of a secure theoretical base from which it can operate with any confidence.[23] In bracketing off society, psychic determinism is seen to pathologise the client through suspending the possibility that what may appear as maladaptive behaviour is in fact intelligible, reasonable, and even has integrity, once we acknowledge that people actively engage with the world by interpreting their circumstances and acting accordingly.[24] This is the well rehearsed sociological insistence on moral pluralism that has lent to social work a sceptical relativism towards the status of any judgment about normality or pathology. This radicalism has also bequeathed a voluntarist insistence on man's capacity to act back on the world, however bizarre or anti-social it

may appear. It runs through what Philp calls the Hegelian heritage of social work, finding a shared resonance in radicalism and traditionalism alike. Thus the Latin American theorist Alfero is able to talk of a psycho-social project in which self realisation occurs through the practical engagement of the individual with the world:

In spite of the fact that reality conditions man, we conclude that he is capable of influencing and transforming this reality. Even under conditions of oppression, man is capable of seeking his own liberation.[25]

This dialectical sociality (to use the language of Frierian radicalism) is not entirely absent in more obviously orthodox approaches, even though these occupy a space marked more by the optimism of liberal individualism than by a concern with the overthrow of oppression. Like the spirit of man in Alfero's radicalism, traditionalism expresses a commitment to the autonomous individual who can use his reason to gain and secure freedom, as Hollis here demonstrates with some clarity:

It is assumed that man is not only acted upon but is capable of spontaneous activity; that he had some measure of control over his own fate both by adapting to and by changing his external realities . . . It is also assumed that adults can still change and develop towards greater self-realisation. The greater the client's active involvement in the change process, the greater his mastery of the interadaptation process is likely to be.[26]

(iii) *The pursuit of client autonomy*

Hollis is quite clear then, that in part at least, the limitations on people's autonomy and freedom may reside not so much in the psyche, but in the objective material world and the individual's place within it. Neither does she suggest that knowledge of this should be hidden from the client for fear that the awfulness of his social oppression may somehow overwhelm him. The goal of existential authenticity—which goes well beyond simple questions of social work merely making people happy—is demonstrated when Hollis writes that 'emphasis in work with the individual is placed upon the client's developing understanding of his situation, of significant others, and himself'.[27]

But a certain vagueness over the nature of the situation nevertheless remains, whereas radical theorists, and especially Marxists, are unequivocal in identifying the dehumanising system of capitalism in its full irrationality as the specific content of that situation. It is in combatting a domination imposed through a ruling ideology that radical social work serves the cause of individual autonomy. In defending alternative life styles, forms of sexuality, attitudes to work and so forth, radicalism champions pluralism against the monolith of bourgeois moral uniformity. Daphne Statham, for example, in a feminist call for a radical social work practice,

argues strongly for counter ideologies of gender and forms of family organisation which run in opposition to dominant expectations and practices: the object is clearly to affirm the individual's right to independence outside the structures and routines laid down by ideologies of sex, marriage and domesticity.[28]

Marxists, too, are committed to thinking of the autonomous person freed from the oppression of present social arrangements. Although by no means methodological individualists, Corrigan and Leonard lay considerable emphasis upon a Marxist tradition in which human felt-needs have been a significant focus of analysis. They refer approvingly to the French Marxist psychologist Lucien Seve, who talks in terms of '. . . the problems of human individuality . . . at the heart of Marxist science and of the construction of a classless society,'[29] and go on to assert that only through a socialist transformation will the conditions for what they call a 'truly human' practice be realised.[30]

It is this commitment to the individual which for Corrigan and Leonard gives Marxism an appropriate and legitimate place within the speech community of social work. Marxism can address the problems which are pre-given social work ones, and appear relevant to non-Marxists as well as to non-radical social workers. And in point of fact it may actually *be* relevant since, as we have seen, even traditional social work recognises the need of the individual to be freed from corroding social situations. Because of this Corrigan and Leonard lend to conventional social work a mode of thinking which is recognisable—and indeed may be intelligible as well—for in their Marxist penetration of social work they have also entered a pre-given discourse that has rules and organising principles to which they must subscribe if they are to successfully talk social work.

(iv) *The place of understanding and consciousness*

In the previous section there was a quotation from Hollis which suggested the importance she attaches to a client's awareness of situation as a pre-condition for both personal autonomy and the reconstitution of the environment. This is the pragmatist inheritance in which knowledge is vested with considerable capacity to change an individual's objective circumstances.

Significantly this inherent idealism also shapes the radical method of conscientisation, an approach which rests upon transformations in the individual's conceptualisation of the world which oppresses him: 'the development of critical consciousness by which the demystification of political structures and economic relations takes place, [enabling] a group and the individual within it to assert their own humanity and to confront dehumanisation systems' (Leonard[31]). Transforming the individual's subjective grasp of the world is therefore an important element in the radical

social work programme, with the insertion of a political understanding again marking the radicals' emphasis upon the specifics which traditional social work is regarded as leaving unsaid. But the continuity—the radicalisation of the tradition—is discernible, for once the principle of understanding of his situation is accepted—as it clearly is by Hollis—then there is no *a priori* reason why this process should halt at the point when political understandings of a situation are tackled.[32] It must be acknow-ledged that understandings—political or not—are processes of cognition rather than simple transferrals of information through didactic hectoring.[33] Conscientisation, rather than being some aberrant corruption of social work purity, shares with orthodoxy the principle of beginning where the client is. Hollis gives us the traditional guidelines here:

... the process of understanding begins with what the client see as his problem, then moves into understanding some aspects of the client himself and some aspect of the rest of the system within which he locates his trouble—and of the ways in which these facets interrelate, interact, transact and affect each other.[34]

And Leonard is informed by the same principled commitment not to impose authoritarian meanings on the client.

The development of critical consciousness cannot take place where the oppressed are treated as merely empty vessels to be filled with 'liberating' ideology: critical consciousness develops from the acknowledgment of the existing consciousness of the oppressed however fatalistic it may be, and from mutual dialogue between all those involved in the task of liberation.[35]

Now if there are resonances between this prescription for conscientisation and Hollis's more modest talk of understandings, then these are to be found in a common idealism, a humanist rejection of either psychic or material determinism, a philosophical anthropology of man's fundamental good and an ultimate belief in his volitional capabilities.

THE BEGINNING OF A NEW SOCIAL WORK?

Up to this point I have hinted, if somewhat obliquely, at the attempt by Marxist social work not only to break with traditionalism, but with the subjectivism and idealism of radical social work. I have also alluded to some of the problems in achieving such a departure, to which I now turn in more detail.

Though capable of being dismissed as political, Corrigan and Leonard's contribution is, in fact, founded upon a relatively straightforward principled moral imperative; if individual's problems can be ultimately traced to society, then that society must itself be transformed. In accomplishing this, reformism has proved compromised and bankrupt, and indeed will always be so, given the chimerical nature of redistribution.

Both ethically and strategically, Marxism offers social work the promise of something more 'than the inadequacy of traditional . . . theory and practice'.[36] Ethically this may be the case but a Marxist strategy implies putting social work in an unquestionably oppositional relationship to the bourgeois state, and this involves certain difficulties. In particular there is the problem of how far social work is determined by the relationship it has to other key social institutions and from which it cannot break free. As Skenridge and Lennie point out:

a practice based on historical materialism would place its agent in an objectively different position *vis-à-vis* the state (that is working against rather than for the state's function of unity) and in this sense it could be argued, they would no longer be occupying the place of social worker in so far as they were engaged in this practice.[37]

Corrigan and Leonard seem to be aware of this caution, and do want to demonstrate the merit of a Marxist perspective in practice terms. They do this by taking a number of instances and sensitising the reader to the complexity of the situation facing the client. Like liberal sociologists they attempt to fill out the social component to the dominant psycho-social paradigm of social work. Hence as a more comprehensive account of the totality of human experience, Corrigan and Leonard's is a welcome contribution. Their dialectical sociality goes beyond crude social influences on behaviour and they allow for a human reflexivity and intentionality which is grounded in the everyday material experiences of living in a class society. The practice recommendation here is for sensitivity to the complexity of the social situation, though it also means that this approach can readily be incorporated into mainstream social work, especially now that the system model has given theoretical legitimacy to a broader range of interventions. For example, how far would Corrigan and Leonard's conclusion to their section on family conflicts be regarded as unexceptional, even to conventional social workers, when they write that '. . . the social worker should, then, start to work not simply with the daughter but the whole family, helping them to understand the tremendous contradictory pressures placed upon them by the economic structures of capitalist society.'[38]

Such a modest conclusion could be seen as no more than equipping us with a full appreciation of the person—that very centrepiece of traditional social work—and as much an affirmation of traditional commitments as marking any radical departures. This is not a specifically Marxist break, and represents little more than the kind of understanding of biography and history that could be derived from Wright Mills' synthesis of pragmatism and Weberian Sociology. The Marxism to which they adhere has been imperceptively diluted by virtue of the very discourse into which they were

bound to enter once they even began to think in terms of the given category social work. There is the problem of what was earlier referred to—the attempt to preface the pre-given (bourgeois) practice of social work is inevitably flawed given the determinate nature of that activity. As it stands, the direction in which they point us is the manner in which a structural analysis can add to our empathetic understanding of say, the elderly, rather than how social work practice might remove the very reasons for the presence of this social problem.

Of course, given that the plight of the elderly is a product of the economic relations within capitalism,[39] it is unlikely that social work alone will have much purchase on the issue's successful resolution through the class struggle. Hence it is argued that only by closer links between social workers, their clients and the labour movement can this be accomplished. It is this that comprises the other element to Corrigan and Leonard's Marxist practice; it remains though an aspect of occupational militancy and of political action, and is external to the much more intimate arenas of practice which they discuss elsewhere in the book. The links between the two are, as we saw earlier, that the pursuit of the one (socialist transformation) will eradicate the other (personal troubles), but this is a sequence which is trapped within its own internal logic. It neglects to consider that what is eventually being discussed *is no longer social work*. Intent on making social work Marxist, the historical and structural limitations on that social work are simply being wished away.

It is this logical impossibility of attempting to unite the irreconcilable which suggests the greater degree of continuity between radical and traditional social work: radicals have been inclined to overlook the radical kernel of traditionalism, its tentative social critique and attempt to establish the creative potential of man. Equally traditionalists have tended to neglect the very real ways in which radical social work has spelled out the exact nature of those social arrangements which constitute an otherwise reified society, and the collective strategies open to individuals in confronting the constraints that society would seek to impose on clients' self-determination. Ultimately and somewhat paradoxically, the strength of radical (and Marxist) social work may be that it is *not* the dramatic shift that it is sometimes meant to be; rather the fact that it shares a psycho-social continuity with traditional social work may mean that its significance will emerge in being able to specify the person-society connection more satisfactorily than can the conceptual uncertainties of traditionalism.

Roger Sibeon for their helpful observations on earlier drafts of this paper. The staff group at Warwick University's Department of Applied Social Studies—to whom this was given as a seminar paper—also made a number of extremely welcome (and tolerant) comments.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Galper, J. (1975) *The Politics of Social Service*. Prentice Hall. Ch. 7. See also Rein, M. (1970) 'Social Work in Search of a Radical Profession', *Social Work*, **15,** 2.
2. In particular I have referred to Florence Hollis (1970) 'The psycho-social approach to the practice of casework', in Roberts, W. and Nee, R. H., *Theories of Social Casework*, Chicago University Press. For a recent clear statement by Hollis that the 'truly central theme of social work is both psychological and social', see Hollis, F. (1980) 'On revisiting social work', *Social Casework*, Jan.
3. Bailey, R. and Brake, M. (1973) 'Introduction: Social Work in the Welfare State', in Bailey, R. and Brake, M. (eds) *Radical Social Work*, Arnold.
4. See, for example, Milligan, D. (1973) 'Homosexuality: Sexual Needs and Social Problems', in Bailey and Brake, ibid.
5. Corrigan, P. and Leonard, P. (1978) *Social Work Practice under Capitalism: A Marxist Approach*, Macmillan, p. 8.
6. Two particular sources have provided me with some general ideas about how to 'read' theory as more than a surface representation of ideas: Eagleton, T. (1976) *Marxism and Literary Criticism*, Methuen and Glucksman, M. (1974) 'The Structuralism of Levi-Strauss and Althusser', in Rex, J. (ed.) *Approaches to Sociology*, Routledge and Kegan Paul.
7. This is the familiar 'materialist' approach to knowledge, and is still best summed up—despite being something of a cliche—by quoting from Marx: 'In the social production of their life, men enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will, relations of production which correspond to a definite stage of development of their material productive forces. The sum total of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which rises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production of material life conditions the social, political and intellectual life process in general. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness'. Marx, K. (1968) 'Preface to a contribution to the critique of political economy', in Marx, K. and Engels, F., *Selected Works*, Laurence and Wishart, p. 181.
8. This grants to ideas a measure of independence from the determining requirements of class domination, and allows for the emergence of a critical reflection on society. At the same time, it is important to ask why it is that some of these ideas, rather than others, become adopted by established institutions. Weber's idea of *elective affinity* has much to commend it in trying to understand the link between 'ideas' and 'interests'. See Weber, Max, 'The social psychology of the world religion' in Gerth, H. H. and Wright Mills, C. (1947) *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, Routledge, pp. 284–5.
9. Siporin, Max (1978) 'Practice Theory and Vested Interests', *Soc. Serv. Rev.* September.
10. Galper (1975) op. cit., p. 209.
11. Some of these ideas I have taken from Mark Philp's important paper on social work knowledge. Philp, Mark (1979) 'Notes on the form of knowledge in social work', *Sociological Rev.* **27,** 1.
12. Such are the arguments to be found in the 'most determinist' discussion of social work I have come across: Skenridge, P. and Lennie, I. (1978) 'Social work: the wolf in sheep's clothing', *Arena*, **51.** I am grateful to Pauline Hardiker for bringing this Australian paper to my attention, as well as the reply by Watts, R. (1979) 'Two Bo-Peep amongst the sheep: A comment on "Wolf in sheep's clothing"'. *Arena*, **52.**
13. Skenridge and Lennie (1978) op. cit., p. 91.

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14. Stedman-Jones, G. (1971) *Outcast London*, Oxford University Press, contains what is probably the most penetrating discussion of the COS and its role of moral imperialism.
15. A useful introduction to the links between the stages of capitalism and the nature of state intervention can be found in Jessop, R. (1978) 'Capitalism and Democracy: The Best Possible Political Shell', in Littlejohn, G., Smart, B., Wakeford, J., Yuval-Davies, N. (eds) *Power and the State*, Croom Helm, especially pp. 21–22.
16. Brown, M.A.G. (1966) 'A review of casework methods', in Younghusband, E., *New Developments in Casework*, Allen and Unwin, p. 18.
17. Lukacs, G. (1971) *History and Class Consciousness*, Merlin Press, p. 88.
18. See, for example, Lees, R. (1971) 'Social Work 1925–50: The case for a reappraisal', *Br. J. Soc. Wk.*, 1, 4.
19. Richmond, M. (1922) *What is Casework?*, Russell Sage, p. 225.
20. Bailey and Brake (1973), op. cit.
21. See also the 'Marxist' discussion by Keefe on Empathy as both a political and practice skill. He argues that because '. . . contradictions, changes and stresses in the economic structure of society are reflected in the lives and psyches of clients, the full development of empathetic skill demands an elaboration of the worker's understanding of this structure and its pervasive impact on the life of the individual.' Keefe, T. (1978) 'The economic context of empathy', *Social Work*, November.
22. Hollis (1970) op. cit., pp. 35–36.
23. Amongst which the most vitriolic is Cannan, C. (1972) 'Social Workers: training and professionalism', in Pateman, T. (ed.) *Counter-Course*, Penguin.
24. See the discussion in Pearson, G. (1975) *The Deviant Imagination*, Macmillan, particularly Ch. 3.
25. Alfero, L. A. (1973) 'Conscientisation' in *New Themes in Social Work Education: Proceedings of the XVI International Congress of Schools of Social Work*. International Association of Schools of Social Work, p. 80.
26. Hollis (1970) op. cit., p. 38.
27. Ibid, p. 33.
28. Statham, D. (1978) *Radicals in Social Work*, Routledge and Kegan Paul.
29. Seve, L. (1979) *Marxism and the Theory of Human Personality*, Laurence and Wishart, p. 56.
30. Corrigan and Leonard (1978) op. cit., p. 141.
31. See Leonard, P. (1973) 'Towards a paradigm for radical practice', in Bailey and Brake, op. cit., p. 60. His specific debt to both phenomenology and critical structural analysis can be traced in an earlier paper (1972) 'Explanation and education in social work', *Br. J. Soc. Wk.*, 5, 3.
32. Those opposed to conscientisation, on the grounds that it is political indoctrination, would seek to maintain an illusory distinction between 'politics' and 'social work'. See as an example of this Tilley, N. (1977) 'No Marx for clients', *Comm. Care*, 2 March.
33. A useful distinction brought to my notice by Bernard Davies. See Davies, B. (1977) 'Paulo Friere's concept of learning', unpublished paper, University of Warwick Department of Applied Social Studies. See also Davies, B. (forthcoming) 'Towards a "Personalist" Framework for "Radical" Social Work Education' in Bailey, R. and Lee, P. (eds) *Theory and Practice in Social Work*, Blackwell. In this paper Davies looks at some of the ways in which Paulo Friere 'endorses' a number of principles found in the 'conventional' approach of Carl Rogers. Davies, too, is intrigued by 'themes and continuities'.
34. Hollis (1970) op. cit., p. 47.
35. Leonard (1973) op. cit., p. 54.
36. Corrigan and Leonard (1978) op. cit., p. 9.
37. Skenridge and Lennie (1976) op. cit., p. 91.
38. Corrigan and Leonard (1978) op. cit., p. 29.
39. There is evidence to suggest that Corrigan and Leonard are right on this point; see Green, B. (1979) 'Internal Colonialism vs. Elderly: Renewal and Critique for Gerontological Theory, *Berkeley J. Sociol.*, 23.

A FORGOTTEN RADICAL

Dennis Chapman and the New Criminology in Britain

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IN 1968 a book appeared from a British sociologist offering a sustained critique of " establishment " criminology. It adopted an uncompromising stand about the ideological underpinnings of a criminology which was more concerned to reform criminals than understand crime, and it attempted to describe what were said to be the close links between class interests and juridical control exerted over the less powerful. It was not explicitly Marxist, though the direction of its analysis shared many similarities with what has subsequently appeared within that sub-discipline known as " the political economy of law and crime ". The book was Dennis Chapman's *Sociology and the Stereotype of the Criminal*. It probably raises only a faint glimmer of recollection, but its powerfully critical thrust puts it well to the " Left " of what then, in the late 1960s, stood as radical British criminology. Whereas the compromised and reformist weaknesses of the new deviancy are now acknowledged (*e.g.* Taylor, Walton and Young, 1975), Chapman's book stands the test of time far better; his structural analysis of the links between economy, crime and law anticipate many elements now deemed to be the *sine qua non* of a revitalised (*i.e.* Marxist) criminology. Thus, in summarising his own thesis, he condensed much of what later emerged in a " new wave " deviancy which never acknowledged one of its progenitors: " Much of this social control derives from the organs of political power and is often the arbitrary imposition of the interests of groups with power, or of broad social classes, on the population as a whole or on other groups or classes. This process is masked by the substantial identity of those with social, political, economic and religious power, and control of the ideology through education, religious teaching and the means of mass communication ". (Chapman, 1968, p. 242.)

Sociology and the Stereotype of the Criminal brought together the ideas which Chapman had been sketching out and developing over the previous five years in his lectures at Liverpool University. It appeared at about the same time as the emergence of the National Deviancy Conference; as a contribution to a new, more radical and less correctionally hide-bound British criminology it was totally eclipsed by the dominance which the NDC came to exert over the " new criminology ". To judge from the sparse references to Chapman's book by later radical writers,[1] its impact upon them was apparently slight and it is accorded no significant place in the " official " histories of recent British criminology. (Cohen, 1974; Wiles, 1976; Downes, 1978; Taylor, Walton and Young, 1975.) Ironically, the reason for his marginal position in these radical departures may be the very fact of his thorough-going

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[1] The only ones I have come across are Taylor, Walton and Young, 1973, p. 36; 1975, p. 67; Box, 1971, pp. 62–63; Fitzgerald, 1977, p. 31.

rejection of the whole enterprise called " criminology ". Whereas the new deviancy theorists clearly accepted that there was indeed such a thing as deviancy, Chapman was not so sure. One of the thrusts of his book is seriously to question the ontological status of crime and deviancy independently of social definitions, and in so doing to expose the activities of the powerful as behaviourally (though not socially) identical to those for which the less influential were censured. Chapman accordingly regarded any sociology which concentrated on the " underdog " as fundamentally misplaced; since this was precisely what " hip " criminology was doing towards the end of the sixties, his contribution to the debate seemed of little direct relevance. There appears then to have been no direct association between Chapman's radical break with criminology and the more assertive but theoretically less adequate approach adopted by the NDC.

There is substantial agreement amongst commentators (Cohen, 1974; Downes, 1978; Wiles, 1976) that radical British criminology emerged as an alternative to " . . . the arid criminological conferences of the Institute of Criminology at Cambridge " (NDC, 1980, p. viii). Initially under the strong influence of American labelling theory, the umbrella organisation for these sociologists—the National Deviancy Conference—enabled the new criminology to depart from an orthodoxy contaminated by state sponsorship. The NDC was both a cultural and intellectual movement, as is acknowledged by its members (Cohen, 1974; Wiles, 1976). An atmosphere of moral pluralism and relativism, and the spontaneous activism of the new Left, were receptive to the intellectual break with traditional criminology made by writers like " the enchanted triumvirate of Matza, Becker and Lemert " (Ditton, 1979, p. 4). Lemert, especially, captured it well in what was to become a catchphrase of the new deviancy, with his inversion of the axiom of orthodox criminology, namely that crime leads to social control. From henceforth the theory that " social control leads to crime " characterised all work in the area of crime and deviancy. (Bottoms, 1978; Ditton, 1979.) But emerging intellectual movements, asserting their independence and autonomy, undoubtedly need to dramatise, sometimes to the point of caricature, the differences between the established and the new. The NDC, it is clear, was no exception to this (Cohen, 1974). It may be a necessary step in establishing the new paradigm, but it results also in setting limits on what is acceptable within the new discourse. It is likely that this is precisely what the " counterinstitutional hegemony " of the NDC did to Chapman's contribution to the debate with criminological traditionalism. That the NDC could not apparently accept the thesis advanced in *Sociology and the Stereotype of the Criminal* serves as a reminder that radical knowledge is as relative and contingent as that of the conventional sociology which it periodically criticises (*cf.* Gouldner, 1971).

The institutional and intellectual pre-conditions for " overlooking " Chapman's book were therefore all present; he was not engaged in a debate with Cambridge Institute postivism, nor was his thesis readily assimilated into the language of labelling theory. His work certainly emerged out of a sense of inadequacy with the sorts of questions asked by orthodox criminology.

Like that of the NDC it was marked by that " problem-shift "which makes " normal " knowledge and ways of thinking appear increasingly redundant, though the setting within which these conflicting perspectives were worked out was not Cambridge but the social science department at Liverpool University. Under the influence of John Mays this had established a secure and extensive reputation during the 1950s for ecological criminology. A string of descriptive studies of working-class " under-life " (Mays, 1954, 1959, 1964; Kerr, 1958; Lowson, 1970) had taken as their point of departure a variant of sub-cultural theory in which the specific " deviant " properties of working-class culture were identified as the source of delinquency. Rule-breaking was seen as endemic and " normal " in these working-class enclosures and detached from what happened elsewhere in society. It was, though, an approach which, in stressing " culture " rather than individuals, at least broke with the clinical psychopathology which had so extensively infiltrated criminology (Downes, 1978).

Nevertheless, these studies tended to represent the working-class community as a kind of bizarre enclave of anthropologically interesting characteristics, so contributing to received wisdom about the close association between crime and the working class. From his own knowledge of middle-class business and professional life Chapman was well aware of the greater complexity of the problem. He argued that the studies did little more than reproduce in sociological form the same vicarious " slumming " that lay behind the settlement movement with which the department of social science had been so closely involved since the turn of the century (Chapman, 1968, p. 244). Instead of investigating the darker social corners of Liverpool, Chapman looked more systematically at the criminality of his own class (and, we suspect, his own acquaintances)—the fiddles, bending of perks, the use of privacy to screen deviancy and the monopolising of the control apparatus generally. In so doing, his objective was to correct the ideological intrusion which he regarded as pervading the work carried out by observers of working-class life (Chapman, 1968, p. 50).

Based in Liverpool, Chapman was without institutional connections with those universities where the new deviancy theorists were teaching or researching. The style in which he wrote increased his remoteness and excluded him from the " speech community " within which the invisible college of the NDC operated. His approach owed little, if anything, to the then prevalent social reaction perspective. Unlike labelling theory, which shared with its positivist rival a concern with the (mis)management of deviancy, Chapman's criminology looked from the very outset to the nature of control, in order better to " . . . account for the identification of certain behaviours for disapproval and certain persons for punishment " (Chapman, 1968, p. 240).

Institutional location and theoretical uniqueness may have contributed to Chapman's relegation to the periphery of British criminology in the last years of the 1960s, though biographical factors probably played a part also. The spirit of anti-utilitarianism and expressive hedonism which took the new deviancy into its studies of " nuts, sluts and perverts " (Liazos, 1972) was not relevant to someone whose age (then in his mid-fifties) precluded

" hanging around " with marijuana users, industrial saboteurs, hippies or political revolutionaries. The new deviancy embraced the criminial, the outcast; the old criminology took its side with the state. Chapman could do neither, though it did mean he was not " corrupted " by the voyeuristic " zoo-keeping " tendencies with which an increasingly " Marxist " Jock Young charged the burgeoning new discipline in its preoccupation with " freaks " of various kinds. (Young, 1975.) It was marginality which lent to Chapman's approach a certain " sociological impertinence "; students were introduced to his (regrettably unpublished) research on prostitution, which was not concerned with their childhood experiences, personality profiles or argot, but with the geographical (and, by inference, social) origins of their clients. These were identified through tracing the number plates of vehicles observed in the " red light " district of Liverpool—an approach not without its methodological difficulties, but nonetheless imaginative as an attempt to break away from what was then an almost exclusive concern with the weak and powerless. (See also briefly Chapman, 1968, p. 43.)

Sociology and the Stereotype of the Criminal was an attempt to do what radical and Marxist criminologists have pursued since their self-proclaimed departure from orthodoxy, namely to analyse the close connection between society and crime and deviancy. Chapman accomplishes this in a number of ways: describing the discrimination with which the classes are treated over rule infraction by studying the typifications held by the police and judiciary; examining the systematic way in which the powerful avoid criminal sanctions and the highly relative way in which behaviour is judicially identified as criminal; the role of " rehabilitation ", which he regards as largely directed to working-class rule-breakers who are consequently deemed to constitute the sum total of " the criminal population ".

These are the substantive areas which Chapman examines, and his findings are interesting; but, by adopting a comparative approach to class differences in criminal processing which is derived from newspaper reports, his methodology is open to criticism for its " socially produced " nature.[2] I do not want to enter into a debate about the methodology which Chapman employed; given the absence of other source material and the minimal funds at his disposal, it was an imaginative (and well executed) " unobtrusive measure ". More interesting, though, is the theoretical and epistemological departure which the book represented. Most significant, perhaps, is his questioning of the whole criminological enterprise which he sees as nothing other than a front for correctionalist social engineering. As Chapman rather nicely puts it, " sociology has simply added its voice to the cry of ' stop thief ' " (Chapman, 1968, p. 27), and he directs his book, with a characteristic blend of cynicism and sarcasm, to reforming not criminals but rather criminologists (Chapman, 1968, p. 96). Through insisting on " ceasing to concentrate . . . attention on the ' criminal ' of the popular stereotype, and look at society as a whole " (Chapman, 1968, p. 91), Chapman is making

[2] Interestingly, the same " method " is adopted in a recent " radical " book on imprisonment (Fitzgerald, 1977), where differential sentencing is examined in a way reminiscent of Chapman's approach.

theoretical, methodological and political points. He emphasises that an object of inquiry must be created in theory before it can be researched (p. 240) in order to avoid operating within pre-given administrative categories of, say, crime. Today this is a commonplace sociological maxim, but then it was a significant departure from an empiricist fact-gathering tradition.

Politically, Chapman was led into exposé sociology, and his book is amongst the earliest British attempts at documenting the way in which the bourgeoisie break their own rules and in so doing lay bare the true nature of civil society (*cf.* Young, 1976, p. 17). At the same time, though, Chapman is concerned with more than moral outrage, a quality which Taylor, Walton and Young view as the defining feature of this demasking (Taylor, Walton and Young, 1975). He regards the systematic obfuscation of the crimes of the powerful and the emphasis on working-class criminality as an essential means of class control, arguing that " the identification of the criminal classes and its social ostracism permits the reduction of social class hostility that could otherwise be directed towards those with status, power, reward and prosperity " (Chapman, 1968, p. 4). Chapman is neither surprised nor outraged at such goings-on, since he employs a class, rather than a pluralist model of society. The functionalism which he adopts as his over-arching methodology (Chapman, 1968, p. 1) is always harnessed to the query " functional for whom? ", though given the (admittedly implicit and theoretically under-developed) class analysis from which he begins it is not altogether surprising that this question has something of a rhetorical flavour about it.

Chapman is clearly not bound by a Durkheimian notion of crime operating in a system-maintaining way to define moral boundaries; neither is a reified society the reference point for this functionalism. In a comment that " . . . central to the writers' approach is the notion of crime as part of the conflict situation; a thesis antipathetic to the universalistic concept of Durkheim " (Chapman, 1968, p. 240), he reveals the way in which functionalism can offer a liberating model for analysing the links between institutions without necessarily falling into the conservatism of a Parsonian approach. All the same, Chapman is indebted to Durkheim since, in asserting not the abnormality of crime but its inherently societal quality, Chapman breaks through the conventions about the " pathological " nature of the phenomenon. Social arrangements, rather than personal qualities or subcultures, are firmly placed at the centre of his causal model. These are what he refers to as the " normal workings " of a society that " selects out " individuals for the specific purpose of controlling working-class delinquency, whilst at the same time systematically permitting the criminality of those with the economic and social power to divert attention and censure away from their own infractions. Thus he writes that " the intention of this discussion is to call attention to the causal role of the police, of the courts in the designation of criminals, that the process is selective in that the poor and illiterate are more likely to be thus designated than the well-to-do and well educated " (Chapman, 1968, p. 151). Chapman therefore pursues an extreme *relativism* to what constitute the personal attributes of criminality, alongside a structural *determinism* over the origins of crime. Thus he mocks those who would argue

that criminality is the result of physiology as well as advocates of criminological naturalism when he writes: " The fundamental difficulty of (conventional) theories . . . is the assumption implicit in them that when the number of criminals changes through legislation, or through changes in retail distribution, like the opening of a supermarket, such changes will be accompanied by changes in the EEG patterns . . . of certain persons." (Chapman, 1968, p. 47.)

Repeatedly Chapman refers to the crime-producing nature of society. In discussing so-called " criminal areas " he attempts to articulate a provisional political economy of the city, arguing that " delinquent areas were consciously and systematically created for profit by wealthy middle class property owners with the assistance of building societies and insurance companies during which the law was broken with impunity " (Chapman, 1968, p. 43). Far from being an aggregation of people with disabling personal qualities, these " dreadful enclosures " (to use Damar's later (1974) graphic phrase) themselves created the pre-conditions for what criminologists may otherwise have been tempted to describe as " the culture of poverty ". As he sardonically observes, " it does not appear to have occurred to the authors . . . that working class culture which they purport to describe could be adaptive to the social and economic conditions in which the working class live ". (Chapman, 1968, p. 49.) Once again there is the recurring theme of social control as the cornerstone of a criminology which must be based on an analysis of class relationships if the phenomenon of crime is to be accurately represented, rather than distorted, by social science. Chapman is doing more than pointing to the bias in the criminal justice system. Certainly he documents this through the workings of the police and courts, and he attracted favourable comments from otherwise hostile reviewers for apparently pointing to the need for reform. (Sparks, 1968; Willett, 1969.) He is *not*, however, referring to an " otherwise just " system, nor was he concerned with a " bad-apple " model of isolated instances of corruption or administrative error; because of the linkages between law and class interests, he already suggests in embryonic form what Taylor, Walton and Young were later to identify as the fundamental properties of a radical criminology: " a patterned or structural view of ruling class deviancy ". (Taylor, Walton and Young, 1975, p. 32.)

Chapman was able to approach "crimes of the powerful" because he recognised, in an exceptionally early piece of sociological self-awareness, that " criminologists . . . identify themselves with the ideology of their own social stratum ", and because of this " they devote their studies exclusively . . . at the perfecting of existing institutions of detection, sentencing and punishment or reform " (Chapman, 1968, p. 98). Their vision is shortened through accepting " the thesis that crime is bad, that society could function without crime, and that crime is a special category of behaviour with special discoverable causes " (Chapman, 1968, p. 3). And he also correctly notes—in one of the few passages from his book quoted by radical criminologists (*cf.* Taylor, Walton and Young, 1973, p. 36)—that " there are considerable professional costs involved to the sociologist in breaking with this set of

correctionalist parameters in pursuit of an analysis of the sociological *phenomenon* (rather than social *problem*) of crime. The penalties are: to be isolated from the mainstream of professional activity, to be denied resources for research, and to be denied official patronage with its rewards in material and status ". (Chapman, 1968, p. 23.)

Chapman's more expanded vision of criminological enquiry takes him off to examine " identical behaviours only one of which is subject to disapproval and accordingly only certain persons for punishment ". (Chapman, 1968, p. 240.) If, in other words, " criminal " activity (*i.e.* independent of sanctions) can be held constant, we learn a lot about the social creation of " the criminal " through an analysis of differential reactions, if indeed there are any. And such an approach allows us to look at activities which, although not, for example, subject to the criminal sanction of " theft ", can nevertheless be regarded in " scientific " or operational terms as " the transfer of goods or rights from one person to another without the former's full knowledge and consent " (Chapman, 1968, p. 85). Chapman does not atheistically hold to a stance which regards behaviour as " criminal " or " deviant " only if it happens to have been subject to official sanction, though clearly the social reaction *is* of central importance to a theory which rests upon a differential processing model. This is clearly illustrated, for example, in his chapter on the social meaning of imprisonment. However, like many subsequent writers he equivocates over the extent to which deviancy is a quality of the act or of the reaction to it, and he presages a later debate in the following way: " The nature of criminal and delinquent behaviour may be regarded in terms of the action itself, the consequences of the action, and the degree of approval or disapproval excited by knowledge of the act in different persons or groups of persons and in different institutions ". (Chapman, 1968, p. 167.) Significantly—and this really is the whole core of his substantive analysis, as opposed to his embryo " sociology of knowledge " critique of criminology—it is to the source of the censure of " criminal " that Chapman constantly returns in emphasising that it has no pre-given ontological status, and he refers quite unequivocally to the way in which these definitions are framed and enforced by those with economic, social, political and moral power. (Chapman, 1968, p. 242.)

Chapman's anticipation of subsequent developments in radical criminology is again here quite marked. Almost a decade after the appearance of *Sociology and the Stereotype of the Criminal*, Sumner virtually (but unknowingly) paraphrases the thrust of Chapman's analysis. Sumner is here discussing what an authentic Marxist criminology might look like, arguing that it is the censure of criminality which should be the object of inquiry: " Different social practices are censured, formally or informally at different times in history, and within the same society the same may not be equally censured, depending on factors such as the class of the person, his age, sex, neighbourhood of arrest, etc. " (Sumner, 1976, p. 169.) It was, of course, precisely these variables which Chapman attempted to identify, though he did so by relying upon a provisional empirical verification rather than by the incantation of theoretical formulae.

At the time *Sociology and the Stereotype of the Criminal* appeared, criminology was still largely obsessed with a paradigm which paid more attention to " findings " than to theories. It is unremarkable, then, that it was Chapman's methodology (of using newspaper reports) which attracted most comment from those reviewing his work. Given that his " theory " relies upon a " class analysis " (albeit an ahistorical and under-developed one), then perhaps it is not surprising that his book was read as an excursion into politics. Two reviewers, in particular, struggled to unravel what they obviously regarded as the unwarranted blending of the ethical dualism between " facts " and " values ". Richard Sparks agreed that " There is much which is interesting and illuminating in this line of theory ", but continued with the caution " provided it is not taken too far, which alas is just where Chapman pushes it " (Sparks, 1968). And, of course, where Chapman does push it is straight into that uncomfortable space which labelling theory took so long to occupy, namely the political economy of the censure which comprises " the label ", a departure which reduced another reviewer—Willett—to the heavy sarcasm of outraged amazement that anyone could utter in the same breath words like " law " and " class interests ". In a somewhat hysterical review he caricatured Chapman's thesis: " Criminals are depicted as deprived and under-privileged scapegoats for a guilt ridden and priggish establishment, most of whom are on the fiddle as well "; and he ended his observations with the revealing comment that " . . . what it has to say is as dated as the archaic term ' working class ' " (Willett, 1969).

But Chapman was not only criticised by the criminological establishment for daring to challenge the liberal and reformist orthodoxy of the time; he was also mis-read by otherwise sympathetic reviewers as an interactionist and then judged to have failed on criteria to which he owed little allegiance. His approach was crammed into this epistemology (*cf.* Messinger, 1970) and he was regarded as " an unwitting follower of a new orthodoxy " (Rock, 1968), a somewhat inaccurate comment when he was endeavouring to address the question of " primary " deviance that social reaction so neatly " bracketed ". " Controlology " may have been recently coined by Jason Ditton (1979) to take the social reaction perspective beyond the critique of Taylor, Walton and Young and into the criminological nirvana of how crime is " produced "; but it was a point reached by Dennis Chapman something like a decade earlier precisely *because* he failed to cite the people reviewers said he should. Ironically this omission of Becker, Lemert, Cicourel *et al.* freed Chapman from the subjectivism which recent commentators have regarded as the major hindrance to a fully developed social theory of crime (Taylor, Walton and Young, 1973).

In terms of the recognition it received, *Sociology and the Stereotype of the Criminal* therefore occupied an intellectual no-man's land between conventional, traditional criminology and the New Deviancy that was so stridently asserting its radicalism. For the one, Chapman's book was too " political "; for the other it was unsufficiently immersed in an American heritage of social reaction perspectives within which all work " had ", as it were, to fall. But Chapman's contribution has to be seen as an exception to the eastwards

movement of criminological ideas across the Atlantic noted by Young. " It is to American deviancy theory of the 1960s that we owe the first concerted attempts to demolish the acceptable paradigm in which crime and social intransigence had been framed throughout the century " (Young, 1976, p. 11). It emerged, as I have tried to show, from a somewhat quirky and insular shift in knowledge, more correct in content than " correct " in form.[3]

Downes is surely correct in saying recently that " as it evolved, criminology paid little attention to how and why the criminal sanction came to be involved against certain kinds of behaviour and not others, or against certain individuals and not others who engaged in similar infractions " (Downes 1979); but in so writing he is also closely paraphrasing the very words that Dennis Chapman used a decade earlier to describe the work which he had attempted in his book. Downes goes on to identify three particular contributions which provided a " more inclusive deviancy framework for the study of crime and delinquency " by answering those questions about the criminal sanction; namely *The New Criminology* (Taylor, Walton and Young, 1973), *Critical Criminology* (Taylor, Walton and Young, 1975) and *Crimes of the Powerful* (Pearce, 1976). All of these, it is suggested, mark the point at which radical criminology departs from a liberal sociology of deviance. But Chapman had already sketched out a " more inclusive theory " before these books appeared, perhaps because, unlike those authors, he had not been diverted by that " liberal sociology of deviance ". This emerging Marxist criminology to which Downes refers was obviously little influenced by Chapman's attack on orthodoxy; his style and language share nothing with the discourse of European Marxism that so dramatically changed the nature of British sociology, and he retains a commitment to " science " and " empiricism " that was irredeemably outré by the seventies.

Chapman's book, which is idiosyncratic in style, shot through with citational blanks and theoretically heterodox, just did not relate to the particular stage through which criminology was passing in the late 1960s. His " labelling theory " was too little, his " Marxism " (such as it was) too early. But despite being something of a homespun amalgam of both these " paradigms ", nevertheless in theoretical method, object of enquiry and critique of correctionalism, it is surely an early instance of radical British criminology. Rock's comments on the erratic, disorganised and oblique nature of the history of criminology could have been tailor-made to account for the absence of Chapman in the " officially recorded " developments of that subject: " Such innovations have usually swept in and out of criminology, leaving confusion in their train. They have not always been steeped in criminology . . . . They have not always phrased their analysis in a style that can be grafted on to the tradition . . . . They have furnished commentaries which are unread, arguments which are unanswered and analysis which is unused ". (Rock, 1979, pp. 54–55.)

[3] Stephen Cole talks of the way in which the intellectual organisation of the study of deviancy in the United States is also shaped by various " extra-scientific " factors: . . . " the acceptance or rejection of a theory is . . . dependent on the way the theory fits in with the other interests of the community of scientists . . . " (Cole, 1975, p. 212).

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MORE ON GENDER AND JUSTICE:
GIRL OFFENDERS ON SUPERVISION*

DAVID WEBB

Abstract   This article discusses the findings from a survey of 14–16 year olds made subject to a supervision order in 1978. The social enquiry reports and case files of 241 girls and 971 boys reveal a number of noticeable differences between the sexes in the imposition of this particular sentence. Girls are made subject to an order for less serious offences than committed by boys, after having been involved in fewer previous misdemeanours and for having committed fewer current offences. Taken together, the data would appear to point to a degree of discrimination in the administration of juvenile justice.

This pattern is set within the contexts of the supervision order being a disposal of wide and often unspecified remit and can thereby be readily interpreted by both sentencers and social workers or probation officers as extending general superintendence to wayward youngsters. Because troublesome girls are viewed as exceptional delinquents, they are vulnerable to a greater degree of control and regulation 'for their own good' than are boys. Whilst ideas of welfare that are enshrined in legislation directed at young offenders have a benign objective, an emphasis upon 'needs' can be variously interpreted meaning that everyday typifications become expressed in the penological regulation of delinquent girls.

Introduction

THE concern here is with the disposal of girl offenders before the law, and specifically with the use of the supervision order[1] for criminal offences committed by 14–16 year olds. By comparing the respective antecedents and offence behaviour of boys and girls subject to the same disposal, it is possible to assess the degree to which there is any variation in the imposition of this particular sentence according to the young delinquent's gender.

The evidence to be introduced suggests a number of rather distinct differences in the criminal biographies of the boy and girl offenders in the sample; most notably, girls are subject to supervision orders for less serious offences than committed by boys, for having been involved in fewer current offences and for having fewer previous convictions. Whether this constitutes 'injustice' in the sense of a systematic bias in the administration of juvenile justice is not a question which is directly addressed here, but it tends rather to emerge from considering the data as an instance of the penological regulation of deviant girls, through extending to them what in official discourse is 'care and protection', but which in effect stands as a censure of their 'stepping out of place' (Carlen, 1983); for behaving, in short, not as young girls should.

The supervision order is one of a range of disposals available to sentencers when dealing with 'young persons' (defined in law as between the ages of fourteen and sixteen) found guilty of criminal offences. With slight variations about a quarter of 14–16 year old girls convicted of indictable offences are placed on supervision orders in any one year. A lower (and gradually declining) proportion of boys are subject to the order for criminal offences, in part because of the wider range of disposals available for young males – the detention centre and, until comparatively recently, the attendance centre, just did not exist in the sentencing repertoire for girl offenders. (HMSO, 1984: Table 7.8). The supervision order

is, then, employed with some frequency so far as delinquent girls are concerned. Like a good deal of juvenile justice provision, it seeks to meet two objectives (Harris, 1982). It is a conventional tariff disposal[2] acting as a punishment through imposing a measure of superintendence on the wayward youngster and suffering him or her the inconvenience of reporting to a supervisor for anything up to three years, though two years is by far and away the norm, and early discharges for good progress are possible. But the supervision order is also, though, an individualized welfare measure intended to provide the opportunity to meet those personal or social needs which considered opinion regards as precipitating the young person's delinquency in the first place. It embraces, to use a somewhat crude and overplayed dichotomy, the co-presence of care and control.

The effect of the order is to place the young offender under the supervision either of the local authority Social Services Department or of a named probation officer. The duty of the supervisor as it was phrased in the Act (the Children and Young Persons Act, 1969, s. 14) is to 'advise, assist and befriend' the supervised child or young person, a requirement which is as vague as it is broad, and clearly open to a wide range of interpretations. What these might be with respect to girl offenders is the concern throughout this present discussion.

Whereas probation officers are given some, if not very precise, guidance on how to proceed in supervision by reference to the Probation Rules, no such formal assistance is available to local authority social workers (Roberts, 1981: 119–128). Not unexpectedly procedural vagueness is expressed in occupational practices; other findings on which we have reported point to the uncertainty with which probation officers, and especially social workers, approach this task of supervision. (Webb and Harris, 1984).

Procedure

The data around which the present discussion is arranged were collected in the course of a survey of 14–16 year olds who were made subject to a supervision order for criminal offences in 1978. From content analysis of the social enquiry reports and files accompanying each case, information was collected on 241 girls and 971 boys. Because files were not always complete it was sometimes impossible to extract all the intended information from each case: the tables presented later reflect a number of 'missing data'. The schedule used to code the content of the files was piloted through twelve drafts when discrepancies between the three researchers conducting the fieldwork were reduced to a random rather than systematic minimum. The study was conducted in six high delinquency areas geographically spread across England and Wales (Harris and Webb, 1983).

The files afforded information concerning, *inter alia,* the nature and seriousness of the young person's offence; his or her previous criminal record, if any; the number of offences found proved, and the degree to which a social worker or probation officer made reference to particular 'problems' facing their young client that could be met through social work intervention.

Whatever might be the omissions occasioned by a study with a heavy quantitative rather than ethnographic emphasis, such a survey does at least have the virtue of wide coverage, complementing and substantiating conclusions drawn elsewhere from different orders of research activity. In particular, the availability of data on both girls and boys offers the comparative element which is not always present when the question of sexual divisions in the administration of criminal justice is invoked. At least on a *prima facie* basis, any significant differences in the criminal biographies of the two sub-populations would point in the direction of a particular penological response on the basis of the young offender's

gender, standing thereby as a test of juridical sexism, that 'tendency to think about and behave towards people mainly on the basis of their gender, to generalize about individuals and groups on the grounds of their biology . . .' (Sachs and Wilson, 1978: ix). The findings set out in the next section indicate that such a pattern of penological response indeed applies to the supervision order. The presentation of these data is then followed by a more extended discussion of some reasons for this, suggesting that juvenile justice legislation, welfare ideologies and assumptions about girl offenders coincide to produce a 'panic' about the criminal waywardness of these young women.

Girls and supervision: Some empirical data

The pursuit of a delinquent child's welfare as the most propitious approach to waywardness has increasingly been challenged for the way in which it abrogates strict notions of justice (Platt, 1977; Bean, 1976; Freeman, 1981; Morris, *et al.* 1980). Sentencing offenders to help makes them subject to an incursiveness and intrusiveness from 'relational experts' which is more controlling, more stigmatizing and temporally more enduring than would be an unequivocal punishment for what are often trivial offences. Significantly what are admitted under the guise of 'best interests' and 'welfare' do not stand as unambiguously fixed but are contingent and closely dependent upon what Smith terms the 'precepts and concepts' of professional workers (Smith, 1980; 196); not surprisingly, in matters outside the strict purview of solidly professional concerns and training, these concepts and precepts are likely to be infiltrated by common sense. The responses to women offenders, both by magistrates (as suggested for example by Farrington and Morris, 1983) and by social workers and probation officers are marked by a residue of assumptions about the *especially worrying* and troubled (rather than troublesome) nature of young women's delinquency, and which finds them hastening to do something for a girl's own good.

The data which follow are offered as some endorsement of the way discretion and sexism might operate to give particular form to juridical process. Table One shows that there is a statistically significant difference in the seriousness of the offences committed by the boys and girls in the study; although the most prevalent offence for both was one of medium seriousness – most typically, involving property of between £10-£100 in value – a greater proportion of girls had been placed on supervision for trivial offences. Gender then is beginning to look as though it might be an element in skewing that requirement of at least an approximate equivalence between offence and sentence which in sentencing terms is termed proportionality. A specific offence illustrates this: the trivial misdemeanour of property theft up to £10 accounted for 15% of the supervised boys in the study, but 26.6% of the girls.

TABLE 1

Seriousness of offence by gender

	Boys		Girls	
Trivial	256	(29.7)	84	(38.7)
Medium	454	(52.7)	114	(52.5)
High	152	(17.6)	19	(8.6)
TOTAL*	862	(100.0)	217	(100.0)

$x^2 = 14.76$ df = 2   p<0.001

* 'Total' in all tables reflects usable data and excludes 'missing cases'

The trend towards girls finding themselves on supervision orders for lesser infractions is suggested further in Table 2. Girls on supervision were slightly more likely to have been sentenced for being involved in one offence only whereas the tendency was for boys to have been made subject to an order for multiple offences. Perhaps of more significance in documenting what appears to be a pattern for girls to be moved up the tariff more quickly

TABLE 2
Whether or not convicted of more than one offence, by gender

	Boys		Girls	
Convicted of more than one offence	434	(45.3)	84	(35.4)
Convicted of one offence only ..	524	(54.7)	153	(64.6)
TOTAL	958	(100.0)	237	(100.0)

$x^2 = 7.52$ df = 1   p<0.01

than boys, are the data shown in Table 3. Criminal 'record' will – other things being equal – bring about a more severe disposal, since it reflects a previous indifference to earlier, milder punishment. However, it is clear from these data that previous offence behaviour is much less salient amongst the girls on supervision than it is for the boys; whereas 46% of the boys in the survey were subject to a supervision order for their first offence, this rose quite dramatically to 75% of the girls,[4] pointing again to the apparently more rapid deployment of a supervisory sanction for girl delinquents.

TABLE 3
Number of previous court appearances by gender

	Boys		Girls	
None	437	(45.9)	174	(75.0)
One	294	(30.9)	40	(17.2)
Two plus	221	(23.2)	18	(7.8)
TOTAL	952	(100.0)	232	(100.0)

$x^2 = 65.24$ df = 2   p<0.001

The tendency towards a noticeable difference between the boys and girls, despite being subject to what, in their eyes at least, might be seen as the 'same' disposal, is suggested further in the following tables. Here those young offenders who were subject to a supervision order for a trivial offence *and* without previous convictions have been compared with the remainder of the study population. It should be noted that because of missing data, the 'leakage' of useable cases increases as more conditions for each are sought and this explains the totals which are smaller than those of tables 1-3. 78% of the girls' files are useable for the remaining analysis, and 73% of the boys.

Table 4 indicates that those on supervision with a modest 'criminal biography' were more likely found amongst girls than boys; almost a third of the former and slightly under one seventh of the latter.

TABLE 4

Supervision order by criminal status and gender*

	Boys		Girls	
'Not serious'	105	(14.76)	57	(30.0)
'Other'	606	(82.24)	133	(70.0)
TOTAL	711	(100.0)	190	(100.0)

$x^2 = 23.21$ df = 1   p<0.001

*Criminal status is a composite derived from seriousness of present offence and offence history. 'Not serious' refers to a trivial offence with no previous conviction; 'other' to medium and serious present offences together with one or more previous convictions.

This susceptibility to supervision for what on the face of it might seem slender reason, is not as boundless as might have been implied. If it were, then proportionally more girls than boys with modest criminal biographies would be expected to find themselves on *two years* rather than *one year* orders. This proved not to be the case; about two thirds in both instances had been placed on supervision for two or more years, and there was no statistical difference between these two particular sub-populations ($x^2 = 0.27$ df = 1 n.s.).

In general, the *length* of the supervision order tends to reflect the seriousness of the offence committed and previous convictions, and it operates in this manner for boys and girls regardless of gender; in both cases, virtually identical proportions of boys and girls with more serious criminal biographies (75.8% and 77.4% respectively) were subject to an order of two years or more. It seems here, in the length of order, that sentencing would seek to claw back some of the proportionality lost in the making of the supervision order in the first place: the pursuit of welfare as a self-evident 'good' is at least apparently tempered to some degree by traditional considerations of justice.

In submitting Social Enquiry Reports to the court, social workers or probation officers stand as professional advisors on sentencing, tendering their considered view about the most appropriate disposal, but giving due weight to the young person's welfare in so doing. Recommendations thereby convey the welfare worker's own sense of what should be the response to a young person's infraction. In the case of three quarters of those girls convicted of trivial offences and with no record, the report writers considered a supervision order as the most appropriate. (74.1%, N = 40). As Table 5 indicates they were as likely to hold such a view on all other offenders as well, including boys whose criminal biography was of a modest nature; in other words the advisors on sentencing do not apparently discriminate between offence variables when making a recommendation for supervision.

TABLE 5
Recommendations made for supervision, by gender and 'criminal status'

	Boys				Girls			
	Not Serious		Other		Not Serious		Other	
Specific recommendation								
made for supervision	74	(75.5)	410	(71.3)	40	(75.1)	86	(68.3)
No recommendation made	23	(24.5)	165	(28.7)	14	(24.9)	40	(31.7)
TOTAL	98	(100.0)	575	(100.0)	54	(100.0)	126	(100.0)

Those placed on supervision are as likely to have been involved in trivial as in more serious offending; given the greater proportion of girls rather than boys characterized by modest criminal biographies, it is not therefore surprising that the overall link between gender and trivial criminal activity is stronger for girls than it is for boys. Since this particular group of girl offenders did not possess the 'formal' requirements for a moderately high tariff disposal (which at least applied to those young people whose offence was more serious or whose history of criminal behaviour was more pronounced) then one would imagine that the reasons for a supervision order being recommended might lie in those 'needs' revealed by the routine professional practices of social workers or probation officers.

Although the question of the objective status of these needs must be suspended, their precise determination being contingent upon for example the professional ideologies of the welfare workers and what their agencies are constituted to address (Smith, 1981; Dingwall, *et al.* 1983), it is nonetheless important to see how far the offender is viewed as possessing personal or social difficulties that might be addressed through social work involvement. After all, locating and specifying problems and needs is part and parcel of the professional remit of the social worker and probation officer, since it is through this that otherwise 'irrational', 'anti-social' or unaccountable behaviour can be made publicly intelligible (Hardiker and Webb, 1979; Philp, 1979). In other words the supervision order would be serving specifically welfare objectives should 'needs' be identified to be subsequently met through social work, even if strictly speaking the severity of the offence merited a less severe disposal. Although for critics of 'welfare sentencing' this is seen as 'unjust', it would nonetheless point to rationality and purpose in what was recommended rather than reflect no more than fairly deeply embedded 'feelings' about the girl offender being so exceptional that a small scale moral panic is set in motion.

Despite recommendations for supervision orders being made on girl offenders, largely irrespective of the seriousness of their offence, it is difficult to see any way in which these are linked to a coherent welfare response. The social enquiry reports had been coded to see whether clearly identified social work strategies had been proposed; if they had then this would stand as some 'justification' for recommending supervision.

Clearly stated reasons were more likely *not* to be made than made, and this applies to both boys and girls, something which has doubtless contributed to the sense of unease sometimes expressed by the magistracy about the vagueness of content in Social Enquiry Reports (Webb and Harris, 1984). Nonetheless, Table 6a indicates that at least in the case of

boys involved in minor misdemeanours, social workers and probation officers were significantly more likely to spell out a social work strategy to accompany their recommendation than when writing about more serious offenders. There is no such distinction however made with respect to girls; as Table 6b shows, those involved in trivial offences were not more likely to be regarded as having needs to be met through social work intervention, suggesting that whatever it is that the supervision order might be seen as meeting, it is not to do with those problems which social workers or probation officers are able to spell out with any particular clarity. The identification of 'needs' appears no more salient for these 'trivial offenders' than it does for others. If there is a general uncertainty

TABLE 6

Specific social work strategy in Social Enquiry Report by criminal status

(a) Boys

	'Not Serious'		'Other'	
Social work strategy in social enquiry	42	(40.0)	173	(28.5)
No strategy	63	(60.0)	433	(71.4)
TOTAL	105	(100.0)	606	(100.0)

$x^2 = 5.21$ df = 1   p<0.05

(b) Girls

	'Not Serious'		'Other'	
Social work strategy in social enquiry	19	(33.3)	42	(31.5)
No strategy	38	(66.7)	91	(68.4)
TOTAL	57	(100.0)	133	(100.0)

$x^2 = 0.07$ df = 1   n.s.

about what the supervision order might offer delinquent youngsters, this seems most pronounced amongst those girls whose law breaking has been of a more or less inconsequential nature. Given the rather unclear picture of what their 'needs' might be, or the problems in their lives that need addressing, the basis of any concern that prompts a supervision order (other than a general anxiety about their 'moral welfare') is not immediately apparent. More ethnographic, observational studies might reveal otherwise, though the data on sexual stereotyping by welfare personnel from this perspective is scant. Certainly, the inference we would draw from our analysis of their files is that girl offenders who were placed on supervision for mild misdemeanours (in about three quarters of the instances at the behest of the writer of the social enquiry report) had no especial evidence of 'problems' to the extent which would justify a welfare disposal overriding more traditional notions of proportionality. The question that presses in becomes increasingly insistent: just why were these apparently 'low risk' girl offenders placed on supervision – and recommended that they should be? As already intimated, on neither criminal seriousness or history nor 'need' do they warrant this disposal. It is to this that the following discussion turns.

Discussion: Social control, deviant girls and welfare

The findings reported on here, it must be emphasised, refer to one disposal only and apply to girls in particular rather than women offenders in general. Extrapolations to the full span of sentencing and the entire age spectrum must inevitably therefore be limited and cautious. This is important to bear in mind. Adult women offenders appear to be subject to neither harsher nor more lenient sentencing than men, when seriousness of offence and criminal record are held constant (Nagel, 1980; Farrington and Morris, 1983). Within this apparent equality of disposition, the actual practices of the sentence are likely to be around the women offender's gender competence (Carlen, 1983). 'Sexism' in the administration of justice therefore occurs latently. But for girls the procedures are more formal and overt.

Conventionally represented as the weakest family members (namely women and 'children') the provisions of 'care' within the juridical framework of the 1969 Children and Young Persons Act extends the prospect of sentencing them to supervision. Though benign in intent, such strategies have been criticized for the suspension of justice entailed, though only rarely has the point been made about the amplified impact that this might have on girls in particular. (Campbell, 1982; Casburn, 1979; Hudson, 1983). It is the penological consequences of being a delinquent, female, 'child' that is the question at hand. Clearly, there is a broader whole within which the findings presented here are a part, namely the social control to which deviant women are subject. These data are both a reflection of and lend weight to a perspective on crime which asks more about the social reaction to delinquency than about the original perpetration.

Labelling theory substituted the social genesis of delinquency for aetiology; by its emphasis on social control as the means by which deviant and delinquent statuses were ascribed it broke with the essentialist doctrine which had hitherto stood so securely as the focus for criminological investigation. The characteristics of criminogenic individuals or social groups no longer occupied the enquirer's mind, but rather the nature of rules created, endorsed and sustained by this or that set of moral entrepreneurs. An approach which stressed the relative and contingent nature of all rule breaking behaviour, it also opened up the prospect of a detailed examination of the underlying assumptions, interests and typifications of those seeking the censure of particular forms of behaviour. The control culture became a legitimate target of ironic enquiry, as the agency which '*created*' through its rules, laws and attributions the deviant phenomena that in another voice it sought to extinguish, treat or reform.

These changes in perspective and emphasis were played out against the issue of male criminality; it has taken time for the same approach to work its way through to the question of the delinquency of women, the study of which retained secure connections with biologism even when the general tide of criminological thought was turning against this form of reductionism (Smart, 1976). Given the paucity of information on women's criminal behaviour, and the oft-times curious theories proffered to account for it, it is not surprising that social book-keeping along the lines of 'who does what and how often' should have persisted ('to set the record straight') when sociological criminology elsewhere was turning an agnostic eye on such things. The recognition, however, that ultimately 'the idea of a "true picture" (is) inherently imprecise and elusive' has prompted . . . 'A shift of emphasis, away from attempts to discover the truth about the extent and nature of women's offending towards a closer study of their actual involvement with the criminal justice and penal system' (Morris and Gelsthorpe, 1981: 140). 'Women and crime' increasingly becomes a

question of women and social control (Hutter and Williams, 1981). Social reaction theory and penology share a common concern with the management of the socially deviant; though the former professes a detachment from the administrative concerns of the latter. It invites, too, an enquiry into how far and in what fashion the nature and pattern of sentencing might convey both the formalizing of precepts about behaviour and the interpretation of statute. In both, the law has been regarded as subjecting women to a form of control intended to remind them of familialism, propriety and conventional gender practices. Paradoxically, and significantly, any general discretionary latitude allowed to the law will either by lenient or harsh treatment serve as a means of reaffirming certain preferences; for example, leniency extended to one woman because of her demonstrably competent motherhood, harshness towards another in order to offer her thereby the chance to be appropriately remoralized (Carlen, 1983; Nagel, 1980; Sachs, 1978). The apparently discriminatory practices of the law are not therefore instances of mere mal-administration, but reflect the deep structure of material and moral interests to which women are subject. In this view, juridical practices resonate with the patriarchal interests so securely embedded within the contemporary social order (McIntosh, 1978).

Though this can lend some intellectual respectability to shoulder-shrugging indifference to the practices so revealed, any study of control within criminal and juvenile justice tends towards at least an implicit statement about the ironical gap between officially stated universal criteria and the manner of their application in practice (Pearce, 1976). The particular treatment of women and girls before the law has accordingly been one way in which gender issues have been brought into mainstream developments within criminology, and in particular penology. *De jure* precepts, and *de facto* practices (which is what concern us here) both stand capable of being exposed for their abandonment of the principle of equal citizenship.

Part of the way in which this works in the case of delinquent girls is through the latitude extended to social workers and probation officers in meeting needs. In seeking to remove law breaking juveniles from the criminal justice system under the guise of care or treatment, a system of superintendence which Donzelot calls tutelage '. . . made possible a saving and corrective intervention of the state, but at the cost of a near total dispossession of private rights' (Donzelot, 1980, p.93).

Saving and correction are ushered in to regulate the lives of deviants under the banner of 'welfare'. Welfare (at least in the juridical context), concerns itself with the 'root cause' of an individual's waywardness (McEwen, 1981), and seeks the remoralization and reintegration of the individual with society. The objective is reform, with the 'best interests' of the child (as defined by experts) giving direction to rehabilitation. But inasmuch as the determination of what welfare or best interests might be is open to interpretation, there is scope for the intrusion of moral evaluations of need. In this ensemble of 'legal welfarism', and assumptions and attributions about gender, the delinquent girl finds herself subject to a particular regulatory censure. Because of the exceptionalness of their criminality, the delinquent woman has become, as the Victorians would have it, 'unsexed'. Girls who are delinquent are seen as departing not only from the legal code, but from gender expectations as well; by breaking criminal laws they are *ipso facto* offenders against a moral code which lays down particular expectations about the appropriate behaviour of the sexes. Delinquent girls are thereby subject to the attribution of multiple waywardness – not only formal, legal,

infraction but also that of being a gender deviant (Hiller and Hancock, 1981; Shacklady Smith, 1978; Campbell, 1981; Terry, 1970).

Whereas the ordinariness of rule breaking by boys and its continuity with what is normally expected of males can be readily grasped within the purview of the natural attitude, the delinquency of girls is often regarded as quintessentially problematic and exceptional. Girls, when delinquent, pose cognitive problems dissonant not only with a preference by the control culture for obedience to the law, but also with its demand for acquiescence to more diffuse norms. Because the natural attitude expresses the belief that '(d)elinquency among girls is such a perversion of, or rebellion against, their natural female roles' (Shacklady Smith, 1978: 75), behaviourally, greater compliance is expected of them (Parker *et al.* 1981: 7).

Since offence behaviour is frequently viewed – both in statute (Packman, 1980; Clark, 1979) and occupational ideology (Morris *et al.* 1980; Bottoms and McWilliams, 1979) – as constituting incontrovertible evidence of problems in the offender's life, this means that criminal proceedings provide ample scope for welfare interventions over and above that demanded by justice alone. And since the legislative reference point for dealing with young offenders is inconsistent and theoretically confused (Harris, 1982), and as we have seen in the case of the supervision order ambitiously vague, it is not surprising that phrases like 'best interests', 'welfare', or 'need', will be variously interpreted. (Priestly, Fears and Fuller, 1977). As Hiller and Hancock (1981: 101) observe from their work on girls and juvenile justice in Australia, '. . . as with all kinds of legislation couched in fairly general terms, the personnel whose task it is to implement it are left to interpret the provisions as they see fit, in the context usually of prevailing values, attitudes and expectations'.

The Supervision Order as Tutelage

The very vagueness to the procedures attaching to the supervision order is testament to the authority divested to those experts – above all social workers and probation officers – charged with responsibility for wayward youngsters. They stand as custodians of the young person's good, offering a range of presences from family therapist to adult authority figure. Whatever the varying content to these presences, the form is constant and stands as an instance of what Donzelot (1980) has referred to as 'tutelage'. This '. . . elaborate structure of counselling, guidance, advice management and supervision by statutory and voluntary agencies . . .' (Barrett and McIntosh, 1982: 98) introduces the state's agenda for regulating and disciplining actual or potential deviants into the private sphere of personal and family life.

Donzelot lays some emphasis upon psychoanalytically derived knowledge as the particular way in which social work introduces disciplinary imperatives to disorganized families. But psychic reconstruction probably figures insignificantly in most social work interventions, with moral example and exhortation demonstrating a more empirical inflection to tutelage than arcane 'psyknowledge'. (Carew, 1979). Supervision, as revealed in its statute-defined elements of advice, assistance and befriending suggests something along these lines. It implies authority, but authority which is benign, resting upon a sagacity of life *experience*, rather than upon technical *expertise. Assistance* is extended to those who, on their own and because of a variety of deficiences (moral, cultural), have found it difficult to participate 'adequately' in civil society. And all this, which involves substantial lay rather than specifically professional qualities, occurs within the ministration of *befriending*, the

contingent offering of pseudo-mutuality. Supervision in these guises is a mundane task, easily appropriated by common sense and the everyday; it is so vague that almost anything can go.

Although the remit of the supervision *order* is diffuse and wide, the remit of supervision as tutelage is very specific; its concern is with moral departures and their necessary correction and resocialization. Ironically the very latitude allowed to the supervision order makes it responsive to the hidden and reified arrangement of things; within a multiplex of lay and professional assumptions about the extreme atypicality of female delinquency, which official statistics and 'criminological' accounts apparently endorse, the girl offender becomes an obvious case for the meeting of self-evident needs. In focusing upon social deviancy (however imagined or imputed) to a greater degree than on legal infraction and criminal history, the practices of juvenile justice, exemplified by girls subject to a supervision order, means that the court does not really pronounce judgement on crimes, rather it '. . . examines individuals. There is a *dematerialization of the offence* which places the minor in a mechanism of interminable investigation, of perpetual judgement' (Donzelot, 1980: p.110, original emphasis). For delinquent girls (and probably for deviant women in general) the rehabilitative ideal which informs liberal penal policy is given a very specific inflection. The reform which marks in Pearson's (1975) phrase, their 'return to utility' is accomplished with singular emphasis placed upon their performing not so much as socially competent citizens, but in terms of demonstrably competent gender practices (Hudson, 1983).

Some Conclusions

I have not sought here to offer more than a partial account of the way in which girls are treated within juvenile justice. The concern has been with one disposal only, though the particularly ambivalent nature of the supervision order makes it something of a suitable test around which to assess the juridical and welfare balance in the operation of law. As was pointed out earlier, 'welfare' legislation vests authority and discretion in decision making with the experts, and in this are inevitably admitted their professional ideologies as they endeavour to make a 'competent' assessment of 'just what sort of case is this?' (Giller and Morris, 1981). But such ideologies are not exhaustive and the *lacunae* that they cannot address are 'filled' with extra-professional assumptions, often deeply embedded common-sensical responses. There is difficulty in accommodating atypical and exceptional offenders who stand outside the purview of the habitual knowledge which makes for the routine, relatively unproblematic handling of cases (Sudnow, 1969). Women offenders, whether young or old, do not fall easily into the familiar categories of 'normal' crime, save perhaps that of being self-evident 'problems' with no more to be said. Not surprisingly, there is an absence of clarity in problem formulation and recommendation making by social workers. This is something which Hardiker has shown applies as well to another subordinate group – in this case black offenders – knowledge about whom is also more partial, more infused with the everyday and the frequently mythological than for those kinds of offenders who comprise (or have comprised until recently) the bread-and-butter of typical professional and lay experience (Hardiker, 1977). There is here that vulnerability to a restricted representation which it has been suggested is a common feature of women's experience within the juridical system (Carlen, 1983; Dell, 1971); the person charged with speaking for the deviant is muted because of no recipe within which to offer an 'account' of the

wayward's actions. Though recommendations for supervision *were* made in the case of the girls in this study – and often for very trivial offences – this was much less frequently linked to any clear strategy of social work involvement than amongst the boys. Both in the commission of recommending these girls for a supervision order, and in the omission of saying what might be offered then, there is a tendency towards limiting the visibility of girl delinquents as legal subjects.

All young offenders are subject to being sentenced on the basis of their welfare being thereby directed. But for girls the discretion allowed by this finds them subject to a greater distortion of proportionality in sentencing than found amongst boys. The trend is clear: the data here show that girls recommended for, and subject to, supervision orders include a higher proportion of offenders committing trivial offences and with no criminal history behind them. More frequently than amongst boys, the girl offender is apparently presumed to be a case for supervision even with the relative absence of those needs which social workers and probation officers might see themselves as capable of addressing.

Discrimination of an *intentionally* sexist nature is without doubt too crude an explanation for the tendencies outlined here, though the structure of events is such to suggest that the system of juridical enforcement is discriminatory. There does seem that there is sufficient evidence to aver that the supervision order appears to be a disposal which plays into deeply held sentiments about the more or less unquestioned need to 'watch over' the delinquent girl. This means that what Black (1976) has referred to as the 'behaviour of law' – or at least this small corner of juvenile justice – is such that its operation is sometimes applied with greater force to some citizens on the basis of their gender as much as on any other, more strictly criminal, quality they might possess.

Notes

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1. It should be noted that recent legislative innovations relating to young offenders have extended the powers available to the courts in directing the nature of supervision to which the young person might be subject. (Criminal Justice Act 1982). Our data refer to the situation prior to the implementation of these changes.

2. The tariff refers to one (amongst a number) of the principles of sentencing. It rests on the principle of proportionality since it seeks to ensure that the severity of the sentence should be limited according to the seriousness of the crime. There ought, then, to be a proportional relationship between the nature of the criminal act committed and the disposal to which the offender is subject. The common-sensical expression would be the self evident truth that the more serious the offence then justice demands a heavier sentence.

Individualized sentencing on the other hand looks not to past offences but seeks to influence future behaviour through an appropriate form of treatment. It is particularly mindful, in the case of juveniles, of their welfare, one consideration of which could see them receiving a sentence other than demanded by strict proportionality.

The range of disposals available to the juvenile court combines sentences which are uncompromizingly punishment ones (such as a fine or detention centre) and those which are more individualized, intended (in part) to address an individual's problems. McEwen's (1981) small study of magistrates suggests this is how they view, on the whole, the supervision order, though a number acknowledged it also contains elements of retribution. While it is possible that an individual's needs might find them moving down the tariff demanded by strict proportionality (e.g. a serious offence committed 'because' of severe relationship problems between a child and his or her parents attracting a supervision order rather than a custodial sentence), it is also true that individual needs can move an offender up the tariff should, for example, it be deemed their problems are such that two years supervision by a social worker would be more appropriate than a small fine.

It should be emphasized that the tariff is more a notional framework than a formal set of rules; there is no prescribed hierarchy of sentences, though of course limitations are set to length of sentence for particular offences. But latitude within this is considerable with the magistracy in particular being able to reflect in their sentencing local lay sentiment.

3. The coding of offence seriousness was:

Trivial   i   Property offence up to £10 value in total
              ii   Common assault
              iii   Minor public order offence (causing an affray, etc.)

Medium   i   Property offence (including criminal damage) (£10-£100)
              ii   Assault occasioning Actual Bodily Harm
              iii   Indecent assault
              iv   TDA/Allow to be carried

High   i   Property offence over £100
              ii   Grievous bodily harm/malicious wounding (S. 18/S. 20)
              iii   Rape or serious indecent assault
              iv   Robbery (even where sum involved is trivial)
              v   'Obvious' serious offences – conspiracy, murder, etc.

If more than one offence

i	Up to 5 x trivial	Trivial
ii	6 x trivial and over	Medium
iii	Up to 3 x medium	Medium
iv	4 x medium and over	High
v	Up to 5 (trivial and medium) (except where 4 x medium/1 x trivial)	High
vi	Over 5 (trivial and medium)	High
vii	1 x high plus any other	High

4. We have not here taken into account the impact that police cautioning might have. We sought to extract this information from files but were unable to do so with any confidence.

  Although not standing as a conviction in the strict sense of the word, 'cautions' are frequently introduced into the court proceedings as elements in the young offenders 'antecedents', and may therefore be taken into account in sentencing. Hence a young person who on the face of it is sentenced 'harshly' because they appear to have no previous convictions, may in fact have been earlier 'sentenced' to a caution. Insofar as girls might be more likely to be cautioned (the police acting chivalrously towards someone in especial need of protection), then their previous blameless existence may be more apparent than real. Nonetheless, there is no evidence to suggest that the sex *per se* of a young offender determines the likelihood of cautioning rather than prosecution (Fisher and Mawby, 1982; Mott, 1983; Landau and Nathan, 1983), and on the basis of this it seems reasonable to assume that both boys and girls in our sample would have experienced a similar propensity towards having been previously cautioned. In other words, discriminatory sentencing to which girls might be subject seems unlikely to have been brought about by their having been earlier cautioned by the police.

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Social Work and Critical Consciousness: Rebuilding Orthodoxy

David Webb

Abstract

The paper has two interwoven themes. The first concerns pedagogy: how to construct an approach to teaching social workers which domesticates the radical critique of socialists and feminists, rendering this as a base for 'legitimate' social work, yet which will also 'liberate' those students for whom technique and procedure are exclusive concerns.

The second theme is an elaboration and examination of the organising concept empowered to meet this teaching objective, namely *critical consciousness*. It is sustained not just for its strategic merit as an instructional device, but as a principled base for thinking about intervention.

Critical consciousness is considered as a politico-moral enterprise of cognitive awareness aimed at people gaining an enhanced grasp of their *objective* circumstances. The ramifications of this burden of knowing are considered, as is the degree to which critical consciousness and its attainment reflect the particular knowledge held by the 'social worker as educator'. Although it is held that action is the test of the adequacy of any emancipatory knowledge, the article is more concerned with developing the ideas behind, than with the implementation of, critical consciousness.

> "And as he had acquired absolutely nothing about political economy or about logic and was therefore at the mercy of the first agreeable sophistry that might take his fancy by storm, his unfitness to commence the business of being a citizen almost reached perfection".
>
> Arnold Bennett, *Clayhanger*

A Preamble

In casual moments, caught off guard and finding themselves voicing impetuous utterances, social work educators may sometimes speak, not always with subtlety, of the two broad constituencies of students with whom they must 'deal'. There are first the 'radicals', that querulous (or so it seems) cabal of socialists and feminists who charge much of what passes for knowledge and practice with being perniciously oppressive, merely 'reproducing the present social relations of capitalism'. Intellectually it is perhaps difficult not to concur with certain elements of the analysis from which springs such sentiment; such agreement, however, stands alongside the recognition that these students will have to operate with competence and survive occupationally within agencies of which they are critical. They will have to discharge duties which are collaborationist and execute sanctions against society's victims. To construct amongst these students an occupational morality which is faithful to their principles is important if they are not to be lost to cynicism or despair.[1] So what follows could be seen as the beginnings of a theory of practice which looks to achieve just such a resolution of 'political' analysis and 'professional' objectives. It draws, accordingly, upon that critical analysis of social divisions to which radicals might turn, yet it seeks a 'praxis' deliberately and intentionally circumscribed by the pre-given 'place' which social work occupies — and is 'allowed', as it were, to occupy —

within contemporary British capitalism.[2] Inevitably this 'paradigm' is accommodative: it tends to prioritize change at the level of the human subject, though it allows for the transforming *activity* consequent upon shifts in the cognitive world of the person. Whilst knowledge and action are held as indissoluble, the knowledge-constituting role of social work as it comes into contact with deformed subjects (and subjectivity) is emphasised. Subjectivism, but not philosophical idealism, and a commitment to change rather than social regulation places what follows within the 'Radical Humanism' set down by Whittington and Holland in their recent elaboration of social work's paradigmatic variety.[3] It could stand as an application of their more 'formal' exegesis: a working instance of one particular 'meta theory'.

So much for the response, as it were, to the first — and should we say 'more troublesome' — bunch of students. But there is the other, more 'invisible college' to whom we speak. This group we seek to enliven with our enthusiasm for theoretical reflection, kindling the imaginative expansion associated with the deliberately ironical view of things. These are the students we regard (perversely, given our exasperation with their comrades) as 'too complacent', and 'insufficiently critical', 'too concerned' with technique alone. To move them on poses its own tactical demands; perhaps they are too resistant to even the mildest 'debunking', to even the mildest of suggestions about social divisions and the distribution of the social product. To speak to them about the internal 'radical' momentum of social work, the immanence of a 'more progressive' element in that conventional enterprise, is, one hopes, to open up possibilities brought by their obligation to social work *per se* rather than by grafting on something outside its discourse. Social work as a 'cause', with certain ethical (liberative, emancipatory) purposes, with a moral commitment of a certain form to human-kind, paradoxically has an agenda which *must* be 'political' if it is to be professional.

So what follows is not just an enunciation of a particular social work paradigm wherein we might helpfully sketch a particular view of society, outline the principal sources of social problems held, and set down some attendant social work aims. It stands, additionally, as a certain kind of teaching strategy, aimed at maximising 'relevance' as well as 'education'. It presents too, perhaps, the pedagogic equivalent of Mathiesen's dilemma:[4] to seek an impact, the new so effectively enters the speech community of the established that it is incorporated within that discourse; alternatively it is so 'wild' that it is 'defined out' as irrelevant, with no one 'hearing' what is said. Only in the space between, so the argument goes, can creative possibilities find realisation.

Social Work: Yet More Dilemmas

Social work faces an abundance of conundrums. I begin here with the one which arises from the profound discrepancy between what we know as the social genesis of the problems faced by aggregates of individuals, and the capacity of social work to deal with those disabling 'structural' conditions. Social workers, troubled by the ethical dilemmas produced by the rift between analysis and possible remedies open to them, collapse into *angst* or retreat into routine. Rhetorical advice to forge links with the labour movement, whilst perhaps strategically correct, does not on its own aid the

development of an occupational morality, nor does it lessen the mood of bad faith that is especially pronounced where idealism and reality are most often at loggerheads — on training courses.

There is no need to be a self-confessed 'radical' (which convention assumes to be of the left) for such conflicts to cause unease; it requires only a moderately well informed grasp of sociology and social policy to recognise that social divisions have an impact on those life chances which clients daily exhibit as their own problems. Not surprisingly, it is difficult for people whom Wright Mills somewhat disparagingly referred to as 'social pathologists' to rise above a series of discrete cases and apprehend instead the broader sweep of public issues. It is difficult because inscribed upon the organisational practice and occupational culture of social work is the case-by-case approach and the individuality and uniqueness of each client. Though progressive when people are otherwise treated as labour power or reproducers of labour power, such individualising of problems nonetheless sits uneasily alongside those social sciences which speak in terms not of idiography, but 'sociography'.

It is not surprising then, that dissonance marks the occupational *weltanschauung* of social work, and more particularly, perhaps, that of the student facing competing stocks of knowledge which are so often apparently irreconcilable.[5] So any move to construct, if not in totality at least in elements, a set of theories of practice might serve to resolve this tension between 'knowledge of social causes' and the specific practices 'allowed' to social work and around which it discharges its allocated 'charter'.[6]

Emancipation Through Consciousness

One strategy, in seeking simultaneously to address these competing discourses of knowledge set against practical possibilities, can be seen in the periodic interest which social work has given to the possibility of developing with clients a critical consciousness,[7] in which the mood of humanism is rescued as the individual develops a 'progressively more critical mode of problem solving ... as he (*sic*) faces and tries to solve problems of oppression'.[8] Here *cognition* problematises the taken for granted world of both cultural and material existence, *oppression* speaks to the saliency of power in social divisions, and *problem solving* stamps upon that existence the affirmation that purposive action is indeed possible. The process involves 'a change of mentality invoking an accurate, realistic awareness of one's place in nature and society (and) ... a logical action aimed at transformation'.[9]

But we should sustain the case for critical consciousness not by reference to the fortuitous manner in which it resolves practitioners' existential troubles in holding together 'the political' and what may pass for, (at first sight anyway), 'the therapeutic', but by its impact upon the lives of clients. We should be able to justify it morally or ethically; to substantiate why transformations in peoples' consciousness are merited and just why a deliberate challenge to their assumptive worlds might be mounted.

These matters constitute the main body of this article. We need before this though a brief mention of the constituent traditions which contribute to this idea of critical consciousness and at least a pointer to how these might stand with more orthodox traditions in social work. Here the work of Paulo Freire is an enduring point of

reference. Although I do not propose to do more than allude to his thinking,[10] it is important to recognise the centrality he accords to consciousness (of sociocultural reality) as a force capable of shaping people's lives. Only through knowledge which frees the individual from myth and a corroding dominant ideology — perhaps more conventionally expressed as hegemony — can the individual determine the source and nature of oppression. Freire's exploration of the complex fashion in which consciousness is shaped by material reality, yet is capable of going beyond that determining forcefulness to the point of transforming concrete circumstances runs throughout his work. He writes, accordingly, that 'only beings who can reflect upon the fact that they are determined are capable of freeing themselves'.[11]

Freire's blend of materialism and humanism, his ideas of actualising individuals capable of affirming their humanity through will locates him at the creative interstices between idealism and materialism, where humanism cannot be declared by *fiat*, but is realised only through struggle against the very forces which *de*-humanise. These concerns place Freire alongside, or rather within, *Critical Theory*[12]. This rests upon the axiom that the social sciences should be *emancipatory*; that through their analysis of the impediments to human realisation they should establish means by which human needs and purposes might be satisfied.[13] Of some centrality is the way in which knowledge exerts an autonomous and independent effect on social existence, for history is made 'with will and consciousness'. Knowledge extends the self understanding of those social groups capable of transforming society:[14] from the perspective of liberation theology, problem solving action is impossible without understanding and elucidating the social, political, economic and psychological mechanisms which oppress.[15] Such is the humanist core of the variety of inflexions given to the task of 'liberation'.

Conscientisation shares with critical theory a concern with what Habermas has termed the emancipatory interest; to reason self consciously and to make decisions in the light of available knowledge. Once it is acknowledged that history embodies domination, repression and the ideological framing of action, it becomes apparent that self understanding is often limited by unacknowledged conditions[16]. But through knowledge and understanding of a situation, individuals will thereby better grasp their sufferings. These understandings will certainly include those to do with the social structure and social arrangements, and to ignore these as irrelevant is to de-humanise the cognitive process. Accordingly Critical Theory "seeks to articulate the felt grievances of a specific group of actors, to provide a vocabulary in virtue of which they and their situation can be conceptualised, to explain why the conditions in which they find themselves are frustrating to them, and to offer a programme of action which is intended to end with the satisfaction of these desires"[17].

Critical consciousness (or conscientisation) is concerned then, with challenging the given categories of thought with which people order their social world and think about themselves. It addresses 'ways of seeing' in John Berger's phrase, and is essentially a strategy for cognitive renewal; an approach to reappropriating a consciousness which has been hijacked by systems of meaning which are alien to the individual's quest for an accurate grasp of their reality. It is what in more conventional social work parlance might be called *self*-determination (rather than 'other'

determination). But, crucially, the realisation of this is only possible by confronting the mechanisms (ideological, linguistic, material) by which the subject's capacity to reflect on his or her acivities is eclipsed.[18]

But it is not 'Critical Theory' which has a monopoly over the 'emancipatory interest'; it runs, for example, through liberation theology, and stands too within that radical kernel of 'conventional' social work. So when speaking of the purposes of the enterprise, Helen Harris Perlman writes '(it) seems fitting that social workers, among others who stand for humanness, should strive to hold and in some small way to expand the narrow margin of self-determination, because it is chiefly in the exercise of his will that man knows himself (*sic*) and feels himself responsible for his choices and his fate'.[19]

It may be possible, then, to see what critical consciousness (following Freire I use this interchangeably with conscientisation) might offer social work: to construct it, as it were, *within* the protective shell of what already exists. Such intellectual civil engineering has at its disposal humanism and subjectivism to span the bridging points between the given and the possible, building thereby a 'theory of practice' which addresses the realities, history and purposes of the extant, rather than the wishful. Indeed it is sometimes difficult not to be struck by the similarities of project between the emancipatory interest of critical consciousness (that people 'see themselves and their social situation in new ways' so that they 'can decide to alter the conditions which they find repressive'[20]) and that of traditional pragmatism ('the very essence of mature humanness is the exercise of choice rather than his coercion by his own blind impulses or the power of others. It is what builds in him his sense of effectiveness, of identity, of selfhood . . . '[21]). Of course it is not surprising that there *should* be these significant points of superimposition, for critical consciousness is an amalgam of a number of philosophies, a meld of humanism, Marxism and perhaps most significantly for our purposes, philosophical pragmatism.[22] It is this latter intellectual tradition which, Greenstone argues, has given significant impetus to (in particular) American social work.[23] From Jane Addams to Pincus and Minahan, this has spoken repeatedly of the importance of rationality, of active interpretation, in order to render intelligible the hitherto perplexing. Philosophical pragmatism is a spur not only to psychodynamics but to systems theory; both have a (however flawed) liberative agenda.

So in a sense critical consciousness is the politicisation of pragmatist philosophy; it provides, for example, an account of why the choices to which Perlman refers might be systematically denied to some citizens, and once having offered such a theory, implies a corresponding praxis which is more political than is self actualisation alone. But this does not necessarily point to a rupture of discourses; as I have argued elsewhere,[24] there are points where 'the new' can speak successfully (and appropriately) to the established, offering a revivifying impetus especially when the established (as with social work) has its own history of opposition to certain repressive social practices[25]. So, in enunciating some purposes and properties of conscientisation I am attempting too to address the purposes of social work *sui generis*, arguing that critical consciousness actually looks to at least some of the inherent, essential and fundamental projects of the activity. 'Radical social work' as often advocated is far

from the root of social work; so far indeed that it ceases to be social work at all but some fanciful fiction, an idealist excursion in which the mere prefacing of social work with the appropriate adjective is considered sufficient to transform an enterprise which is, in truth, constituted by a specific set of social, political and economic arrangements that cannot be 'wished away'[26].

In any event, prudence towards the forces of modernism is always worthwhile, and it is sometimes profitable to seek in orthodoxy a kernel that needs recovering if the unalloyed 'message' is to be rendered in pristine form. The separation of the radical and the traditional might therefore be less absolute. To return, very briefly, to the theological analogy: it is in the recovery of traditional teaching that are found the inspirations for liberation, and not the subsequent interpretations of Christ's ministry which have sought to somehow 'modernise' (perhaps render *bourgeois*) His teachings.[27] Cautious orthodoxy is sometimes a fruitful source of novelty, for it invites a reflection back on those origins in order to explore ramifications lost through subsequent revision.[28]

Finally in this section mention must be made of feminism, and the contribution of 'consciousness raising' to the discussion at hand. Feminism's analysis of the systematic, structured and above all *gendered* nature of what conventionally passes for individual ills, whether physical or 'psychological', lends to it a materialist or objectivist base, whilst its insistence that shifts in consciousness and social relations should prefigure changes in the infrastructure give it the kind of humanist-subjectivist praxis that characterises 'critical theory' more generally.

But whatever the merits of this approach to working with women (and they have been many), 'consciousness-raising' remains feminist practice and as such is inevitably (and perhaps appropriately) separatist. It does not attempt to speak to social work:[29] it is not, in another not especially elegant word, 'generic'. It is difficult too to work out the transfers to other settings when method and subject population are so closely linked. To break with this sometimes limiting closure, a measure of autonomy from the feminist discourse is necessary, building instead something much more from *within* social work itself.

Of course, for there is a measure of indebted reciprocity between the two, some of what is mentioned here might connect across from social work to feminism, lending some strategic advantage to those who would argue for practice which is simultaneously feminist *and* legitimate social work. There may be just some points of intersection where the politico-ethical project of these two discourses coincide, and insofar as there are, the linking theme should be the 'supra-content concept' of critical consciousness.

Social Work and Communicative Competence

A whole range of practices have seen will and consciousness as means to emancipation; from knowledge flows the grasp on experience and the chance thereby to reorder practical events. This underpins the uncovering of repression that is the object of psychoanalysis as much as it does the philosophical pragmatism which lent such hopeful force to American social work thinking and its pursuit of the free individual. The impediments to *knowing* reality are the myths that envelop it, myths

which are shrouded from cognition because, in large measure, of the way in which language is as socially distributed as are the material fruits of labour.[30]

This sort of cognitive relativism maintains that knowing and perceiving are rendered variably, depending upon the code which we employ to map the plethora of objects, emotions or social relationships which we encounter. "Reality" does not speak for itself but is revealed (or refracted) through the ordering processes at our disposal. And, of course, language is paramount amongst these, but it is not equally accessible to everyone: '... the form of the social relation, or more generally the social structure, generates distinctive linguistic frames or codes, and these codes essentially transmit the culture and so constrain behaviour.'[31]

What is made possible, or rather not made possible by these codes or frames is part of what critical consciousness addresses, for it is through language that an organised system of meaning is produced by the subject in order to render intelligible the disorder of being-in-the-world.

Because social work is much involved with talk, in the communication of values which are affirmed, repudiated or ignored in the course of innumerable encounters it can be readily charged with *reproducing* social relations. Language *par excellence* is the means by which these organised structures of belief are shored up — as feminists have consistently reminded us.[32] And for Marxists of a subjectivist, humanist persuasion, the corruption of the individual's consciousness and experience in the 'specific historical period of late capitalism' is what lends a complementary note of *moral socialism* to analysis, critique and remedy.[33] There is a sense conveyed of anger at the thwarting of the species-being, of hindered realisation,[34] and it is because of this that 'the opposition to capitalism (is) not only a power contest against an external system but against its inner hold'.[35] The terrain for the worker concerned with the well being of others is therefore legitimately that occupied by consciousness; it may once have been called casework, though now, refreshed, it might stand as the cultural interrogation of the categories of thought employed to order the world. Not surprisingly, people's right to knowledge of their predicament is a *sine qua non* of emancipation and is behind much of the thrust of critical theory. As Held observes '... by disclosing deformations of communication they attempt to restore to men and women a true awareness of their position in history'.[36]

The dialectical interplay between the politicisation of the personal and the personalisation of the political creates the space which critical consciousness seeks to fill. It is surely significant that the caution and scepticism of the profoundly orthodox Paul Halmos toward the politicisation of personal troubles sees him much less able to deal with conscientisation than less subtle, more strident and more didactic approaches to 'politics in social work'[37]. In some way this might be precisely because of the successful fashion in which critical consciousness looks to the person-in-situation — that irreducible core of social work enquiry. Conscientisation seeks to overarch the discrete and reified circles which are society and the person; or as Longres and McLeod express it, 'consciousness raising presupposes a simultaneous concern for troubles and issues. but gives primary attention to the way in which public issues penetrate private troubles'[38].

The mood which informs conscientisation as an ethical enterprise is that no individuals should think of themselves as less than full persons simply because they happen to occupy a subordinate position which deforms their sense of self. Held again conveys the contribution which critical theory can make to this, since 'the goal of the critical sciences is to dissolve barriers to the self conscious development of life'[39].

The Reconstruction of Consciousness

In arguing for a social work which is prepared to move beyond superficiality and commonsense accounts of things to embracing the 'deep structures' of relationships and social existence, George Gammack sees the enterprise as one of, above all, *clarification*. He notes that people often find it difficult to reflect on 'anything other than that which is already manifest', and that this can contribute to their sense of stalemate or destructiveness. The task of the social worker is 'to take that which is for people latent, and to return it to them in some new form'.[40] Though bounded by an exclusively 'therapeutic' concern, Gammack says enough to offer further reminders that there is a unity with critical consciousness in which reflection, transformation and clarification are central moral (as well as operational) imperatives. There are other clear echoes, too: critical theory, like the social theory behind conscientisation, holds that

> "a great many of the actions people perform are caused by social conditions over which they have no control, and that a great deal of what people do to one another is not the result of conscious knowledge and choice. The critical model . . . requires . . . its practitioners to seek to discover quasi-causal and functional laws of social behaviour in particular social contexts"[41].

These quasi-causal laws are the context within which a knowledge of the individual is established, perhaps through a process of interpretative empathy[42]. The method is to 'reveal the universal in the particular', in Adorno's phrase; to eschew a false or disingenuous 'respect for the person', but instead to see in the individual an instance or exemplification of what we know to be 'particular quasi-causal relationships (which) determine that their social situation be repressive'[43]. The task of critical consciousness is to 'situate' the person — and to share this with them — in order to liberate them from the kind of debilitating individualism which causes a shut down in autonomy and an introjection of helplessness.

Critical consciousness sees oppression or 'troubles' as expressions of communal distress. Its *structured* rather than idiographic presence is what fires people looking to encourage critical consciousness amongst those with whom they are working. Because people are obliged to enter into given economic and social relationships often marked by an absence of mutuality, then these *lived relations* generate a particular attitude to the world. Through material or emotional vulnerability their self is deformed as it becomes locked into the particularities of place, unable to comprehend what lies behind and beyond the immediacy of experience; the racist white youth who 'sees' 'immigrants' taking jobs is a depressingly apposite example.

Part moral outrage, part critique, the manner in which 'living in capitalism' (or

racism or patriachy) limits the individual's range of thinking about the sources of both psychological and material domination becomes a point for grasping people's response both to themselves and to the world they inhabit, or what Leonard has referred to as the dialectical relationship between consciousness and material existence[44].

The communication of values and ways of thinking are, as I have earlier suggested, important elements in many social work encounters, both prosaic and 'therapeutic'. Helping people gain a particular 'personness' is perhaps one way in which social work can challenge the conventional categories into which people order their cognitive worlds. Now all this is decidedly unlike that kind of 'help' advocated by those who would wish to remove from social work (or its kindred activity of probation) anything tainted with the therapeutic brush which reconstructing consciousness implies here. But equally what is being discussed is not and should not be arcane, for critical consciousness seeks to build upon the perhaps fractured or even 'imaginary' grasp of their own predicament which people hold. As Freire has argued, conscientisation involves a pedagogy which is not didactic, but rather works towards illuminating understandings currently held and revealing them as partial truths only. This is what from a more conventional perspective might be called the *nameless dread* which for a multitude of reasons is not admitted to our consciousness[45]. It is the stage of awareness that Alschuler calls 'magical', because people feel powerless before an awful reality and an awe-inspiring 'irresistable force which changes or maintains things according to its will'[46]. It is, in other words a mood of fatalism, of things beyond our control yet which controls. It is this *appropriation of the will* that so contracts consciousness that it reflects the material experiences of subordination; consciousness *is* ideology in this account of things. Critical consciousness undertakes to break through this mythologising edifice of ideology by way of the process of *naming* — putting anxieties and feelings, barely acknowledged possibilities, into words. What has previously been unconscious is made conscious so transcending the structures of communication which distort access to understanding. Critical or renewed consciousness accordingly lends linguistic and cognitive coherence to those scarcely discernable sentiments which are contained so effectively by the systematic failure to 'name things otherwise'. 'Naming' moves a person's grasp of his or her situation on from where it is at present, beyond the purely immediate and experiential to the reflexive and 'theoretical'. There is a quizzing of what is given to the individual by lived experience, for this reflects not only the extant (and often oppressive) social arrangements, but also the impact of ideologies which socially construct the ordering of that experience.

Critical consciousness obviously rests on a view that we can move from the distorted to the accurate representation of how things really are; it implies too a Kantian notion of truth wherein there is a correspondence of thought to reality. It means the person charged with 'directing' the emergence of this revivified consciousness has a clear grasp of the greater adequacy of his or her knowledge compared with everyday recipe understandings. This is crucial because conscientisation seeks a cognitive accord between the subject and the objective circumstances they occupy, so it is important to know what that objectivity might be. This is a problem for any doctrine of liberation, whether individual (like psychoanalysis) or collective (like

Marxism), since 'we' know *a priori* the conditions which thwart that emancipation. Nonetheless, both critical theory and conscientisation remain, I think, more agnostic about the nature of truth (or reality) which might be attained than they do about the nature of the present consciousness which should be set aside: a progression away from a state which is *false*, to something which, if not true, is moving in that direction. Both are concerned with the process of interrogating present impediments to knowing, with the *process* of reconstructing consciousness anew rather than with achieving some ultimate state of 'grace' *per se*.

Hence it is that Freire talks about penetrating the phenomenological essence of the object one has in front of oneself in order to analyse it thereby offering up a 'test to reality'[47]. The materialism that speaks of the quasi-causal nature of the social world, then, suggests that what people 'see' depends on how *life* is produced and interpreted, but movement towards what the essential truth might be is attained more by the struggle of reflection on the present and its inadequacies than by a revelatory 'falling of the scales'. Social work in this sense is akin to the kind of social scientific enterprise described by Outhwaite, neither arrogating each and every understanding held by members, nor refraining from interrogating them either out of ethnomethodological purity. 'The social scientist', writes Outhwaite,

> "must begin with data which are already partially interpreted in the ordinary language of everyday life. Moreover, social scientists cannot coherently aim to provide a natural science of human life, but rather to deepen, systematise and often qualify, by means of empirical and conceptual investigation, an understanding which is already present"[48].

New knowing emerges from within the old as this becomes progressively more bankrupt in its capacity to deal with lived reality (the doctrine in a romantic ideology for a woman whose experience of marriage is marked by financial and emotional subordination for example). It does not come from the imposition of irrelevant criteria or catagories. The old axiom of starting where the client is is all well and good in one respect, though it is not so helpful in saying where we might be going, about which social work, at least in its popular everyday voice, remains coy. Critical consciousness is at least explicit about the direction of that change, but it does share with the nonjudgemental maxim of orthodox social work a sense of an unfolding of consciousness, of a striving towards 'perfect knowledge'. Both conventional social work and critical theory are, somewhat surprisingly, dialectical, sensitive to past certainties and future possibilities. As Adorno (cited in Held) states, 'only an essentially undialectical philosophy . . . could maintain that the old problems could simply be removed by forgetting them and starting fresh from the beginning'[49].

Freire is adamant that critical consciousness emerges out of what he calls dialogical relationships between teacher and taught, and that in this reciprocating process both learn. But of course, however democratic or non-hierarchical, however non-didactic, it cannot be anything other than the teacher having an agenda, a path, which is the preferred one to follow. Unless Freire is in favour of solipsism — which he is not — it is difficult to see how conscientisation as an invitation to 'the people to grasp with their minds the truth of their reality'[50] can avoid issues of ontology ('reality') and

epistemology ('truth') raised by such a definition. Of course, conscientisation does have *a priori* categories with which it explains the human condition and in this sense it is the same as any other coherent body of theory and knowledge. It is impossible to deny the directionality behind critical consciousness; since it regards consciousness as a human capacity which should be *developed* it can only do this if it breaks from solipsism. Critical consciousness is accordingly an attempt directly to confront *ideological* (and hence 'distorted') knowledge and the associated limitations on consciousness. Because it accepts the material basis of personal troubles, conscientisation inevitably accords an epistemologically privileged status to certain kinds of causal accounts of those troubles.

In establishing the merit of 'naming' problems in terms of the communality of many misfortunes — the universal in the particular once again — we can strengthen and give substance to often tentative and inchoate 'feelings' of ill ease. Through continued criticism and reconstruction, the partiality of perspectives can be progressively overcome.

The Burden of Knowing

Somewhere Freud says that the objective of therapy is not to create a euphoric cure, but merely to render neurosis as everyday unhappiness. The charge that might be levelled at critical consciousness is that it too expands the linguistic and cognitive horizons to the extent that it raises dilemmas or moral imperatives for action which were hitherto shrouded. The oppressed are now aware of the circumstances which bring about their oppression, and this, it might be argued, merely compounds their misery. Ignorance, if not exactly bliss, is at least comforting.

Two objections might be made here: one is that ignorance is often miserable and that many conditions of distress arise from a dissonance between what is felt and what is capable of linguistic articulation. Secondly, the process of knowing might itself offer the prospect of action designed to solve the problem not previously recognised. Critical consciousness clarifies issues for the actor, even if it expands the existential burden. There is also something faintly sinister, or at least rather arrogant, about keeping people in ignorance of what has befallen them, though this, of course, is not to deny that the matter should be handled with sensitivity and an awareness of the 'teachable moment'. Critical consciousness opens up the prospect of corrective (and ethical) action for those who hitherto regarded themselves (and were seen by others) as crudely determined automata. As with Socrates (and more prosaically with psychodynamic psychology) such an approach cries out that the unexamined life is not worth living. There just might be, then, a moral imperative which speaks of supplanting mere being-in-the-world with a more reflexive awareness of that world.[51] That which is hidden can more easily mystify, breaking through the veneer of 'adjustment', 'civilisation' or 'contentment'. It constitutes the nameless dread which rules the person.

Social work's pursuit of subjectivity and its commitment to life enhancement should therefore suggest that involvement with consciousness could figure more explicitly in how 'intervention' is approached. A technicist concern with service delivery, whilst eminently rational, effectively shifts social work from a moral-

humanist discourse to one which is concerned with instrumental reason, with allocation, regulation and, all too often, client-objectification. The cultural tradition wherein moral-practical insight serves as a clarification of how the subject might act rationally to solve particular problems has been supplanted by a more empirical, objectivist approach[52]. And this is not just the province of the 'technicist right', with its mania for 'efficiency'. It has a broader cultural momentum than political allegiance alone allows: one has only to reflect (perhaps with embarrassment) on the way in which, not so very long ago, *Case-Con* ridiculed 'case work', crudely substituting the discourse of subjectivity for that of materialism, economism and superficiality. superficiality.

Conclusion

I have here concentrated more upon the linguistic and cognitive focus of conscientisation than upon the means of testing the adequacy of the new knowledge arising from critical consciousness. And of course, 'linguistic formulation' may not be enough, it needs to be accompanied by repeated corrective experience, (the equivalent of 'working through')[53]. Systematic evaluations of this process are not yet available, though there are accounts of the related consciousness raising employed by feminist social workers[54]. But — in defence of 'speculative contemplation' — what has been outlined here is a pedagogic device as much as a theory of practice. My concern has been to show the fundamental place that critical consciousness might have within the purposes of social work — admittedly conceived in somewhat abstract *essence* rather than in agency practice, but offering nonetheless at least a snippet on how the activity might be constituted as an occupational and ethical project for students and clients alike. Conscientisation shares with social work 'proper' a humanising, actualising, problem solving and emancipatory concern. *If* social work is about these processes, then there is no reason why critical consciousness should not be admitted to the fold.

I have tried then to set out some of the principles behind conscientisation and the way in which it arguably addresses a fundamentalist constituency within social work as well as a more self consciously radical one. Its application — its morality if you like — also resonates with a principled commitment to the individual's right to an authentic rather than deformed sense of self. The goal of the critical sciences (into which one might place at least 'my' version of social work) is to dissolve barriers to the self-conscious development of life. Critical consciousness is not a fancy meta-method that subsumes all within it; it does not claim to *summarise* practice, but rather to 'radiate through the work we do in whatever ways that are possible' in such a way as to infuse what generally occurs in everyday social work.

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'The mezzo level: conduits of care, welfare organisations and the supervisory state'. Chapter four of *Welfare, Power and Juvenile Justice* (with R Harris). Tavistock (1987) pp. 87-103.

See the end of the next contribution for the bibliography from *Welfare, Power and Juvenile Justice*.

4 The mezzo level: conduits of care – welfare organizations and the supervisory State

'Whilst [social services] departments are not simply outcrops of some universal self-generating bureaucracy neither are they associations of uncontrolled self-supporting "professionals". Whilst they are not simple obedient agents of social control, neither are they unrestrained instigators of social change.'
(Brunel Institute of Organization and Social Studies 1974: 19)

'Probation work is a clear example of a marginal occupation. Probation officers are in an ambiguous position with regard to two systems of control: the legal and the social services . . . The probation officer is frequently caught among the wishes and demands of probationer, judge, department administrators, police, social service agencies, and influential members of the community.'
(Thomson 1984: 111)

The deviant, disadvantaged, or distressed may experience welfare work through particular encounters with specific workers which they may characterize as helpful or not, useful or not, and so on. But the nature and content of these encounters emerge not only from the personal characteristics of the workers, but also from the policies, practices, priorities, resources, and culture of the bureaucracies which employ them. Organizations variously constrained to meet need, censure the wayward, and contain the disagreeable will formulate workload priorities for their staff in ways which most readily show them to be discharging their mandate in a manner pleasing not only to employees and clients but also to the various outside interests which influence their activities. The time to be spent on particular problems, the interpretation of permissive legislation, the procedures to be followed in specific instances, the resources available for various provisions – home helps, meals on wheels, intermediate treatment, day centres – all reflect policies which, though possibly influenced by the professional staff, are by no means determined by them. Yet decisions of this kind impact profoundly on the nature of the experiences of the clients as they sit, in the interviewing room or at home, with their welfare workers.

Equally, as employing agencies the organizations exercise different

levels of control over their staff according to the nature or politicality of the work they may be doing. Quite obviously in child protection cases all social services departments have procedures, manuals, and close monitoring arrangements at both inter- and intra-organizational levels, and the matter is also very seriously addressed in probation offices. That such prioritization reflects principally external pressure need hardly be emphasized: children who may be at risk of violence, after all, receive so much more urgent attention than, say, elderly people who may be at equal or greater risk of self-injury that simple humanitarian concern cannot be an adequate explanation. This vulnerability to outside pressure of welfare organizations – social services departments in particular – is the central theme of this chapter. It is a matter which extends beyond the area of child abuse to permeate also the agencies' responses to a wide range of duties, among them the supervision of young offenders.

As David Howe has observed, then, we cannot decontextualize professional practice from the organizations within which it takes place: it does not have a separate life of its own (Howe 1986). A similar point can be made about the impact of the agencies on the supervision orders made by the court, and which their staff have to manage. A supervision order, though it originates in the juvenile court, takes its meaning from the organizational processes which turn it into reality: it is not only what the court orders but also what the supervisors do. It is an almost universal experience for tensions to emerge, covert practices to develop in relation to the management of the orders, and various forms of occupational deviance to occur (Pearson 1975a, 1975b). Although some of the deviance may reflect private activities by the front-liners who supervise the orders, it would be naive to assume that the non-reporting of undetected offences and the failure to return to court recalcitrant clients, for example, are anything but implicitly if not explicitly sanctioned activities within the agencies themselves.

But the matter is not simple. The organization does have its differences with the court, which mean that the latter frequently fails to get what it wants from the supervision order. At the level of practice, the organization makes particular demands of its front-line workers. But different and contradictory processes also occur which undercut the transformational impact of the organization itself. First, in relation to the courts, though squabbles and manipulations of the kind we have been describing are indeed everyday occurrences, behind them lies a broad consensus which ensures that the disputes take place against a background of shared assumptions about the very nature of delinquency. More precisely, courts and agencies are the

products of those assumptions, their very existence and meaning being framed within a discourse which, for example, takes delinquency to be an individual act requiring individualized treatment. It is in this sense that *the agencies convey as well as transform ideology*, and we explore the issue as the first of two themes to be developed in the next section.

The second of these themes involves the analysis of the organizations themselves, *sui generis*, as *open systems* variably vulnerable to pressures from different external sources, but also containing within themselves a conflict of traditions – notably between the Poor Law and autonomous professionalism – which is worked out in practice between competing operational models of agency service and independent practice. By separately discussing social services departments and the probation service we shall show that whereas the latter has effected a feasible resolution of this problem, social services departments remain vulnerable both to attack from without and to dissension from within.

The welfare organization, then, is neither a passive container of active professionals nor a force which destroys professionalism itself. If, as Maurice Kogan and James Terry have observed, one does not want (we would say need) professionals to act as professionals, one would hardly go to the trouble of employing them (Kogan and Terry 1971); hence David Howe overstates the matter when he suggests that the organization 'determines' practice (Howe 1986); it clearly emerges from the organization but exists in a dynamic relationship with the demands of managers. In this chapter we trace the line through court mandate, organizational imperative, and agency practice as a means of accounting for the nature of the supervisory practices we observed in our study.

At this point, however, we must confront a particular linguistic problem. We have been speaking, and shall continue to speak, of 'the organization', or 'the agency' as though to imply both that it represents an homogeneous, even organic, whole, and that the front-line worker is somehow outside of it. This is not our intention: any complex organization contains conflicts both among different levels of staff and different categories of staff – between senior and middle management, for example, and between the professionals and the administrators. Equally, to address the front-liner, the person is *within* this mêlée, both influencing and influenced by it. When in this book we speak of 'the organization' we shall be referring to the formal policies and less formal official expectations which emerge from it and which may be subverted at any level. This, we know, is unsatisfactory to the organizational theorist, but we can only plead that one has to

draw the boundary somewhere, and our boundary reflects the fact that our main interest in welfare organizations is in the extent to which their policies and norms have a transformational effect on the court order, and the ways in which those policies and norms are passed on to and further transformed by the front-liners. Readers with a more detailed interest in welfare organizations will doubtless look elsewhere for fuller discussion (see, for example, Billis 1984; Blau and Scott 1963; Brager and Holloway 1978; Hardiker and Barker 1981: ch. 4; Hasenfeld and English 1974; Kakabadse 1982).

Welfare organizations: two themes

Welfare organizations as carriers of ideology: when the juvenile court makes an order transferring responsibility for the management of a youngster to a welfare agency, it effectively removes that youngster's social label of 'defendant', replacing it with a new label, 'client'. We know that to the already stigmatized the process of 'becoming a client' is typically further stigmatizing (Rees 1978; Page 1984), and that the positive professional ideologies of 'respect' and 'confidentiality', for example, are constantly undermined by the status, history, and function of the agencies of which the professionals are a part. Clients bring expectations to their encounter with the agency which reflect their folk-knowledge of that agency, its predecessors, its existing clientele, even the building in which it is housed – the spectre of the 'Bastille', for example, has repeatedly haunted former workhouses to whatever subsequent use they may have been put. As a general principle, the more stigmatized, the closer to the residuum, a particular client is, the more he or she is likely to perceive the agencies in negative, censorious terms.

Stereotypes are not, of course, immune to change, and are repeatedly modified or confirmed by the day-to-day practices which occur within those parts of the organization which the new client encounters (see, for example, Hall 1974). But a folk history of stigma, back through national assistance to public assistance and the 'means test man', is not easily erased, and nor, given the residual income maintenance functions which the social services department at least has assumed, is there strong reason why it should be (Handler 1973). To develop this point somewhat we return to the Charity Organization Society, whose rationalism we mentioned in Chapter 2, as a case study in the developing culture of the welfare agency.

The Charity Organization Society (COS), founded in 1869, represented a point of convergence of two contradictory trends in Victorian thinking: the concern to give alms to the poor for the relief

of distress, and the belief that to do so undermined the moral qualities necessary for personal success (Stedman-Jones 1971). The COS was in part the philosophical child of the revisionist philosophy of John Stuart Mill, whose *Utilitarianism* had been published in 1861, and to whom the Greatest Happiness Principle was no private psychology but encapsulated higher social duties which included charity:

> 'It is better to be a human being dissatisfied than a pig satisfied; better to be a Socrates dissatisfied than a fool satisfied. And if the fool, or the pig, are of a different opinion, it is because they only know their own side of the question. The other party to the comparison knows both sides.' (Mill 1861: ch. 2)

But of at least equal influence on the society were those thinkers such as Barnett and Lock, whose acceptance of the more stringent tenets of classical Utilitarianism remained generally firm. Indeed the society's early years and predominant influence coincided precisely with the popularity of Samuel Smiles, whose *Self-Help* had first appeared in 1859, but whose later books, *Character* (1871), *Thrift* (1875), and *Duty* (1887) were yet to come. The society, in short, operated within a profoundly individualistic frame of reference.

But the danger remained that, corrupted by the example of the clever pauper ingeniously extracting funds from the emotionally vulnerable wealthy, the labouring classes would become demoralized and diverted from life's stern disciplining. To give, according to this ascetic approach, required not an emotional response to the apparently simple property of destitution, but a 'scientific' reaching beyond the observable, to assess the person beyond the facade, to judge the genuineness and character of the supplicant. This was revealed best by a historical or biographical account of the person's pathway to the present: how past vicissitudes had been conquered; how far previous moral fecklessness had contributed to present misfortune; what balance existed between catastrophe and complicity in this person's impecuniousness. Biography became essential to assess character and evaluate signs of progress or resolve. Where such signs were apparent the reward was a charity which, unlike admission to the workhouse, left relatively intact the supplicant's civil and citizenship rights.

Hence in that private forerunner of State welfare provision, a system of files, records, and documentation emerged not for either benign professional or neutral administrative reasons so much as with a view to moral accountancy. The evaluation of a claim needed no longer to depend upon the moment of contact with the agency – the nature of the problem, the appearance of the supplicant – but

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extended into a cumulative picture of *this* person's achievements, previous disbursements received, and so on. The power of the agency hence incorporated past as well as present morality, and a morality exhumed by personal questioning, visits, enquiries of relatives and neighbours. But even though knowledge of claimants was central to the application of professional power, it was but the other side of the coin from the agency's concern for the acuity of its staff, so that what was known and recorded reflected an 'objective' truth, not some personal idiosyncracy of the person who knew and recorded it. Emphasis upon functional roles rather than the individuals occupying them marked the bureaucratization of welfare.

The Charity Organization Society represents an ideal type of the transformation of charitable or philanthropic endeavour into a tutelary process. The regulation of the lives of the poor by monitoring and the giving or withholding of alms reflected not only the penetration of bourgeois values into the lives of the residuum but also, more subtly, a recognition of the fact that those values already existed among the respectable working class, and had to be inculcated in the undeserving poor:

'it is a serious overestimation of the role of the state to assume that its sanctioning powers were the exclusive source of the social division between criminal and respectable. The strategy of mass imprisonment is better understood in class terms as an attempt by the authorities to lend symbolic reinforcement to values of personal honour which they themselves knew were indigenous to the poor.'
(Ignatieff 1981: 174)

Hence the COS involved not only colonizing the poor but also buttressing the honour of the respectable by delineating boundaries between them and the disreputable; a process, in short, of classification. But it is by studying the form rather than the content of the society's activities that we can glean a better understanding of contemporary welfare organizations – the accumulation of knowledge by, and its transmission among, people who are functionally interchangeable; the creation thereby of the reification or objectification of that knowledge; the link between knowledge and power; knowledge which is 'special', or expertly processed, remote somewhat from the discourse of the laity.

In spite of the COS's eclipse by the collectivist responses to social need of the twentieth century, there remain sufficient numbers of 'residual' problems to justify the continued individualization of supplicants. So the COS's legacy is principally that of method: the holding of information on individuals, the establishing of files and

cases, the social history all continue, and testify to the Society's role as a progenitor of rational and bureaucratic welfarism. The individualism and uniqueness of each case were established through the mechanisms of assessment and classification; the eschewing of the impressionistic and the endorsement of privileged knowledge prefigured the later experts, even if arcane psyknowledge (Donzelot 1980) had not yet taken the place of the moral certainties of characterology.

But the reality of the COS's power lay not so much in its vaunted rationality as in the vast gap which existed between rational theory and capricious practice. Certainly to its supplicants, 'cringe or starve' seemed the choice, a phrase which itself encapsulates a view of a disjunction between rational and fair ideal and moralistic and arbitrary reality. The COS's agents seldom if ever attained the wisdom of Solomon, and such wisdom, such omnicompetence, would have been essential were they to have made correctly the kind of judgements which they claimed the legitimacy to make. Rather, the very capriciousness of the almsgiving heightened the power of the donor and weakened that of the recipient. Capriciousness destroys certainty, the linearity of cause and effect, the process by which all the players know the rules. Capriciousness meant that the only option open to the poor was to apologize, to assume they had erred, to repent – in short, to cringe.

Now the purpose of this case study is not to suggest in some simple way that no 'progress' has been made; that the moralism of the society permeates the professionals of today. But nor can the agencies of today quite divest themselves of either the method or the purpose of the COS. In method, as we have seen, they replicate and extend the doctrine of individualization in terms both of professional practice (collecting social histories, noting detailed explanations of events) and of organizational procedures (caseloads, allocations, files which render the professionals interchangeable, which make knowledge the property of the agency). In purpose they classify, process, judge, and act upon judgements to the extent that any professional ideology of 'non-judgementalism' is circumscribed almost out of existence into philosophical approaches barely sustainable in practice (see, for example, Stalley 1978). Of course judgements must be made, and they must have social consequences: how could it be otherwise when resources have to be allocated responsibly and accountably; when private information innocently given may form the basis of a report to a court? How can knowledge not be power, and how, conversely, can the possession of power not lead to the demand for, and acquisition of, knowledge? That the practice is carried out courteously and

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in a friendly manner is of itself desirable; but the means *by which* it is done cannot deflect the reason *why* it is done.

The agencies constitute a process of bureaucratizing their clients' lives consistently with these methods and purposes. Problems, needs, triumphs, failures become translated into 'file' knowledge, individualized and dislocated from the wider social and economic processes which generate them. It is in this sense that the agencies regulate disruptions in public order, that they transfer the ideology of delinquency from courtroom back into society, where by processes of monitoring, befriending, cajoling, and generally making work for idle hands they seek to impose good behaviour on that minute proportion of young offenders who come their way. But the irony of this individualization is that it is itself an organizational routine: when everybody is individualized, nobody is individualized, and the ultimate logic of file-knowledge is the identical processing of innumerable cases: interchangeable clients dealt with by inter-changeable professionals.

There is also a sense in which the internal structure of the organiz-ation can reproduce, legitimize, and consolidate the allocation of more general social roles. One of these is the issue of gender. A majority of front-liners are women, subordinated to male managers, but also, by virtue of their necessary contact with clients, conveying a particular imagery of what women 'do'. The imagery is ambiguous; at one moment women may be seen as responsible for this part of the apparatus of control, at another as softening the control itself by being interposed between it and the people being so controlled (Heidensohn 1985: 172–73). The ambiguity reflects, therefore, not only the paradoxes of welfare which we have discussed, but also broader paradoxes to do with the dualisms embedded in women's social roles.

It is in these ways that welfare organizations are conduits of care. They share the court's individualistic perception of delinquency; they reflect that perception in their own structure and practices; and the historical tradition in which they are located is predominantly (though not exclusively) negative: the Poor Law and police court heritages of the two agencies have been too little acknowledged by commentators. The agencies' procedures operate too at a level of irony: as we have seen, to individualize the person behind each face queuing up in the waiting room is such a routine procedure that its consequence is to individualize no one.

Within the organization, however, exist two contradictory elements which modulate this function of conveying ideology. First, although the ideologies of individualism held by the court are indeed carried into the supervisory process, at an *operational* level there exist the

conflicts and jealousies, the suspicions, to which we have earlier alluded and which militate against the possibility of a closely collusive relationship between court and agency. The practicalities of the day-to-day management of a statutory order differ markedly from the practicalities of passing sentence and having done with it, and almost inevitably lead to elements of concealment and minor deviance; equally the role of the organization differs from and is in some respects more restricted than that of the juvenile court: the former has no deterrent or prophylactic mandate, for example, and the exercise by the court of its powers in a punitive way not infrequently engenders hostility within the agencies. Further, the agencies are even less concerned with what the offender has done than with what he or she is. So embedded in the juvenile justice system is the welfare agency, of course, that this is no qualitative shift: that comes earlier in the process, usually at the moment the police decide to take action and a kindly, concerned juvenile bureau officer knocks on the front door. But though at this later stage the sentencing act which creates a tutelary process is a quantitative not a qualitative shift, a shift it nevertheless is, as the court's action becomes a springboard for further interventions of a kind which, as we shall later see, are somewhat unpredictable.

The second conflict is that between the negative stereotyping and the professional value and aspiration of the front-liners. The organizations, it will be recalled, are not *simple* successors of poor law provisions, but contain within them different, contradictory traditions based on professional counselling and quasi-therapeutic child care theories. These traditions are embedded in the professional ideologies of the front-liners themselves and reinforced in their training (which, to make the point even more explicitly, is usually studiously referred to as 'education and training'). The struggle of the professionals, whose motivation is on the whole benign and ameliorative rather than controlling, to carve for themselves a 'space to care' in an organization which all too often seems antithetical to such an objective (Hardiker and Barker 1981) is a matter to which we shall return later. Welfare work is, however, an 'interstitial profession which serves both the client in need and society at large' (Compton and Galaway 1975: 472), and, in that it serves the former only to the extent permitted it and in the manner laid down for it by those representatives of the latter who employ its practitioners, its capacity to provide for its clients in the way those practitioners might wish is considerably restricted.

Welfare organizations as open systems: if the Charity Organization Society represents for us a paradigmatic instance of the links between

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organizations, ideologies, and the social structure, it will be obvious that similar links exist today. Welfare organizations are part of a broader social context and penetrated by a range of external influences (E. Roberts 1982; Hardiker and Barker 1981). These influences affect their functioning at levels both of policy and practice, and though they cannot be said to *determine* all such policies and practices (complex human organizations being notoriously immune to any such certainties), they do impact upon them profoundly:

> 'An open system exists, and can only exist, by exchanging materials with its environment. It imports materials, transforms them by means of conversion processes, consumes some of the products of conversion for internal maintenance, and exports the rest. Directly or indirectly, it exchanges its outputs for further intakes, including further resources to maintain itself. These import–conversion–export processes are the work the enterprise has to do if it is to live.'
>
> (Miller and Rice 1967: 3)

So while to the professional supervising the delinquent, the desired output might be either the psychically adjusted or the materially better-off client, with a reduction in delinquency having less centrality, to the impinging systems the desired export is reformed ex-delinquents. That such a demand is unrealistic will be obvious; equally obvious from our own argument thus far will be that, unlike the manufacturing system which produces commodities attuned to the demands of the environment or it perishes, the welfare organization is not dependent on this kind of 'success' for *survival*, because it fulfils certain social functions by its very failure: it intrudes, classifies, monitors. But surviving by failing is an uncomfortable way of earning a living and leads to a range of strategies which we begin to describe in our next section. For the moment, however, our concern is with the nature and level of the demands of the environment on the organizations. They exist at two levels – the level of *broad socio-political realities* and *precise legislative sanction*. The relationship between the two is a complex matter beyond our present scope, and details of the agency sanction afforded both social services departments and the probation service are available elsewhere (see, for example, Jarvis 1974; G. Roberts 1981). Our concern here is with the nature of the relationship between the welfare organizations and the broader socio-political realities which impinge upon them.

At this point we introduce two illuminatory concepts. First, Dingwall, Eekelaar, and Murray have helpfully presented the organizational task as a *charter*, a notion embodying a fusion of the legislative and the interpretive:

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'By establishing governing charters under the control of the public or their elected representatives, state intrusion into citizen's [sic] homes may be legitimated. The chain of moral accountability is the essential corollary of the preservation of liberal ideals. Inasmuch as it is broken or eroded, surveillance becomes oppressive rather than facilitative, coercive rather than regulatory. . . . While the professional has only to square his or her conscience, the bureaucrat or bureau-professional must attend to a line of external constraint.
(Dingwall, Eekelaar, and Murray 1983: 120–21)

The charter defines not only the framework of rights and duties which constitute agencies' sanction, but also a set of roles they must play and judgements they must make. It will be recalled that of their essence these judgements are not always amenable to rule-making, nor can they be in some rationalist way value-free. The essence of a child abuse scandal may well not be simply incompetence (though that is not to deny its existence) but a different interpretation of the charter between members of the organization and its environment: it is, after all, one thing to export an unreformed and unrepentant delinquent, quite another to export a dead child. But when, as in such an instance, a charter embodies the necessity of a judgement being made among competing values or conflicting rights, in the absence of clear and broadly accepted operational guidelines the outcome must be acrimony, uncertainty, and variant decision-making. Jasmine Beckford may have been a child in trust (Blom-Cooper 1985), but the balance in a charter between the child protective duty and the duty to respect family rights is easier determined with the benefit of hindsight than at the time. Hence this comment:

'While our personal conclusion must be that agency staff are over-respectful of parental liberties and that "justice for children" may require more rather than less state intervention, we recognise that these deficiencies, by our standard, do not represent failings by the individual agencies so much as the inherent limitations of the licences and charters which we, as citizens, have granted to them.'
(Dingwall, Eekelaar, and Murray 1983: 207)

But the idea of a charter means that individual welfare workers cannot legitimately shirk the controlling functions mandated to their agency, whether they involve child protection, the management of community service orders, or the supervision of young offenders. They may, of course, lobby to change the charter, but pending change, or if they are unsuccessful, they are obliged to do their duty. It is in this sense that welfare work exists within a preordained discourse out of which it is

an idealist illusion to pretend there is a path (Webb 1981; and from a different perspective, Davies 1985).

The second concept is that of *organizational resolve*. The charter given to organizations does not represent any broad social consensus, nor is it always clear. Both probation and social services agencies are subject to conflicting pressures and demands – the latter, as we shall show, very much more than the former – and out of the plethora of external pressures and internal conflicts not only about specifics but also, existentially, about the entire nature of the enterprise of welfare, the mass of people who ultimately comprise the organization have by some means to determine, negotiate, or have imposed upon them a set of operational policies and practices by means of which to tackle the tasks and fulfil the roles embodied in their charter. The extent to which this is done we term organizational resolve: it is that which brings an organization to approach a particular problem in a particular way, which determines how far the different levels and types of workers who make up the organization agree about the purpose and method of an intervention; how far conflicts can be contained; how far there is goodness of fit between the organizational practices and the demands of the environment which receives the organization's exports (Kakabadse 1982). In looking at, successively, probation and social services agencies, we shall show that organizational resolve is a useful vehicle by which to analyse certain similarities and differences between them.

So all welfare organizations contain conflicting models of service delivery, and it is preferable to analyse what might otherwise, and more individualistically have to be interpreted as coincidental mass incompetence in terms of organizational or structural factors of this kind. For example, in our study of supervision orders (Harris and Webb 1983; Webb and Harris 1984) we saw on the part of social workers in particular an apparent abdication of control which reflected more than anything a conflict between the preconstituted role of welfare work which we described in the last section and the 'professional' ideology of practice of the front-liners; a disjunction, that is to say, between an *agency service* and an *independent practice* model of service delivery, the one reflecting hierarchical models of account-ability, the other autonomous social workers acting in a client-centred way on the basis of professional values and knowledge. Although in the day-to-day world a truce can often be sustained between them, it is by definition at points of difficulty that the cracks appear, and stark choices are presented to workers between what *should* be done (for which knowledge they might draw on books of practical ethics, such as Leighton, Stalley, and Watson 1982, or Rhodes 1986), and what

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the agency's charter decrees *must* be done. This conflict accounts in part for the sense of alienation among social workers in particular detected by researchers (DHSS 1978; Hadley and Hatch 1981; Glastonbury 1982).

If organizational resolve is vulnerable to these conflicting ideologies (which hide behind them fundamental questions such as 'what kind of social worker am I?') it is vulnerable also to two further and related matters. The first lies in the very answer to the question just posed: 'what kind of social worker am I?' has numerous possible answers which range from community activist to overt social controller. Hence the diversity of answer which can be given – and justifiably given as well as theoretically defended given welfare work's abundant pluralism – leads to yet further questioning, an overarching *Angst* which finds its expression in occupational uncertainty and an acute awareness of the paradox involved in working for a profession which is so singularly unable even to define what it does.

Then also comes the matter of professional knowledge, which contributes to welfare work's relatively low insulation from lay opinion. Seen by some as censorious interlopers and by others as paid excusers of moral failure, welfare workers are ready scapegoats for numerous ills. Those who claim expertise in the intangible domains of relationships, parenting, and delinquency will inevitably clash with a culture which expects of its experts certainty and specific output. 'Everybody' knows something of the concerns of welfare work, and, as we remarked before, sometimes claims greater prescriptive certainty than the experts themselves. There is no barrier of arcane knowledge, no agreed expertise.

Such realities impinge variously on the two agencies. For the *probation service* the matter, though not simple, is the less fraught. Linked as it is through employing committees dominated by local magistrates to the Home Office of central government, the service stands largely outside of the more volatile politics of local government. As that arm of the criminal justice and penal systems which reaches out to the world of reformation and community control it does, of course, have acute and painful dilemmas with which its practitioners grapple (Harris 1977), and the dilemmas have their echoes in equivalent services overseas: hence Fogel notes that 'The struggle to disentangle help from control is ubiquitous in Western Europe' (Fogel 1984), and Conrad that 'no one person should attempt to combine surveillance and service . . . these two functions must not be assigned to the same agency' (Conrad 1984). But of course such a move – however conceptually neat or professionally desirable one might think it to be – would leave probation with the need to be given a new charter; and as it

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happens, the 1980s have seen the English and Welsh probation service resolve its conflicts not by separation of function but by the development of a new operational ideology which has significantly heightened its organizational resolve. The development, described in Chapter 2, of the ideology of decarceration has provided a common denominator between the professionals and the managers (Boswell 1985). Though there remain pressures from many probation officers to revert to a more 'caring' service, these now appear to have little political influence in the face of pressure and resource allocation which are designed to further the objective of decarceration (Haxby 1978). The controlling probation service sought in the mid-1970s by the revolutionary tactics of the Younger Report has, then, arrived more gradually, encouraged by the selective allocation of resources. Hence the service's general adherence to the demands of the Statement of National Objectives and Priorities (Home Office 1984) has ensured a relative lack of conflict with the Home Office. At a more local level, though relations with courts vary, and there is a particular problem to do with the use of recommendations in social enquiry reports, the service generally has come to be seen as providing a useful resource for courts. It has, therefore, been able to secure substantially more organizational resolve than has generally been the case with the social services departments.

Social services departments, unlike the probation service, are not deeply penetrated by a single system, but rather encounter an abundance of demands, many of them conflicting – from elected members of the local authority, members of the public, community activists, the local Press, and voluntary organizations in particular. Their position, as bureau-professional organizations within the local authority sector dealing with politically fraught issues of rights and duties makes them highly visible. Whereas the Home Office is nothing if not cautiously conservative, local government can be volatile. Elected members may take a back seat in professional matters but they may lead from the front; they may see the department as a vehicle for a front-line attack on racism, sexism, capitalism, or the nuclear arms race (for examples of some of these hopes for it see Jordan and Parton 1983); or they may regard it as a necessary evil, to be starved of resources in order to facilitate fixing a low rate. They may have views on residential care, trans-racial fostering and adoption, the involvement of the community in the care of the elderly; they may initiate or oppose joint-funded projects with the National Health Service; they may determine research and training priorities for their staff as well as recruitment policies.

This vulnerability reflects two issues, not only the politicality of the

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location of social services, but also the weakness of the framing of welfare as a professional activity. Since, as we have already observed, boundaries do not blur in one direction only, the lack of definition within the sphere of the social (Donzelot 1980) which encourages many welfare workers not just to help the poor but to attack poverty, not just to protect but to seek to extend clients' 'rights', equally leaves welfare work vulnerable to penetration from outside. And the social services department is particularly well placed (a privilege it increasingly shares with the education department) to become a political football. The issue of community social work is a case in point:

> 'First, there are those who believe that it could be mobilised into political pressure groups to obtain a massive increase in statutory resources. Secondly, there are those who believe that the community model would generate a sufficient volume of informal care services to justify drastic cuts in statutory funding.'
>
> (Pinker 1982: 261)

These conflicting pulls, this politicality, are both cause and consequence of a lack of organizational resolve within the departments themselves.

But in addition to being, by their nature and location, thus permeable to multiple influences from without, social services departments face uncertainty and dissension from within. One source of uncertainty is the very multiplicity of the duties enshrined in the charter. There is a plethora of goals, of competing demands, and the combination of infinite need and finite resources can become organizationally debilitating to the extent that the work is never done; further, the fact that to address one need is to set aside another leads to yet more pressure from the set-aside clients. Such is the nature of social workers' own commitment to ideals, that the pressure is quite liable to be orchestrated from within the departments themselves by those front-liners who seek to champion the cause of the neglected clientele.

It is aspects of this nature of social work which lead to the second source of dissension from within. Drawing as they do on the American-influenced model of independent professionalism, social workers typically take on their clients' battles as their own, sometimes to the extent of seeing themselves actually penetrating their own employing agency as emissaries on their clients' behalf. Though all professionals will seek to influence some aspects of their activities, the impact of social workers' attempts to do so is considerable. This is partly, of course, because of the *extent* of it, but that is an effect more than a cause of the agency's vulnerability. The problem of knowledge-

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status is more central. Such is the competing range of theories about, say, mental illness (all of them passed to social workers in simplified form) that any debate about it will include one set of arguments in support of anti-psychiatry, another in support of the value of psychiatric symptomatology. Although neither side ever actually wins the argument, each one pursues the case as though it is not only a difference of opinion but also a personal *credo* which is at stake. When the organizational charter includes an obligation to enforce sanctions alongside an occupational disinclination to do so; when the status of the knowledge on which an instruction from a senior to a junior professional might be based is so doubtful; when theoretical debates are frequently mere metaphors for the expression of deep-seated ideological conflicts; when the most junior members of the organization claim autonomy for 'professional opinions', the potential for the convincing exercise of organizational resolve is not especially great.

Conclusion

As a conduit, the welfare organization represents the *locus* of a convergence of different and conflicting traditions; it embodies both conflict and consensus with the court. It effectively provides the means by which the logic of the individualization of criminality is taken to its natural conclusion – a form of supervision and control. But in carrying that ideology it in effect transforms it. This transformation is in part a reflection of the practicalities of managing people who have already proved to be unmanageable, and involves a series of accommodations to a reality which it would be beyond the court's sphere of knowledge to comprehend. But also it transforms as a result of a number of separate pressures to which it is subject – pressures both from outside the system and from its own professional staff. These external pressures impinge differently in kind and degree on the two welfare agencies, but create a situation of considerable instability for the social services department in particular. Internal stresses for the organization result from the clash of traditions, the organizational and the professional, which, we have argued, take on different manifestations in the two agencies. In probation the conflict has been in good part resolved around the common objective of decarceration, an objective which simultaneously ensures the growth of the organization *and* provides a professional legitimation for probation officers themselves. But in social services departments there is no such device, and this lack, combined with the vastly larger and more complex

charter to which the organization works, creates a distinct lack of organizational resolve. That this problem presents acute difficulties not only for the organization, but also for the front-liners will become apparent in the next chapter.

'The micro level: the experts at work'. Chapter five in *Welfare, Power and Juvenile Justice* (with R. Harris). Tavistock (1987) pp 105-129.

5 The micro level: the experts at work

'But, at the outset, we encounter this difficulty: Ought the moral reform to exclude the physical suffering and the shame which accompany punishment? If so, is the penal sanction to consist, not in the menace of an evil, but in the promise of a good? The effect of such a proceeding, it is evident, would be completely to overturn the motives of conduct, since the worst part of conduct would be rewarded by especial care on the part of the State; untouched by any agency of physical suffering, the criminal would receive as the sole consequence of his crime, the privilege of gratuitous instruction.'
(Garofalo 1914: 256)

This chapter completes our conceptual analysis of the supervisory process by examining just what it is that the experts themselves do in their day-to-day encounters with their clientele. The chapter as a whole falls into two main parts: first we complement the argument in Chapter 4 that the intra-organizational conflicts within welfare agencies cause particular difficulties for the experts themselves, by exploring some of the ways in which the professionals experience and cope with what we term 'occupational uncertainty' (Webb and Harris 1984). We then report empirical findings which are relevant to our theme in this book. First we shall describe the clients themselves – their class membership, offence behaviour, family patterns, school conduct, and the like – to defend empirically the argument that many of the people subject to supervision orders are really remarkably ordinary; and secondly we shall describe the rather different supervisory practices of the two agencies responsible for managing the orders to illustrate just how capricious are the demands made of the youngsters themselves, how dependent not on their behaviour or needs, but on chance, the agency to which they have been allocated, and doubtless, within the agency the particular supervisor.

By this means the empirical study parallels the theoretical exegesis of Chapters 3 and 4. Just as Chapter 3 demonstrated the imposition of arbitrary power over more and more offenders, so does the first part of the empirical report indicate the apparent, albeit implicit, censoriousness to which the supervisees are subject; and just as Chapter 4 showed how in practice that power was variably and

spasmodically implemented, how it was refracted through the filter of the agency to the extent that its reality was almost unrecognizable from the *Foucaultesque* theory of the matter, so do we see the objects of supervision by the two agencies subjected to significantly different expectations.

This chapter's empirical component relates to the boy offenders in our main sample; the subsample of girls, in relation to whom there are additional matters which also require addressing, is the subject matter of Chapter 6.

Occupational uncertainty

Welfare workers are subject to a cruel irony: what for many of them are the very reasons for their occupational existence – the alleviation of problems, the expression of altruism, a commitment to social justice – have been denounced as a sham, with welfare work itself held to be covert coercion, an ideological practice individualizing structural problems and blaming their victims.

In the academic establishments where they are formulated, these criticisms are seldom that bald, but in the vulgarized form in which they are received by welfare workers they can easily appear destructive and demoralizing. Even community care, the epitome of deprofessionalization, returning power and responsibility to the people, becomes in this analysis a mere exercise in the extraction of yet more unwaged work from women.

Nor, of course, is the political right any friend of welfare workers; indeed such is the revolutionary fervour rhetorically attributed to them by some demagogues of the right that one might be forgiven for believing that the phrase 'social worker' has been inadvertently inserted in a speech intended to refer to the 'socialist worker'. But welfare work has also been arraigned not just on these moral and economic grounds but also as empirically ineffective and professionally spurious (Brewer and Lait 1980).

To neither set of criticisms can welfare workers make a confident reply; indeed the experience of listening to them trying to explain and justify their existence to those outside their own professional and assumptive worlds is typically a dispiriting one. Doctors and lawyers find it, obviously enough, much simpler to say what they do – indeed everybody knows what they do; but beyond that they manage more straightforwardly to deal appropriately with the various conflicts of loyalty or crises of conscience which they encounter. Doctors have to deal individually with structurally caused diseases; lawyers have to prosecute defendants with whose position they are in personal or

political sympathy. But in these cases the professionals concerned develop coherent practices for dealing with such problems, and seem better able than welfare workers to separate the individual action from the issue to be raised with the professional association or in the correspondence columns of *The Times*.

Welfare work is a more weakly framed activity, characterized less by coherence than by the necessary but conceptually unclear function of plugging gaps left by the more strongly framed activities of other professionals. Teachers, doctors, housing officials, and policemen all have relatively clear job descriptions but encounter problems in the lives of the people with whom they deal which, severe as they may be, fall outside that description: professionals should not normally, after all, become embroiled in matters outside either their competence or their jurisdiction. But welfare workers have no such circumscription: in particular cases they may be adjuncts to almost any of these professionals because their role may impinge on the functions of all of them. They may be interpreting what the other professionals are saying or exerting pressure on the professionals themselves to do something different; and they may be collecting evidence from others to take action consistent with their own statutory powers. They provide homes for the old and for children, they have to authorize compulsory admissions to mental hospitals; but they are not experts in gerontology, child development, or mental illness. They have a nodding acquaintance with all these areas and much more besides, but their role remains nebulous, their niche hard to define.

How, then, do welfare workers respond to these assaults from outside which can so devastatingly fuel their own existential uncertainties? Both the meaning of the question and its answer lie in the nature of *the social*, that sphere within which we have seen them to operate. In the amorphousness of the social lie far more possible actions than there do clear rules for selecting among them. Though this is true for social professionals other than welfare workers – health workers are an obvious case in point – the flaccidity of the welfare workers' knowledge combined with the nature of their task and the power they exercise create particular problems for them, and of course a high degree of unpredictability and vulnerability for their clients (Howe 1980; Sheldon 1978). The rules to which these experts are subject come from legislation and agency policy; but except in particular and controversial areas these are blunt instruments: they confine the discretion of the experts in that they set certain boundaries around their rights and duties, it is true; but they do relatively little to govern the way the experts structure their day-to-day decision making. As we have already observed, their capacity to do so is

strictly limited: if rules could be made, the experts would be both unnecessary and undesirable.

Faced with these uncertainties (and their concomitant opportunities for diversity and idiosyncracy) the experts naturally enough present a fragmented and internally inconsistent set of ideas about what their work is and about how best to go about doing it. Of course diversity and informed debate are appropriate attributes of any profession, and we take for granted that they will exist among welfare workers too. But such variations are not quite what we have in mind. The nature and degree of fragmentation seem sometimes to leave unclear quite what is the core activity against which these deviations are to be measured, as the experts create for themselves a private coherence, a cognitive and assumptive structure by which and through which to identify their own professional selves. Such fragmentation, though we think it especially characteristic of social services departments (for reasons which will by now be obvious), is not a matter from which the probation service is immune either.

Fragmentation takes many forms: it may be principally professional or political (an unsatisfactory distinction we know, for how, in the sphere of the social, can we separate the two?) But some experts will find their occupational coherence through a flight into crypto-therapeutics, as though a thorough grasp of the Milan Method of Family Therapy or Transactional Analysis could truly provide it; others, ironically, have embraced the idea of retributive sentencing (to the inadequacy of which one might have thought their very presence stood eloquent testimony) and due process, becoming adherents of the 'back to justice' movement. Others gain their gratification from an association with more prestigious professionals such as consultants and judges, basking thereby in a modest quantity of reflected glory; others again busy themselves by becoming aligned with members of the oppressed classes.

So there are probation managers who argue that the job is to control offenders on behalf of the community (Griffiths 1982) and involves the unquestioning acceptance of authority (Bibby 1976); there are conservative or liberal academics attacking the role of critical theory in welfare work training (Davies 1985) and advocating the selection of less questioning students by courses (Munday 1972). And there are probation officers who say this:

> 'It is through the union that probation officers can make links with other workers and with wider struggles within the state. Organization in the working-class form of the trade union facilitates these links. It also helps probation officer escapes from an esoteric

identity as "the neutral professional" to a recognition of their status as sellers of labour power, having common cause with members of the working class. These links enable us to connect with, and contribute to, broad and fundamental struggles over social justice, distribution of wealth, eradication of poverty and provision of welfare services.' (Walker and Beaumont 1981: 194–95)

This might seem a relatively ambitious mandate for the humble probation officer, but the strategies for achieving such laudable goals seem designed less to bring about these transformations than to excite the maximum hostility among managers and magistrates. Indeed perhaps a more discreet revolutionary would have disseminated them to the faithful by word of mouth rather than committing them to print:

'It is wise to guard against unnecessary criticism. Management scrutiny tends to concentrate on written records and the keeping of up-to-date minimal records is an important safeguard. Often work with clients will have to be justified in the sort of language management prefers – references to esoteric social work theories, the needs of the relationship and professional judgement will prove useful.' (Walker and Beaumont 1981: 186)

In short, business as usual, albeit justified conspiratorially. One would expect nothing else given the discourse within which probation work is located: the central irony of attempting to insert a praxis rooted in Marxist materialism into probation practice is that the very notion of so inserting it is quite irredeemably idealist given the specific and subordinate place occupied by welfare work generally within the social formation (Webb 1981).

But the sum effect of all these fragmented interpretations, these personal syntheses, is paradoxically to create yet further uncertainties: the professional co-existence of such incompatible beliefs and purposes, lacking as some of them do even the most basic agreement about the core of the job can have no other effect. But its cause is explicable hardly at all in terms of the private psychopathologies of the individuals concerned, and for academic social scientists to believe that the answer lies in selecting a different kind of person is clearly absurd: people are moulded by the processes of which they become a part, and where those processes are themselves unclear, where there are multiple paths to heaven, none, in the relativisitic extremes of welfare talk, preferable to another, diversity will inevitably occur.

The diversity, then, emerges from aspects of the welfare workers' role, task, history, and knowledge; it is inseparable too, as we argued in Chapter 4, from the traditions of which they are a part.

'No poet, no artist of any art, has his complete meaning alone. His significance, his appreciation is the appreciation of his relation to the dead poets and artists. You cannot value him alone; you must set him, for contrast and comparison, among the dead. . . . The existing order is complete before 'the new work arrives; for order to persist after the supervention of novelty, the *whole* existing order must be, if ever so slightly, altered.'   (Eliot 1951: 15)

The more secure the tradition, the more it can accommodate and respond to change and diversity. Probation, hence, manages better to retain its central meaning while incorporating a wide range of differences of perspective within it. With a secure base, diversity and debate challenge, stimulate, and are essential for development. Without such a base – and the reader will recall the multiple and conflicting traditions of the social services department – diversity can all too easily become dysfunctional: either the enterprise is diverted into putting into operation some new fad – whether of organization or professional activity – or it is impugned for failing to address competently some new and pressing social necessity. But it is simultaneously insufficiently secure to incorporate this new exigency and insufficiently confident to decline to do so. Its practitioners, therefore, are vulnerable to prolonged and repeated states of self-recrimination, which cause them to doubt ever more centrally the value of their professional work.

The consequence of all this is occupational uncertainty, its practice, once the specialisms and the fragmented commitments and the conflicts with agency expectations have been allowed to run their course, is that paradoxical process of *routine individualization* which we mentioned in Chapter 4, whereby simultaneously everybody and nobody is individualized. Routine individualization exists as the very child of the social, between, at the one extreme, the non-discretionary application of specified rules, and at the other, the *truly* individualized response to every problem, the flexible, creative practice which, though part of welfare work's professional persona, is altogether unrealistic among bureau-professionals whose lives are measured out in files and cases, and who have little option, at least after the first flush of enthusiasm has worn off, other than to approach each new client with the question: 'what type of case is this?' (Giller and Morris 1981).

By 'routine individualization' we mean the application of individual or organizational procedures which, though perfectly sensible to those who apply them, are typically less so to those who are subject to them. The considerable differences between the routine individualizations of the two welfare agencies illustrate clearly that

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these practices have their origins in factors other than logic or rationality, in the private and unpredictable cultures which have emerged in the agencies themselves, as the unstable heirs of disparate and conflicting traditions. Routine individualization, as we shall demonstrate in the next section, finds its way into social enquiry practice. We found in our study that recommendations for supervision orders were rarely amplified by reference to what would actually be done if an order were made; nor did courts blanch from making orders without such justifications. But the significance of this is that 74 per cent of our sample of boys were trivial or medium offenders with no more than two previous convictions, and 46 per cent were first offenders of whom fewer than one in five had committed a serious offence. The very free-floatingness of the supervision order, then, links with the uncertain processes by which it comes to be recommended to make it an aspect of the tutelary process. In the next chapter we shall show how this tendency is especially manifest in the case of girls, but in that of boys too variety of purpose and method, wide-ranging power, lack of coherent tradition, theoretical flaccidity and the experts' simultaneous vulnerability to generalized criticism and imperviousness to precise accountability, combine to make the supervision order just such a form of surveillance.

Now all these uncertainties make of the order too a disposal *suspensive* not only in its imposition but also in its implementation. Two separate processes are at work here. The court, in making the order, has in mind that non-cooperation will lead to a return to court and a more punitive response. But the uncertainties of the supervisory role mean that this very seldom occurs in spite of the widespread failures among a majority of clients to conform to the letter of their orders. Indeed, in our study the most conforming clients were generally those of whom least was demanded.

This may seem a curious point to make: after all, does not the potency of power itself exist in its application, either in its subduing of opposition or, in *Foucaultesque* ironic vein, in failing to do so and hence justifying more of it? How can the failure to report a recalcitrant supervisee to the court constitute a further form of power?

The answer to these questions must itself be equivocal: after all it is perfectly obvious that to return every offender to court on every minor infraction would indeed constitute power manifest. But such is not the only kind of power. The effect of the simultaneous sabotaging and sustaining of the process of which they are a part by the experts is to transform rather than diminish the power to which their clients are subjected. It is to add a second layer of suspensiveness to an already suspensive order, to suspend suspensiveness itself, and to

create of the experts themselves a filter through which decisions are
to be made as to whether the power of the courts is to be invoked. This
is itself a form of power: as any schoolboy once knew, while to be
caned was painful, it was hardly more so than the daily rough and
tumble of the playground or the rugby field; and in a curious sense
to be caned was a relief: one had experienced, survived, and so, oddly,
triumphed over the worst that could be done to one, and certainly no
second caning would be so fearsome. But *never* to have been caned was
to be subjected to a fear of the unknown – a terrible threat and the
most cogent of reasons for generally behaving oneself. Much the same
applies with the supervision order. The powers of course in respect of
breaches of supervision are less than awesome: a fine or an attendance
centre order is a mere pin-prick, after all. But to have the unrealized
possibility of a return to court hanging over one's head is likely to be
a rather greater inducement to conformity.

The power of the supervision order, then, lies not in some efficient
policing practice whereby the least deviance is brutally avenged; we
have no stories of children being incarcerated for being ten minutes
late for an appointment. On the contrary, so far as we can tell with
some offenders missed appointments are so common that they are
hardly even commented upon by the supervisors: and every excuse is
doubtless accepted. There are analogies with a study of the manage-
ment of child abuse:

> 'the structures of the organizations involved and the practical
> reasoning of their members have the effect of creating a preference
> for the least stigmatizing interpretation of available data and the
> least overtly coercive possible disposition. Officially-labelled cases
> of mistreatment are, quite literally, only those for which no excuse
> or justification can be found.'
>
> (Dingwall, Eekelaar and Murray 1983: 207)

This is occupational uncertainty epitomized; but it is, nevertheless,
the application of a peculiar, paradoxical form of power, not quite its
abdication. For the power is not something which the experts *can*
abdicate: it is there not because they have taken it, but because its
exercise is, in turn, imposed upon them. Studies suggest that however
the experts may conceptualize their activities in terms of 'care', this
reality of power, this sense of control is an ever present one for many
clients (Morris and Giller 1977; Morris and McIsaac 1978; Parker,
Casburn, and Turnbull 1981). As the agents of somebody else's
power, the experts' capacity to negotiate its exercise, though real, is
by no means uncircumscribed. There *are*, of course, good professional
practices for making sense of this negotiating potential: it is

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certainly neither our intention to belie the value of openness and clarity (of the kind advocated in, for example, the experts' own literature on 'contracts': see, for example, Cordon 1980) nor to suggest by omission that some experts do not handle their role very much better than others: everyday experience of welfare professionals confirms one's impression that vast differences in skill and ability exist. But the literature of the experts, or their 'value talk' (Timms 1986) would lead one to believe that such professional strategies are enough. This cannot be.

Clients on supervision orders exist in the space between what has been done and what is able to be done to them. A simple, if somewhat defective, analogy demonstrates the meaning of this. Most of us who drive motor cars at some stage commit minor infractions, normally matters of parking or speeding. That we are so seldom apprehended is a consequence both of the near ubiquitousness of the deviance and of police decisions to concentrate their resources elsewhere. We offenders at large are vulnerable, therefore, not only to bad luck but also to a change in policing which (doubtless for some internal, and hence obscure, reason) leads the police to wish to punish drivers speeding through the town in which we live. When we are caught and fined, seemingly arbitrarily, for an offence which we and millions of others have previously committed with impunity, we cannot, according to the principles either of strict logic or strict morality, complain at our lot, but unless we are extraordinarily phlegmatic we are likely to rail at the gods notwithstanding.

Motoring offenders are not, of course, alone in being thus vulnerable: Young has shown a similar phenomenon amongst marijuana users (Young 1971); prostitutes, shoplifters, importuners for immoral purposes, and the like, as offenders whose crimes are not only grossly underreported but also easily detected, are equally liable to be dealt with thus. A supervision order which imposes on youngsters who are *already* known to have broken the rule of law further rules to which the rest of us are not subject – to keep appointments with a supervisor, to attend school, to lead an honest and industrious life for example, and for a period generally as long as two years – precisely ensures that at some stage they will fail. This in turn creates amongst the supervisees a dependence for their continued freedom on the expert. No strict injustice occurs: the offenders should keep appointments just as motorists should obey speed limits. But the vulnerability remains and is in no way abolished by the relative unlikelihood of supervisees actually being called to account for their omissions and commissions.

Occupational uncertainty, then, has implications for workers and clients. In this section we have traced the origins and processes of the

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vulnerability: in the intra-organizational conflicts of which the experts are a part, in the unpopularity with others (including those radicals whom the experts might have expected to be their supporters) of welfare work, in welfare workers' own anxieties and indecisions and so on. But these uncertainties have implications not only for the psychic equilibrium of the experts themselves but also, as we have gradually moved on to see, for the fate of their clients. We have offered a model in which we see power over the clients exercised by people who feel uncertain, even resentful, about having to exercise it, but people also who are vulnerable to pressure from outside and who may operate within a cluster of differing and sometimes competing professional ideologies (see, for a further discussion of this issue, Hardiker 1977; Hardiker and Webb 1979). The rules which govern the exercise of supervision are unclear to the clients, however comprehensible they may be to the supervisors in terms of organizational routine and culture. But because that routine and culture are themselves vulnerable to attack from without or within, they may change; and this uncertainty increases the powerlessness of the clients still further. Even the non-exercise of power is, as we have argued in this section, an application of power; and when that non-exercise is itself perhaps subject to a policy change, a directive from government, a complaint from a judge or a shift in the interests of the experts themselves, the uncertainty of the experts and the discomforture of the clients are further augmented.

Supervising freedom

> 'A departmental committee . . . found that some boys had been placed on probation with a condition that for two years they should not enter a cinema; also that a young offender of 18 was directed not to smoke for the year of his probation and during that time was to remain indoors every night after nine o'clock. He was also directed to attend church once every Sunday. Another case was discovered in which a man and a woman found guilty of a joint crime, were directed not to speak to one another. Within a month of their probation they were married and how this tangle was sorted out is not reported.' (Mullins 1957: 27)

This section is divided into two parts. The two together comprise a compressed summary of part of our empirical data on boys; data on girls are included in Chapter 6. Since the book is not intended to be a research report, the section is relatively brief, and selected to illustrate empirically the themes which we have been discussing thus

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far. The methodology of the study is included in Appendix B. It will be recalled that the total sample is 971 boys aged 14 to 16 on supervision for an offence for the first time; 701 of the boys are supervised by probation and 270 by social services. Because, however, the source of our data was the welfare records of the youngsters, there are a number of omissions. Where records are incomplete or in some other way doubtful in relation to particular issues, we have discarded dubious material, and are reasonably confident of the accuracy of those data included. We were fortunate to have such a large sample; even with discarded files, our database for any one question never dropped below 700, which makes the study by a very long way the largest ever undertaken on the supervision order.

The first part of this section focuses on the supervised population itself, giving details of the kind of person who was placed on supervision; the second offers an analysis *by agency* of the supervisory process. The thrust of the first part will be that the population is remarkably ordinary, that many of the sample are supervised almost be default, that few demonstrate great need or present great risk. In the second part we shall demonstrate empirically some of our earlier theoretical and conceptual points about the differences between the agencies.

The supervised population: in our theoretical exegesis thus far we have painted a curious picture of an almost dilatory exercise of power by experts over very considerable numbers of the working-class young. We have described as *the social* the realm within which the supervision takes place, and have portrayed it as a norm-distributing sector, but as being itself characterized by a host of conflicting and competing norms. We have also shown how it is that this conflict of norms, of which the flaccid knowledge-base of the experts who inhabit the social is a part, has created an unpredictability, even capriciousness, which renders the experts relatively impervious both to control from above and to accountability to their clients. 'Capriciousness' is perhaps the wrong word for that which we wish to convey, for it smacks a little too much of malicious whimsy, a kind of social Russian Roulette. The capriciousness of which we speak is more benign in intent than that, albeit that elements of the Russian Roulette – perhaps with plastic bullets, though – remain. Impressed upon us, as we survey the scene, is the Nietzschean axiom that 'the consequences of our actions take hold of us quite indifferent to our claim that meanwhile we have "improved"' (Nietzsche 1886).

The supervisees were certainly ordinary in their personal and social characteristics. Although a disproportionate number were from one-

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parent families (one in five, against a 1978 average of one in nine: Central Statistical Office 1980: 81), some 80 per cent of the youngsters were from complete families with two parents. Of those from one-parent families the vast majority, as one would expect, had a father absent, and in about half these cases the mothers were in waged work, most of them in unskilled jobs. For these families money was clearly likely to have been rather tight, and if we add to this 20 per cent of the total those other financially precarious units where the father, though present, was unemployed, we find that at the time the order was made about 40 per cent of the total sample had one parent either absent or unemployed. This figure would substantially underestimate the impecunious circumstances of the families, since quite clearly many more would have had, or would come to have as the order continued, experience of parental unemployment. The overall economic tenor of the boys' homes was unskilled or, less frequently, semi-skilled. Fewer than 8 per cent of the boys (a total of 76) had one or both parents in 'white-collar' jobs, and it is likely (though not certain from the way we collected the figures) that a proportion even of these few cases would have had the other present in a lower-status occupation. Almost all the boys, then, came from working-class homes, in many of which the work situation would have been characterized by subordination, and where there would have been a reasonably high degree of financial uncertainty brought about by low wages or unemployment.

Being working class was the most marked characteristic of this group; within the class the sample was not especially atypical: certainly we uncovered no greater picture of social dislocation than one would expect to find among the working class more generally (see, for example, Townsend 1979). In short, with the exception of the single-parent indicator, the sample was of fairly 'typical' boys from fairly 'typical' working-class homes. The vast majority of the sample (78 per cent) were still at school, and almost all of the remainder were engaged in some form of employment or training, with only 3 per cent of the total sample being classified unemployed when their orders were made. This does seem a remarkably low figure, but it must be remembered that in 1978 the total unemployment figure was no more than 1,475,000 (Central Statistical Office 1980: Table 5.15).

It is also possible that, aware of the fact that to be unemployed might be disadvantageous in court, a number of the boys obtained some form of employment prior to going to court — though we have no means of verifying this. Certainly as a group the sample existed almost entirely within the financial and emotional orbit of the family. Of those at school, almost all were in normal secondary education,

with only 10 per cent either in special schools or remedial streams. We were able to inspect school reports in 759 cases of boys still at school; of these, as many as 54 per cent had good or average records of attendance, with the remainder characterized by varying degrees of absenteeism. But when we undertook a further analysis of the poor attenders, we found them no more likely to have been involved in serious than in trivial infractions. Nor, in spite of the generally negative tone of the school reports in the files, did it seem that as a group they were deemed especially disruptive or aggressive by their teachers.

This normality in education is worthy of brief note, since it has long been believed that some association exists between social failure and delinquency (see, for example, McDonald 1969; West 1969; West and Farrington 1973; though for an indication that the nature of this relationship is unclear, see the research review in Rutter and Giller 1983: 199 *et seq*). What we suspect has happened is this. The more disruptive or spectacularly unsuccessful pupils are likely to have come to the attention of the authorities at a younger age than our cohort, and to have been made subject at that time to either supervision or care orders. What may be interesting about our sample is that our selection procedure, by eliminating all but those offenders who are being supervised for the first time as young persons, has filtered out the more difficult youngsters and served to highlight the existence as supervisees of a large number of predominantly unproblematic adolescents.

This ordinariness extends into their offending behaviour, where relatively few of the sample could be said to be either serious or recidivist delinquents. We dealt with the *seriousness of the present offence* by creating a tripartite division into trivial (property offences of less than £10 value and common assault were the main matters here); medium (property offences of £10 to £100 and assault occasioning actual bodily harm); and high seriousness (property offences of over £100, grievous bodily harm, and malicious wounding). We also had an aggregation system whereby multiples of trivial offences became 'medium' or 'high' seriousness offences and so on. In this simple categorization, 30 per cent of the offenders had committed only trivial offences, 52 per cent medium; and only 18 per cent were high seriousness offenders.

But perhaps this rather surprisingly modest criminality was balanced by previous records, and the more trivial offenders had the longest records? Perhaps the serious offenders were more likely to be first offenders? In fact neither of these hypotheses is borne out to any marked degree: the range of first offenders in all three categories was

42–9 per cent with the highest number of first offenders coming into the middle seriousness category and not, as one might have expected, into the highs. There seems to be no significant additive influence in previous court appearances, and the range for recidivists (three or more previous findings of guilt) was only 7–10 per cent. In short, only a minuscule proportion of these supervision orders were in respect of persistent offenders. Quite clearly, therefore, as an 'alternative to custody' the supervision order in 1978 was almost completely irrelevant, and was rather drawing into the tutelary complex far larger numbers of marginal offenders who could almost certainly, as we are about to demonstrate, have been dealt with otherwise. There was no discernible proportionality about the orders, and this almost complete lack of tariff status means that they were being interpreted variously through the routine procedures of report writing and sentencing. When only 7 per cent of the serious offenders in our sample had three or more convictions, but 42 per cent of trivial offenders were also first offenders, there is presumably only one conclusion to be drawn.

We did generate one significant relationship which indicated a modest proportionality: between criminal status and the length of the order. We isolated the rather large numbers of trivial first offenders from all other supervisees, generating a status of 'not serious' for the former and 'serious' for the latter. On this very generous measure we did find that the former were rather more likely to receive one-year orders, but the two-year order remained modal for both groups: so 58 per cent of 'not serious' and 70 per cent of 'serious' cases received two-year orders, apparently as a routine disposal. Interestingly, almost no use was made either of the six-month order (which was newly available in 1978) or, at the other extreme, of the three-year order, which was clearly at this time going out of fashion. The lack of anything very specific to do in many cases, to which we refer later, may have gravitated against a six-month order, however, since if what was wanted was, as we believe, generalized supervision rather than the specific achievement of particular goals, then a two-year order would see all these youngsters out of school and into work; it would also involve their being subject to a court order as they went through the peak crime age of 15 to 16, though we do not suggest that this thought was specifically in the magistrates' minds.

A substantial minority of the supervisees were previously known to one or other of the statutory agencies (22 per cent to social services, 16 per cent to probation, almost none to both). We could find little reference in the files to contact with voluntary organizations such as the Family Service Units, which proffer professional guidance to the poorest, most disorganized families; nor were there many references

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to contact with the Child Guidance Service. We were keen to test whether previous contact with a welfare agency was associated with supervision orders being made, and here our finding was interesting and complex. We tested for previous contact with one of the agencies by seriousness of the offence. There was a patterned relationship between them which involved 59 per cent of trivial offenders, 55 per cent of medium offenders, and 51 per cent of high seriousness offenders having had prior contact.

Now the possible explanations of this finding are, first, that the same objective need which brought the offender into contact with the agency also justified the making of an order at this stage; and secondly that the contact itself had an amplificatory impact: that once one was caught in the net, in the net one stayed. For the first possibility to be plausible, we should want to see a persuasively argued report setting out a range of problems, a set of strategies for dealing with them, and a reason why it was necessary to have a formal order for these strategies to be pursued. But when we came to look at the experts' reports written on the offenders whom they knew, not only did we not find such strategies spelt out, but also we found that the report writers were marginally less likely to have recommended supervision for them at all than they were for the offenders who came to them new. (Supervision was recommended in 69 per cent of cases where there was prior contact, and 73 per cent where there was not.) Though we make nothing of this difference, we can certainly claim that at the very least offenders known to welfare agencies were no more likely to be recommended for supervision than were others; yet clearly magistrates were still making the orders.

This in turn is partly explained by the fact that rather more reports on previously known offenders were written by social services departments whose 'strike rate' in our study was significantly lower than that of probation (only 60 per cent of social services' clients had been recommended for supervision compared with 74 per cent of probation clients). Now it might be thought from this that the social enquiry report itself, by revealing intimate family matters on the basis of information acquired in the course of the previous contact, raised such concern among magistrates as to encourage them to make an order. This may be so: we can neither prove nor disprove it. But that such a consideration is at most no more than a subsidiary one is revealed by our analysis of those reports where a supervision order was made but not recommended. Of these reports, almost 40 per cent made no recommendation at all. This figure was partly explained by an especially heavy tendency in one social services department to eschew recommendations; but when this agency was discounted

'no recommendation' remained the largest single conclusion (at 31 per cent of the remaining total). Of the remaining unsuccessful recommendations, almost all were for low tariff disposals, with only 6 per cent for care or custody.

But when we analysed the cases for which no recommendation was made, we found that quite contrary to our expectations, the experts were significantly less likely to make recommendations in the case of more serious offenders: recommendations were made in 90 per cent of trivial cases but only 75 per cent of serious ones (using our tripartite classification). Quite clearly the popular view that not to make a recommendation in a serious case is to consign the offender to custody is not entirely correct; equally the finding suggests that magistrates see in the supervision order a feasible and desirable means of community control, as well as – or rather than – a form of social welfare.

When we add to this finding one which we shall further discuss below, to the effect that only a minority of reports which did recommend supervision spelt out what would happen if an order was made – what professional strategies would be utilized to solve problems or ensure control – we do have a situation in which a large number of rather ordinary working-class youths are being subjected to supervision for (mainly) two-year periods either without having been recommended for it or, if recommended, without any indication being given as to what would happen to them or why. The youths gave no great sense of having personal needs (we amplify this point later), and many of them seem not to have committed any offence more serious than the kind admitted to in self-report studies by up to 90 per cent of adolescent boys (Belson 1975). Somehow, however, they worked their way through the vagaries of the police cautioning and input systems (Ditchfield 1976; Oliver 1978) to be placed on supervision. Yet the more serious their offences, the less enthusiastic the experts were about supervising them. It was matters of this kind which we had in mind when we talked about the supervised freedom of the working-class young. We described the process as a kind of benign capriciousness, for in truth there is little or no malice about it. But therein lies the very source of power, for who could object to having a youngster overseen by a kindly probation officer or a youthful social worker in order to steer him through adolescence? Yet it is by these very means that the offending boy's world is penetrated, his family – and almost twice the national proportion of one-parent families appeared in our sample – worked with if it seems desirable to do so, the boy himself given, perhaps, compensatory 'treats', helped to find a job, guided to an adult life of contented conformity. This is supervised freedom indeed, but of a particular British kind. It has

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been called a 'Micawber approach' to the matter, a process of monitoring, chatting, 'forming a relationship', and 'being around', sometimes predictably, sometimes unexpectedly, in the hope that some time, some day, something which needs to be done will just turn up.

The process of supervision: although this subsection of the chapter is structured around an analysis by agency of the supervisory practices of probation officers and social workers, in strict terms we are not offering a precise comparison between them. For example, in five of our six research areas the local agreement between the two agencies was that the young person (aged 14 to 16) in our sample would normally be supervised by probation. Hence in all but that one 'deviant' area, social services' clients comprised those who would normally have gone to probation; and conversely, of course, in the one area the same point applied to probation officers' supervisees. The main reason for the allocation of supervisees in this way was that the supervising agency had either had previous dealings with the client himself or with some members or members of his family. Accordingly it was not surprising to find that significantly more social services clients had had previous contact with their supervising agency than had probation clients (Harris and Webb 1983; Webb and Harris 1984). This was so even though, as we previously remarked, we excluded all cases where the client had previously been subject to a supervision order.

This means that in looking at the practices of the two agencies we are not simply comparing like with like. There may be a greater distribution of social need among social services clients, though we have no reason to believe that there is any simple dichotomy here: probably more significant is that for a number of them intervention was already occurring in the family, and the making of a supervision order on a son was simply the provision of a different kind of legislative backing for work which was continuing anyway.

These are real differences and mediate any firm conclusions. The existence of need within the family may, for example, go some way towards explaining the greater tendency to which we shall draw attention later, for social workers to visit clients and families at home. But two points suggest that the answer is not that simple. First, the tendency towards more home visiting must be placed in a context whereby the contact between social worker supervisors and their clients of any kind is less than that between probation officers and their clients; and secondly, it is only for a minority of social services cases that home visiting could be considered to be anything like

intensive. Only 17 per cent of clients, for example, were visited at home on more than ten occasions on a two-year order, and while this was almost exactly twice the percentage of probation clients who received this degree of home visiting, the proportions remain small. However much young offenders supervised by social workers might have been regarded as candidates for the 'welfare' element extended by the supervision order, this was not apparently translated into practices designed to meet particular needs.

It seems unlikely then that supervisory patterns are some simple and rational response to problems. If this were the case, we should expect some sense of urgency on the part of social workers to make contact after the order was made. On the contrary, though, *Table 1* shows that social workers allowed significantly more time to elapse between when the order was made and first seeing their clients than did probation officers, who themselves seldom demonstrated any great sense of urgency in the matter. No less than one-quarter of social services clients were not seen for thirty-six or more days after the order was made. *Table 2* points also to a highly significant difference in the frequency of contact between worker and client with social workers involved in markedly less contact with their supervisees than were probation officers.

Social workers' tardiness in this respect was extended to the first three-month period of the order. This three-month test is an important yardstick: welfare workers tend to say that it is the first few months of a statutory order which are crucial: the relationship is made or it is not, the tone of the proceedings is set. Accordingly we selected two levels of contact frequency over the first three-month period: a low one (three meetings) and a high one (eight meetings), and tested how many social workers and probation officers met their clients on three or fewer occasions (52 per cent of social workers and 26 per cent of probation officers) and eight or more occasions (13 per cent of social workers and 23 per cent of probation officers). In each case the difference was significant, especially strongly so on the low incidence test ($p < 0.001$). These figures are for two-year orders; when we tested for one-year orders we found a similar disparity, with 23 per cent of probation officers seeing their clients on three or fewer occasions, as against 48 per cent of social workers.

The trend for social workers to have significantly less contact with their clients than probation officers continues throughout the order. For example, on two-year orders 69 per cent of social services clients were seen on fifteen or fewer occasions compared with 42 per cent of probation clients ($x^2 = 34.52$, $df = 1$, $p <= 0.001$), a pattern of difference reflected, though less markedly, in the case of one-year

Table 1 *Number of days between order being made and first contact by agency of supervision*

number of days	probation		social services	
		%		%
0 – 7	189	(30.9)	52	(25.0)
8 – 14	135	(22.1)	48	(23.1)
15 – 21	120	(19.6)	30	(14.4)
22 – 28	53	(8.7)	16	(7.7)
29 – 35	41	(6.7)	13	(6.3)
36 +	73	(12.0)	49	(23.5)
total[1]	611	(100.0)	208	(100.0)

$x^2 = 18.50$; $df = 5$; $p < 0.01$

Note: [1] In all tables, 'totals' reflect the usable files for any particular item, and for this reason are smaller than the sampled population.

Table 2 *Frequency of contact by agency of supervision*

frequency of contact	probation		social services	
		%		%
0 – 5	69	(11.2)	51	(22.9)
6 – 10	105	(16.9)	57	(29.9)
11 – 15	128	(20.8)	49	(21.9)
16 – 20	117	(18.9)	27	(12.1)
21 – 25	83	(13.4)	16	(7.2)
26 – 30	40	(6.5)	14	(6.3)
31 +	75	(12.1)	10	(4.5)
total	617	(99.8)	224	(99.8)

$x^2 = 41.39$; $df = 6$; $p < 0.001$

orders. Using here ten visits as the break between a high and low incidence of contact, 63 per cent of social workers' clients fell into the latter category compared with 35 per cent of those supervised by probation officers ($x^2 = 10.60$, $df = 1$, $p <= 0.01$). Of course contact alone is not enough to judge the adequacy of what takes place between worker and youngster and it would clearly be of limited use to make a fetish of this. However, when there is relatively little contact with the client or any member of his social world it is difficult to maintain that anything constructive at all is happening. The only possible exceptions to this are when although the welfare worker is not seeing

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the client, someone else is carrying out supervision on his or her behalf, which the welfare worker is monitoring and supporting; and when the welfare worker has located a specific problem in the client's social world, and is working on that for the benefit of the client, following Baker's dictum, that is to say, to go not 'where the pain is' in conventional therapeutic terms, but 'where the pain is caused' (Baker 1983). In relation to the first of these possibilities we did indeed find that social workers were significantly more likely to involve the parents in the supervision of the child (32 per cent of cases as against 18 per cent of probation cases) and also the school (14 per cent against 9 per cent); although neither set of workers made more than minimal use of other community figures as surrogate supervisors. This finding supports the possibility that in the midst of their confusion social workers were struggling to articulate a model of supervision conceptually distinct from the criminal justice model embraced (albeit uneasily) by probation officers.

It would, however, be wrong to draw too stark a contrast between the habitual explanations adopted by the two agencies responsible for supervising young offenders: *Table 3* sets out the various problems typically identified by social workers and probation officers, from which it is clear both sets of workers share an occupational ideology which sees juvenile delinquency as legitimately and appropriately explained by the family nexus. Indeed the rank correlation between the items referred to by social workers and probation officers is highly significant (*re* 0.948) and indicates a tendency to 'weight' the items similarly. None the less there are, within this similarity of 'profile', differences in the frequency with which they report the problems, and in all but two of the items (8 and 9) the incidence of reporting such problems by social workers is significantly greater than that of the probation officers. It is not that social workers hold one view of delinquency and probation officers another – that the former are the sole exponents of the family dynamics model of causation – but rather that the strength of attachment to this explanation is somewhat greater for social workers than it is for probation officers.

If there is an element of need apparent in the lives of those youngsters encountered by social workers which makes the 'welfare' concerns of the supervision order the rationale for it as a disposal, there was little evidence of this being said in so many words in the social enquiry reports presented by them. We were interested to see to what extent reports, when they did recommend supervision, set out a proposed 'social work strategy'. The concern which magistrates have expressed about giving a 'blank cheque' to social workers (Berlins and Wansell 1974; House of Commons Expenditure

Table 3 *Cases seen to exhibit various 'problems' by agency of supervision*

					agency of supervision						
		probation (n = 701)				social services (n = 270)				statistical values	
		yes	(%)	no	(%)	yes	(%)	no	(%)	x^2	p
1	disruption caused by separation	108	(15.4)	593	(84.6)	79	(29.3)	191	(70.7)	23.94	< 0.001
2	significant separation from parents	333	(47.5)	368	(52.5)	169	(62.5)	101	(37.4)	17.73	< 0.001
3	chaotic household	33	(4.7)	668	(95.3)	32	(11.9)	238	(88.2)	15.48	< 0.001
4	problematic parental disciplining	276	(39.4)	425	(60.6)	136	(50.3)	134	(49.6)	9.59	< 0.01
5	history of economic hardship	108	(15.4)	593	(84.6)	64	(23.7)	206	(76.3)	9.04	< 0.01
6	deviant family norms	62	(8.9)	639	(91.2)	39	(14.4)	231	(85.6)	5.98	< 0.02
7	problematic school behaviour	144	(20.6)	557	(79.5)	72	(26.8)	198	(73.3)	4.23	< 0.05
8	parental criminality	64	(9.1)	637	(90.9)	34	(12.6)	263	(87.4)	2.42	N.S.
9	absence from school	214	(30.5)	487	(69.5)	95	(35.2)	175	(64.8)	1.93	N.S.

Committee 1975) might be diminished were the experts to describe in some detail what they had it in mind to do if an order was made. A specific recommendation for supervision linked with an identifiable welfare work strategy was found in just 30 per cent of the social enquiry reports prepared by probation officers, and only 13 per cent of reports written by social workers, a difference which is statistically significant ($x^2 = 28.57$, $df = 1$, $p < = 0.001$). The 'welfare object-ives' – which presumably the workers concerned might see themselves as having some competence in addressing – do not come across too often, and with notably less frequency and saliency in the case of social workers. It is unclear whether this arises because they are in fact less clear than probation officers about the purposes of supervision or simply that their court report technique finds them less adroit at spelling out the sorts of things that magistrates feel should be expressed.

Finally, in both agencies we found a remarkable tolerance of clients' failures to conform to the requirements of their orders. Supervision orders typically require offenders to report to their supervisors as instructed, to be available for visits to their homes, to attend school, and to lead an honest and industrious life. Although our comments on this tolerance must be seriously mediated by a significant change in the law during our research period (it being possible to take breach proceedings only against clients subject to supervision orders made after 17 July, 1978) (Children and Young Persons Act, 1969, section 15(2A) as inserted by the Criminal Law Act, 1977, section 37(2)(3)), it was previously possible for supervisors to initiate care proceedings in cases where supervision had broken down (Children and Young Persons Act, 1969, section 15(1)).

About twice as many probation as social work clients appear to have breached their orders at some time. On one-year orders breaches were recorded by 69 per cent of probation and 36 per cent of social work clients; on two-year orders the figures were 73 per cent and 38 per cent. The likeliest explanation of this is that very much more was demanded of probation clients than was demanded of social work clients; a subsidiary possibility is that probation records were more complete than social work ones, though here and elsewhere we omitted all records with apparent omissions: over 100 cases in this figure. We noted 460 cases where a probation client had missed office appointments and only 91 social work instances; 13 per cent of pro-bation clients on two-year orders failed on eleven or more occasions as against only 1 per cent of social work cases. Against this, however, over half of social work clients were asked to report to the office on five or fewer occasions on a two-year order, as opposed to less than a fifth

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of probation clients, and only 9 per cent reported on sixteen or more occasions (as opposed to 39 per cent of probation clients).

Yet in spite of the frequency of failure to conform in both sets of client, only nine probation clients and one social work client were returned to court for breach proceedings, and in only ten probation and four social work cases were clients recalled for care proceedings.

In short, the picture is of each agency struggling to make sense of the unclear task it has been asked to perform. We are not arguing that the situation is straightforward for probation and not for social workers, for while it *is* the case that probation practice is closer to what courts expect, it is not precisely what courts expect; nor is it the case that probation officers do not themselves struggle with the problems inherent in having to serve two masters. Rather it is that there exists within the probation service a set of routines for the supervision of offenders in the community; those routines have developed over many years and are based on office reporting interspersed with home visits and occasional group activities. When supervision orders were introduced in the 1969 Act, therefore, there was a series of tried (if not tested) practices on to which the new task could be grafted, and the supervision order seemed to present relatively few new problems for probation officers. Supervision orders were assimilated into existing practices and those practices constituted a fairly strong tradition of court-based supervision.

In the case of social services, however, the very fact that they were being asked to take on part of the probation service's work indicated that something different was required, but the legislation and departmental guidance to local authorities were not such as to elucidate quite what it was. But social services departments had a huge task already in creating a unified culture from a range of different traditions, some of which they might wish to continue (such as the tradition of a professional casework service with a distinct knowledge and value base) and others of which (such as the Poor Law origins of welfare services for elderly and handicapped people) they might wish to repudiate. So for magistrates and others in some simple way to 'blame' social workers for their practices with young offenders or for their ambivalence about the court is to miss the point that such characteristics cannot be located in the personality defects of the workers, the 'ivory tower' training they are said to receive, or matters of that kind: magistrates, police, justices' clerks, lawyers, and probation officers may not like it, but social workers themselves are not necessarily the correct targets for their spleen.

This then is the situation in which social workers found themselves in 1971. They had been given hitherto undreamed of resources; they

carried with them – and had themselves encouraged – the hopes of politicians and public. But their organizational base was new and chaotic (Satyamurti 1981) and their knowledge base rather light. The ideas that they did have – that catering for the welfare of offenders and helping put their families and communities to rights would make a significant impact on both the quality of their lives and on their offence behaviour – were quickly to be disproved empirically and rejected ideologically by the liberal and radical intellectuals who might have become the gurus of a new welfare age. The social workers had considerable power but little tradition or experience on which to base its exercise. As time went on they had to make sense not only of a new situation, but also very quickly of the collapse of part of the very theoretical and conceptual structure on which their existence was based. Only if we grasp this central point can we begin to understand the complexities of their task and the contradictions of their situation.

Conclusion

This short empirical report both justifies and explains the historical and conceptual analyses which preceded it. These analyses sought to unfold some of the dimensions of meaning of the supervision order, and by so doing to demonstrate the impossibility of understanding this particular provision without stepping outside the day-to-day world of the practice guide and the rhetoric of the experts. The logic and purpose of the present can only be grasped – and even then doubtless tenuously – through an understanding both of how it has been historically shaped and of the processes which occur between the draft-ing of the tutelary provision and the encounter in the interviewing room in which the tutelage occurs. We have sought thus far to offer at least a glimmering of understanding of both these processes which, it is hoped, both illumines and is illumined by the account of the experts at work.

In approaching the matter thus, we are aware of certain dimensions which are lacking. Readers will say, if welfare work is their commit-ment, that we have been in some way 'unfair'; that the processes we described in relation to supervision orders which for the most part terminated in 1980 no longer apply now; that no credit is given for 'practice advances' which endeavour to meet just the kind of problem we have been outlining: the use of 'contracts', the reluctance to write reports on first offenders, the practice of reserving supervision orders for higher tariff delinquents.

Although we hope our final chapter will go some small way towards answering these criticisms, it will not, we concede now, go very far,

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for no reason other than that to do so would involve either a very much longer or, more probably, a different kind of book. Material describing practice innovations is, however, on the whole readily available to practitioners, in the pages of the weekly welfare work press, for example, or in materials made available to their employees by departments to do with the writing of social enquiry reports. We are aware of such materials and use them in teaching; nothing in this book should be read as questioning their value, but their availability to the experts themselves discourages us from repeating them here. What has been lacking, we believe, is the kind of analysis we have attempted to offer, and this book can be read by those practitioners who have been interested enough in what we have to say to have stayed with us this far as a kind of gloss on the 'nuts and bolts' publications with which they will be all too familiar. We do think that some of this literature – much of it written by academics like ourselves, or by managers, or specialist practitioners – presumes too much: its cries to try harder or learn something new have the effect above all of asking people already in a whirl simply to whirl faster, or perhaps in a different direction. To the extent that the professional problems with which this literature seeks to deal are decontextualized and dehistoricized, they become matters with which the front-liners themselves are told to deal, but which it is in fact beyond their remit to change.

But for practice improvements to occur it is certainly necessary for the experts to develop at least the kind of working distinction we essayed in Chapter 1 among those aspects of their work which are buried in the very logic of its structure, those which may be amenable to micro-political pressure, say from their professional associations, and those which are simply the fall-out, the unintended consequences of the paradoxes or contradictions to which they are subject, and which can be remedied without undue alarm either by a modest and uncontroversial legislative amendment or even by the development of particular practice principles. In relation to the possible criticism which we earlier forecast for ourselves – that we have failed to acknowledge that the welfare workers are getting much better at this kind of thing now – we are happy to agree, and the reforms to which we alluded in passing are, we think – with perhaps some slight reservations – steps in the right direction. More, however, could be done – by no means all of it by welfare workers – and we return to this and other related issues in our final chapter.

For the moment, however, we turn to an analysis which complements the empirical study reported in this chapter. The supervision of girls highlights also particular constraints to which the experts are themselves subject.

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PURITANS AND PARADIGMS:
A SPECULATION ON THE FORM OF
NEW MORALITIES IN SOCIAL WORK

DAVID WEBB

SUMMARY. This paper puts a name to what is taken as an emergent, and somewhat new framework for social work, a framework exemplified in recent statements from CCETSW. This is termed 'puritanism' and its qualities are described, focusing particularly on properties of moral regulation. A social context to this development is proposed, and it is maintained that a discourse dependent on clear moral categories (which is the essence of puritanism) is a natural outcome of reformist sixties and seventies legislation which sought to intervene in the conduct of relations around key social groupings - those of generation, gender and race especially. Accordingly social work now embraces moral certainty around several issues, giving an occupational and ethical firmness to a profession notorious for its hesitancy in these respects.

The paper has the additional purpose of demonstrating the methodological imperative of detachment and scrutiny, in which the personal predilections of the investigator remain outside (so far as possible) the activity of enquiry.

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But this brings us to the world of judgements, of value and of faith, with which this purely historical discussion need not be burdened (Max Weber,1967, p.182).

Introduction: a trinity of concerns

This paper has several purposes; firstly, and substantively, it seeks to put a name - 'puritanism' - to some of the utterances and intentions which inform and shape the direction now being given to social work through the authoritative voice of key definers, and the Central Council for Education and Training in Social Work (CCETSW)[1] most especially. In this way the paper is a modest exercise in what could be called the semiotics of social work - the attempt in this case to say what is signified by the requirements and by the regulations for social work training currently enunciated by CCETSW. The 'text' here under consideration is that enshrined in various new directives for

the training of social workers, and in particular those parts which refer to what may be variously called 'values', 'ethics' or 'morality' (CCETSW, 1989). Significantly CCETSW's regulations demand not only technical competence, but also demonstrable adherence to a cluster of attitudes and behaviours most notably around anti-racism and anti-sexism and as such this marks a significant re-direction to the purpose of social work. It is the identifying - and the naming - of this new direction which features in this paper. The shift - in the very broadest of terms - is from an individualism in which self-determination and non-judgementalism featured as reference points for an ethical neutralism (liberated from the legacy of Victorian evaluative sanctimoniousness) , to a more recent certitude and orthodoxy about the direction to be taken by social workers in constructing their own, and their clients', moral universe.

This new discourse[2] , which implies, even if it does not rest upon, an increasingly unambiguous set of moral - cum - political imperatives, is associated above all with one 'speaker' amongst the babbling crowd ('radicals', the Home Office, CCETSW) jostling to 'name' social work and define its purpose. Now, although social work is not by any means an unproblematically harmonious community marked by consensus about how it may be defined, about who may be called a social worker, and the ways in which the task should be practiced, certain influential voices do nonetheless exist. In the case of CCETSW, the speaker is powerful (even if not always authoritative) largely because of the buttress of statute and the threat of sanction, making it highly likely that definitions of the situation emanating from this particular quarter will stick with some considerable effect.

It is for precisely these reasons that I take the 'utterances' from CCETSW as being a reasonably robust guide to the direction being sought for the future of social work, since it is through education and training that the nature of the enterprise will be given shape in future years. In short (and the scepticism of cynics notwithstanding) CCETSW acts to legitimate certain interpretations of the reality of social work.

A second purpose of this article (though it is one which is linked with the first) is to suggest a social location for this new paradigm within which social work is now being framed. Having identified this, and named it in ideal-typical fashion as 'puritan', an endeavour is made to gain access to the underlying structure of social work's new discourse. However, since sociology cannot long resist the pursuit of causation, the question remains (if only in my mind) about the reasons for the ascendency and currency of any one particular way of defining professional purpose. Hence identifying the social origins of an emergent paradigm is a necessary element in accounting for the appearance of any cultural phenomenon. Following sociological convention,

this line of enquiry assumes that it is within certain specific *milieux* that new ideas and new practices become possible; there is in other words assumed an 'elective affinity' - a resonance - between the broader sweep of social, political and economic life and the particularities of this or that cultural expression.

This general line of enquiry is applied to the fact that a statutory body is saying social workers will not be deemed to be 'fit practitioners' unless they demonstrate certain values and undertake certain practices directed at very highly specified forms of social change. In this the prescriptive content towards the conduct of morals is high by any reckoning, and it is the attempt to both situate and to explain this which constitutes this paper's second theme. As I shall argue, the 'social context' which makes certain utterances by the Central Council much more likely, is one which is characterised by the legacy of an interventionist state where certain 'formal-legal' regulations towards civil society have established the *bona fides* of moral prescription through statute. These legislative mediations have announced ends which are entirely consistent with the reformist and 'progressive' world view which social work has arrogated for itself. So although the state may no longer seek to regulate sexual conduct through proscribing homosexuality, or demand exacting subordination to a strict ecclesiastical interpretation of the marriage contract, it has by no means absented itself from prescription in new spheres - child protection, sex discrimination and race discrimination being examples of particular tutelages.

The first and second aims of this paper -which are the 'semiotic' and the 'contextual' respectively - stand as the substantive bit of the argument in which a set of observations are directed at certain features of contemporary social work 'culture'. But this should not lead the reader to confuse an analytic project with one of judgement; the approach here rests on a careful avoidance of the evaluative, eschewing absolutely any appraisal of the merit or otherwise of the new discourse in question. It is this strenuous commitment to detachment which constitutes the papers third, methodological, purpose, since it looks to exemplify a mode of enquiry which is, as it were, 'outside' its object of scrutiny, wilfully agnostic towards the goodness or worth of the new moralities and deliberately remaining entirely unconcerned about any normative involvement or prescriptive inclination.

The excavation of the discourse of puritanism takes place through a distancing from the investigator's personal opinion or judgement of the phenomenon; the goal therefore is objective commentary, or at least an endeavour in that direction. In so doing, it ought to be impossible for the reader to identify the enquirer's personal appraisal of what is being scrutinised, whether the new morality is held to be 'the flavour of the month and ripe for debunking', or alternatively 'the quintessence of social work's distinctive

moral-ethical purpose'. The social scientist should, of course, be prepared (and be allowed!) as much to investigate matters which are cherished as those which are despised, for the advancement of knowledge (or at least more humbly, the struggle for this) ought not to be limited to the socially acceptable or the professionally conventional areas of social life.

So, a test of the investigator's success in analysis might interestingly be that of judging how far the reader remains in the dark over the views held by the writer about the phenomenon being discussed. And indeed, to mount an exercise in deliberate disinterest is precisely that which has provided some of the rationale behind this discussion; a self-conscious setting in abeyance of any personal commitment which in another guise (as a social work educator?) I might hold towards the new morality here under consideration.

The paper then, in addition to seeking any analytical merit, is also looking to demonstrate that a decisive absence from the normative or the prescriptive constitutes a legitimate component for social work if its claim to a place in the academy is to be sustainable. Now it is important to stress that whilst detachment is not necessarily a *superior* component - for the elucidation of what is morally or ethically desirable is equally part of the academy's purpose - it is certainly a complementary goal to which due regard ought be tendered in the pursuit of an agenda set by no body other than the academy itself.

Some textual revisions in social work education - and practice

Social work education is being increasingly called upon to deliver practice which is both technically competent and morally grounded. No longer do we refer to the rather empty emblematic (and problematic) phrases like 'respect for persons' or 'client self-determination' which hitherto furnished the ethical touchstone for social work. From now on it is the uncompromising imperatives of anti-racism or anti-sexism which have regenerated the basis of professional education with a set of specific obligations which in their forthrightness have collapsed politics and morality in a way which may well have taken many by surprise. The contrast with earlier indicative pronouncements from CCETSW is worth noting, in order to measure thereby the direction and weight of change that has taken place in assumptive worlds. The 1976 report on values in social work (CCTESW, 1976) whilst not (inevitably for a 'liberal' document) setting itself up as the conveyor of anything definitive, serves as an exemplar of a particular tradition in which universal Kantian principles are subject to the challenge - and perhaps refutations - of the empirical demonstration of individual differences (psychology), the existence of structural impediments to self-determination (sociology), and exposure of the ideological nature of

philosophical categories themselves (politics). Whatever certainty social work may have once held for itself, this report signalled an acute attack of self doubt.

The document in its tone and content is certainly 'balanced' and discursive; its form is marked by 'wise' and 'objective' academic comment in which issues and problems are reviewed but all without any ultimate resolution offered. Its style and approach are tentative; it exemplifies characteristic dilemmas in settling on unequivocal and uncontestable value stances - 'how far...', asks the chairman of the working party in his introduction, '... is it possible or desirable for social workers to adopt political or moral stances in their employing agencies?' In the cultural fall out from the relativistic sixties this was perhaps an inevitable *cri de coeur*; the more absolutist eighties have left us with another answer, though not always a welcome one. Tellingly - if somewhat despairingly - Noel Timms (1989, p.13) has recently lamented the end of uncertainty in social work ushered in by the Central Council's arbitration:

> It appears that once the new form of CCETSW training has been introduced, any problems of value-talk will be more or less a thing of the past. CCETSW ... confidently expects that social workers in the 1990s will be able (as they will be required) to articulate a value system that is coherent.

The Central Council (1989, p.15) then has set aside equivocation in these matters and has 'ruled' on the values of social work, which, it announces, embrace:

> ...a commitment to social justice and social welfare, to enhancing the quality of life of individuals, families and groups within communities, and to repudiation of all forms of negative discrimination.

In addition to what may be seen as conventional commitments to self-worth and the dignity of individuals, to privacy and the right to protection, the Central Council also requires social workers in training to be aware of 'structural oppression', to demonstrate ways to combat individual and institutional racism through anti-racist practice; to demonstrate anti-sexism in social work practice and promote policies and practices which are anti-oppressive (CCETSW, 1989, p.16) .

Though the documentation from CCETSW refers to a variety of disadvantaging conditions, racism and sexism are identified as particular instances of how professional social work should be conducted around the active identification and eradication of certain social practices. The imagery em-

ployed by the Central Council is redolent of General Booth's Salvationists; the vocabulary calls on phrasing drawn from *battle*; reaching the goal demands *censure* or *ban*, and *declaration* serves as a measure or test of individual motive. It is a sequence which conveys the underlying cultural momentum to the new elements of the social work discourse enunciated by the Central Council. This I call 'puritanism', a term here used (I hope scrupulously) without reference to evaluative connotations through plaudit or sarcasm, but as a means of summarising a cluster of attitudes and behaviours. The following section is an attempt to sketch out - in Weberian ideal - typical fashion - the essential properties of this particular social work *Weltanschauung*; to contribute thereby to mapping the cultural shifts which characterise the conduct of today's professional ideology.

New tones in moral regulation: the vocabulary of puritanism.

It is a commonplace observation when conducting the sociology of everyday life that it is really surprisingly easy to be socially disruptive. Not laughing at, or joining with sexist or racist humour, let alone the taking of bold exception to things said or done, is to break with the normal and comfortable regularities of the social order. Any of these 'impertencies' sabotages the reassuring world as it is known; the moral order is made temporarily problematic by the failure to play the game by the unspoken rules, and student social workers (and future practitioners) are now being required to engage in precisely this as part of their training. Significantly it is an obligation arising from being a professional, and the calling thereby entailed, rather than from being a responsible citizen.

What are the mechanics to the stance which must be demanded of these tyros as they make their way through their studies? The qualities follow on inevitably from the requirement: the anti-racist or anti-sexist is self-consciously and deliberately censorious; to them the mundane is made serious, and the reassuring and comfortable 'sharedness' of the assumptive world is assaulted. Others become subject to judgement, and the exception-taker is set above those who are found wanting; an element of uprightness is embraced by the accuser, and the behaviour or sentiments of the tainted are held aside as morally deficient. To be such an arbiter is far removed from the tolerant relativism which emerged from the 1960s and its various cultures of indulgent expressiveness; rather it involves certainty about both rightness and wrongness which is often - perhaps necessarily - phrased in an uncompromising and forceful register. There is here an ironic resonance with the strident tendency in the Conservative party, and its most accomplished spokeswoman; after all, both have something unswerving about what is being

pursued, with the claim to occupy the moral high ground becoming a pronounced *leitmotif* to political life. And equally there is nothing weak or negotiable about the purposes of anti-racism or anti-sexism, which involve the vanquishing and eradication of the objects of their opposition. Such activities have as their project the reconstruction of practices and of thoughts for which is needed an unerring and secure reason for being so 'presumptious' as to wage these *Jihads*. This certainty, this unswerving faith in the worth of certain actions, can be expressed as a form of puritanical exactitude. Judgement, censure, righteousness and watchfulness - all of which must perforce attend anti-sexism and anti-racism if they are to succeed - are also the defining attributes to the ideal-typical puritan. To the puritan falls the heavy obligation of practising extreme strictness in matters of morals and a developed sensitivity to breeches in the correct code of behaviour or thought; the puritan is prepared to see the eradication of the corrupt, and will engage in a holy war to meet this end if needs be.

Despite this stance of rectitude, the puritan does admit to knowing the devil and very often intimately, and will know too all about the temptations and allure of racist and sexist sentiment and practice: it is precisely upon this enticement that anti-racism is often premised after all. To the puritan it is only by knowing, articulating and therefore objectifying corruption that it can be countered and fought. There is accordingly a recognition of evil and that moral existence is a constant struggle between the acknowledgment of, but not the wallowing in, temptation. Fallibility is certainly recognised, for it keeps the guards forever in place.

What the puritan grasps then is the part played by 'deconstruction' in the moral crusade. Whether puritanism is of the old or new variety, it detects the devil and all his works in the seemingly innocuous: the sub-text lying beneath the surface of the everyday is always the force which is to be reckoned with. The puritan hunts down the signifier within, because to the puritan the allegorical devil's stalking presence is patently detectable, however much others are oblivious of these things.

Puritanism stands as an open acknowledgement that evil exists and that its corrupting ways need exposing and eradicating. Now if the old pre-Restoration puritanism derived its understanding from scripture and from divine guidance, contemporary sources are much more humble. Even though that earlier generation sought guidance from spiritual revelation, today's equivalent struggles to secure something in a way which provides comparable - even if secular - certitude of purpose. Whatever these inspirational sources might be, somehow they have to equip the advocate of anti-racism or anti-sexism with moral resolution, a willingness to judge, a commitment to

vanquish. And this is needed because today's puritans certainly wish to enforce the moral boundaries between good and evil. Just as the original puritans saw the Reformation under Elizabeth I as half-hearted and compromised by worldly interest, so contemporary puritans see today's talk of equality, freedom and liberty to be as much corrupted by mammon's deceits. Like their ascetic forebears, modern puritans look to external restraint, internal cautiousness, a rein on instinctiveness and expressivity, and the careful attendance to procedures and protocols in social interaction (Weber, 1967). Regulation and predictability provide a secure and cognitively impenetrable barrier, devoid of the inadvertent gaps through which the devil will reach his arm and embrace the unwary.

To be committed to anti-racism and anti-sexism is to be embraced by the ideal-typical 'Puritanism' that I have outlined; what the new 'text' to animate this enterprise might be remains unclear, though paper 30 looks set to occupy a place of some significant reference so far as social work is concerned. But whatever way this inspiration is secured, 'puritan' is that which issues from it, for what other word would quite so adequately describe that ensemble of practices and values - amongst them righteousness, censure and watchfulness - which underpin these activities?

The societal frame: modes of regulation and new professional possibilities.

The somewhat metaphorical term of puritanism has been employed to name, or to discern, a new direction to the way in which the activity of social work might be being framed. Its purpose has been to go beyond the surface of what could be seen (by the unsympathetic) as 'fads' or 'fashions', the products of pressure groups exerting untoward influence on a profession congenitally vulnerable to good causes. Instead of examining the minutiae of various 'contents', the metaphor points to a paradigmatically radical form being taken by authoritative voices within the profession, even though that revised form may have been brought about through the need to accommodate an accumulation of new ideas which could no longer be contained by the overloaded 'liberal' (non-judgemental) discourse. Social work's tendency to add bits on to an existing framework may be giving way to a rather different (and perhaps radically novel) framing for professional activity, and the emergence of 'puritanism' is an attempt to identify this.

But this paper, (as was emphasised at its outset), is not concerned only with a description through metaphor of an emergent discourse to a new morality in social work. Setting this within a broader context that tries to

explain the 'socio-genesis' of something that is emanating from its predecessor presents the opportunity to speak, however tentatively and cautiously, about 'causes'.

Puritanism has, quite obviously, reactionary and revolutionary expressions, and both the Cromwellian and Islamic forms have adopted a call to fundamentalism in order to repudiate the corruptions of a morally and politically bankrupt order. But the giving of licence to a secular puritanism, with origins outside the spiritual and beyond the holy book, can be traced in modes of regulation within the 'host' society from which it develops. Ironically the certainties of Thatcherism (Conservatism's 'strident tendency') may have operated to move the ideology of welfare practice away from the culture of relativism and expressivity which it conveyed so clearly during the age of Aquarius (Martin, 1980); a 'new realism' that has percolated across to the British Labour Party and the pages of *Marxism Today*, as well as to what many see as the quintessentially occupational expression of both these, namely social work. The theme here, then, is the social location of ideas - the manner in which what passes for knowledge is contingent as much upon exterior political and economic shifts in the cultural climate as on internal developments and progressions within a particular set of ideas advanced within this or that 'speech community'.

Now it is true that all this adds up to a somewhat cynical sounding exercise in ethical and epistemological relativism, since the coherence or integrity of ideas (such as those expressed within social work's new morality for example) and the vocabulary used to convey or sustain these ideas or practices, are mostly set aside as far less interesting than the reasons for those utterances becoming acceptable in the first place. Such an approach maintains that were social conditions not right then the utterances would not be made, or if made would certainly not be heard. This, of course, is not always a palatable line of enquiry; its agnosticism and moral disengagement might be read as doubting the authenticity and sincerity of pronouncements, since what is said or otherwise promulgated is analysed as merely the product of specific circumstances, given by history or culture rather than through the agency of human enlightenment or uncontestable rectitude.

This present excursion into the sociology of knowledge (which Elias [1971, p.161] has nicely described as the examination of that which is held by those who know, rather than of the objects to which their knowing ostensibly refers) sets the conditions for the emergence of social work's 'new' discourse. And the conditions are those given by what the collective sentiment of professional welfare has come to see as the generally (but not sufficiently) progressive and beneficient consequences of reformist, social justice oriented

legislation of the sixties and more particularly the seventies. The intervention of legal regulation to remedy the deficiencies of rampant 'pure freedoms', which lead to exploitation and injustice, has created an accumulation of cultural changes (readily available as a legitimating resource) which make more acceptable the form of prescriptive-proscriptive utterances which CCETSW is now endorsing. In particular, the vocabulary of censure or 'ban' (which during an earlier era social work would have avoided like the plague) has become an increasing feasible lexicon to employ. Hence it is that the outlawing of racial and sexual discrimination, and more robust intervention over abuse of children, are viewed as clear instances of a more or less entirely legitimate expansions in moral legalism in order to ensure that structural disadvantage (or oppression) does not impede the attainment of rights. (The salient statutes here would be the Race Relations Acts of 1965, 1968 and 1976; the Sex Discrimination Act 1975, and the Children Act 1975). As the law has progressively absented itself from the regulation of personal morality (exemplified by the statutes decriminalising - more or less - abortion (1967) and homosexuality (1967)), so it has moved proactively and positively into the regulation of contracts which effect three major social categories, those of generation, gender and race. This contrapuntal movement in social regulation is what Stuart Hall (1980) has referred to as a 'double taxonomy', whereby the 'liberated' domain exists alongside, and in parallel with, an increase and expansion in precept by the state as it seeks to ensure (and secure) a stability in the Millsian 'general interest' (Lea, 1980). And of course safeguarding the rights of all citizens is an important means to legitimate underlying economic divisions beneath the umbrella of universal citizenship.

This focus of moral regulation has shifted from an ecclesiastically inspired concern to maintain propriety in the conduct of sexuality and reproduction (Hall, 1980), to an emphasis on ensuring that waywardnesses of a more secular and 'sociological' nature do not overwhelm the attainment of social order. If for the Victorians morally upright individuals would lead to the creation of a moral *society*, for social democratic reformers of the sixties and seventies, establishing a morally correct society ensured that individuals perforce become moral in compliance with this framework for manners.

The mode of regulation for the conduct of personal and social relations has therefore changed from the 'ecclesiastical' to the secular, from an emphasis on the individual to an emphasis on social categories (Donzelot, 1980). The deregulation of some behaviours has been matched by a regulation of others; moral surveillance of one kind has been replaced by another; importantly and conveniently, Halmos' (1965) secular priest now has a treatise upon which to draw in demonstrating the bases for moral action. This is the text of 'progressive

legislation' which is concerned with corporatist social engineering and substantive justice. It has served to justify the sometimes tenuous claim that the state can indeed stand as relatively autonomous to the interests of a mercantilist ruling class: protection afforded through these laws demonstrates that the bourgeois state acts as a protective shell for reformist social policy and practice. Anti-discrimination legislation, predicated as it is on substantive justice which takes account of differences between individuals, reveals to social democratic reformers how legal enforcement can be used - even if only symbolically - to secure advances in the social position of the vulnerable and also to promise a modicum of restructuring of civil society (Gregory, 1979).

Such innovations revealed too that the move to establish moral legalism need not be the exclusive and repressive province of the 'reactionary' forces of moral rearmament (The Festival of Light, Mrs Mary Whitehouse), but might serve rather as the expression of a 'progressive' spirit which, if not revolutionary, was at least moving in the direction of curbing the archetypal (and summative) exemplar of oppression - the white male adult.

The role of the state - even the bourgeois state - in the management of that civil society has much of a progressive residual about it, especially when faced with the prospect everywhere else of a truncated intervention allowing free rip to unrestrained social forces and social relations. Hence the attachment to and affinity for regulation becomes a political touchstone, and for state welfare professionals (and their statutory voice, CCETSW) an occupational one too. Regulatory machinery, whilst introduced for the protection of some citizens and the enhancement of their rights, offers a cluster of 'legalistic scriptures' which serve as a new point of moral guidance and reference. The largely proscriptive nature of legislation to do with the eradication of discrimination exemplifies the puritan project of 'ban'. In practice this is established as a progressive censure, permitting moral arbitration with a confidence which social work now relishes, having suffered (perhaps outrageously) from the critique which once berated it for doing the very thing which is largely inescapable, namely making moral judgement. The embracing of regulation (and the occupational certitude offered thereby) provides a link with that kernel (or is it vestige?) of the welfare state which still remains. This benign disciplining of civil society - upon which welfare 'policing' is unavoidably premised - is accordingly the social context from which is drawn the puritan vocabularies that provide contemporary references for the preferred nature of social work today.

A concluding reiteration

This paper has sought to account for the moment at which a paradigmatic shift in the assumptive world of social work's ethical base occurred. Captured through the device of 'naming' the new discourse and identifying the ideal-typical properties associated with it, the attempt has been to render clearly (in the methodology of exaggeration associated with typifications) what could well otherwise remain unacknowledged. There is, of course, the inevitable whiff of semiological arrogance about an approach which claims privileged insight into the matter at hand. Still, social work too is sometimes encouraged by its own pursuit of 'uncommon sense' as the enterprise tries to move beyond the superficial, everyday renderings of social and personal problems that obscure through ideology, or sheer ignorance, the 'truth' which lies beneath appearance (Gammack, 1982).

The construction of the 'dramatic' ideal-type of 'puritanism' has been presented here as an exemplification of detachment from moral or other evaluative concerns. Just as Max Weber's personal sentiments concerning bureaucracy were irrelevant to his social scientific task of describing the properties to this mode of authority, so in emulation of that methodological imperative has this paper sought a similar separation between the spheres of involvement and detachment. In so approaching the subject at hand, a point has thereby been made about the struggle for 'value freedom' in the social scientific quest; in pure form this may indeed be unattainable, but a capitulation to solipsism which this despair arouses ought perhaps to warrant resistance. The injunction made in an earlier section about the role to be taken by social work within the academy is, of course, closely related to this, since it invites a consideration of the relationships between the activity of social work education (which to an increasing degree operates within given or determinate discourses) and a more or less autonomous enterprise which might be known - perhaps only a little pretentiously - as 'academic social work'.

Situating some of the paradigmatic changes in social work within the broader contexts of cultural shifts is part of that posture of autonomy associated with detachment. It contributes to reflexivity or self-awareness in which departures or innovations in thought or approach are understood as decidely social phenomena. Insofar as this paper has been about the social location of these ideas, it has veered towards a materialist analysis, setting human agency on one side in its pursuit of what David Matza (1964) has called the 'grounding for the conduct of will'. That context was of course one in which legislative changes in the sixties and seventies (in symbolism as much as in actual alterations in practices) issued new directions for the ways by which social solidarity might be maintained. The name of that way has

been here given - neutrally and without connotations of either favour or disapproval - as 'Puritan', with contemporary 'official' social work thinking revealed as approximating empirically to this ideal-type.

Notes

1. Overseas readers (and even the sheltered domestic ones) might find it helpful to know that the Central Council for Education and Training in Social Work (CCETSW) is established, and empowered, by statute to promote training and education throughout the United kingdom for social work and other kinds of personal social service. It is steered by a ministerially appointed council of 25 representatives from the various constituencies with an interest in social work education, primarily employers, academics and practitioners. The work of the Council is discharged by about 40 professional officers and a supporting administrative staff. The organisation is funded by the Department of Health, to whom the Chief Executive (Director) of CCETSW is ultimately financially and managerially accountable.

   CCETSW establishes national requirements for social work training, monitors programme quality and approves accordingly and sets the permitted course intake in each training establishment. CCETSW awards are the only recognised social work qualifications in the UK though, except in the Probation Service, there is no mandatory requirement to be qualified in order to practice.

2. The word 'discourse' is introduced because it conveys well - and economically - the way in which the symbolic domain of words, phrases, assumptions, theories etc. strive to constitute the world to which they are being addressed. It points to the merit of taking seriously the text as a product of utterances about how the world should be viewed. The claims for discourse analysis are sometimes ambitious:

   In other words, the ... description of discourse is deployed in the dimension of a general history: it seeks to discover the whole domain of institutions, economic processes and social relations on which a discursive formation can be articulated... what it wishes to uncover is the particular level in which history can give place to definite types of discourse (Foucault, cited in Sheridan, 1980, p.108).

   Exploring the conditions behind the emergence of a certain discourse is therefore a legitimate project; its resonances are with a 'conventional' sociological tradition associated with the popular work of (say) Berger and Luckmann's *Social Construction of Reality* (1967). Indeed, the definition of discourse theory, in a recent volume which applies this expressly to social work, seems more to echo that earlier phenomenological, social constructionist line, than it necessarily announces a radically new method.

   Discourse theory examines the language, knowledge, myths, and assumptions that underpin a particular manifest position... Discourse theory argues that specific

discourses can be shown to produce problems and impose solutions on the individual (Rojek, Peacock and Collins, 1989, p.8).

Since these are almost precisely the same words used to explain the nature of a 'paradigm' ('...universally recognised scientific achievements that for a time provide model problems and solutions to a community of practitioners', [Kuhn, 1962 p.x]), I have used the same word occasionally to signify the idea of 'discourse'. This interchangeability has proved sufficient for my purposes, and reflects for example the recognition by Dreyfus and Rabinow (1982) that there are points of affinity between the two.

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A STRANGER IN THE ACADEMY[1]
A REPLY TO LENA DOMINELLI

DAVID WEBB

———————◇◆◇———————

... the objectivity of the stranger 'does not simply involve passivity
and detachment; it is a particular structure composed of distance
and nearness, indifference and involvement'. It is the stranger, too,
who finds what is familiar to the group significantly unfamiliar
and so is prompted to raise questions for the inquiry less apt to be
raised by Insiders' (Merton, 1972:33).

Let us assume - not I hope unreasonably, for inhabiting the academy imposes
its own obligations - that the concluding sentence of 'What's in a name?' is not
rhetorical, but instead signals a genuine invitation to open debate, in which
theoretical or empirical disagreement, rather than moral attributions, are
what is recorded. And since I am not so naive as to imagine that the subject
of my original paper is without some sensitivity, the possession of a cool head
in these matters becomes especially necessary.

So then, in response to that closing question, just what do I think? In fact,
I happen to think Lena Dominelli has rather missed the point, and done so
pretty comprehensively. This means, inevitably, that most of what she writes,
however interesting and otherwise important it might well be, makes for a
response that shows considerable indifference to the principal matters at hand. I
also think there is more than one occasion when Dominelli engages in an
imaginative interpretation of what I say that makes my own tentative foray into
'the semiotics of social work' look like the very acme of positivist rectitude.

Dominelli assumes that 'Puritans and paradigms' is a thinly disguised
piece of what she refers to variously as 'point scoring', 'debunking', 'disap-
proving', and as 'barbed', 'incontrovertibly aimed at identifiable targets', of
feminists and black people who are engaged in the progressive movement
within social work. This view she reaches from a privileged (or is it partial?)
'reading' of my text. To arrive at such a conclusion, Dominelli must perforce
set aside, as at best disingenuous and at worst dissimulation, any disclaimers
that criticism is my intent. A parallel avowed quest for a neutral contextual

analysis is similarly shoved away as self-delusion. Presumably then, any further reiteration here about the challenge of pursuing objectivity, or a denial that my intention was disparagement is almost certainly a complete waste of words. After all, in a fashion that surely warrants her citing Louis Althusser, or Terry Eagleton, Dominelli ascribes the text of 'Puritans and paradigms' not in the least to authorial intent or agency, but to the over-determining domain of a masculinist and orthodox 'malestream' epistemology. Now whether or not she holds to a curious philosophy of biological reductionism in the creation of knowledge, Dominelli certainly reveals in her paper a methodology (which for want of a better word we can call 'structuralist') that is every bit as much 'objectivist', semiotic and arcane as that found in 'Puritans and paradigms' and which she so roundly seeks to indict for the semiological arrogance that it fails to eschew.

Dominelli's attempted deconstruction job on my paper notwithstanding, I can but repeat (but will anyone believe this, or shall these utterances be consigned to the bin of strategically phrased motivational accounts?) that my intention was not at all a critique of feminism or of black perspectives. For the purposes of what I was exploring in 'Puritans and paradigms', it is entirely immaterial whether these approaches are good or bad, adequate or inadequate. Accordingly, Dominelli's defence of these perspectives, and her charting of the social work terrain to which they lay claim, have to be, I'm afraid to say, an absolute irrelevance to my project. Nor does such a response lend one jot to a critique of 'Puritans and paradigms'. My point, after all - and I do rather belabour this, so it is a little surprising it was missed by Dominelli - is about the structure of endorsement to the very approach to social work that is (as it happens) conveniently outlined in 'What's in a name?' Now I happen to find this legitimation process quite interesting sociologically and certainly worthwhile puzzling over; a question meriting at least a stab at an answer. To successfully criticise 'Puritans and paradigms' Dominelli ought surely to have attempted to sketch out a more adequate account of the same phenomenon I addressed, rather than deny so strenuously its very existence as what may be called a *sociological problematic*. As things stand, Dominelli seems less troubled about the quality of the answer I tentatively (or as I put it, speculatively) offered, than with the fact that I actually asked in the first place a question about the nature of what passes for social work knowledge and practice.

In the substantive part of her commentary, Lena Dominelli begins to sketch out - or rather reveal - her idea of academic social work; the philosophy, as it were, of what that activity might look like if called upon to justify its place in the academy. Not for Dominelli twin tracks of parallel importance -

reflexive analysis matched by that I called 'the elucidation of what is ethically and morally desirable'. For Dominelli, it is one element and one element alone that constitutes the rationale for the social work academy, and she declares the irrelevance, pretence and deceit of dispassionate enquiry. By implication, the modest exercise in reflexivity introduced in 'Puritans and paradigms' as a small contribution to social work's self-awareness is seen as tantamount to a betrayal. Such indulgence has no place in Dominelli's emphasis on the exclusively normative; the discourse of 'Puritans and Paradigms' is unrelated to the vision held by her of the social work academy and as such does not warrant any serious (or substantive) consideration.

Even those points at which she does begin to engage with substantive issues, Dominelli's approach is marked by a tendentiousness that promotes a fusing of misunderstanding and of misrepresentation, all seemingly directed at keeping at bay the exercising of any reflexivity towards certain aspects of contemporary social work thinking. Let us, in this connection, take the issues of involvement and detachment where in paragraph two of her reply Dominelli would have the reader believe that I really do write that involvement is 'deemed emotional unscientific, and female', and in inferior contrast to my favoured approach of neutral detachment. No, this makes me seem something of an epistemological misogynist, but in fact *nowhere* do I attribute these qualities to the posture of involvement, and to suggest the gender-cum-epistemic polarities that Dominelli alleges I operate within is entirely devoid of foundation. References to Elias (1978), to Habermas (1972), to C. Wright Mills (1959), or to Merton (1972) could all point to the enduring and far from novel nature of these concerns in sociology, without the need to introduce (in this instance) spuriously gendered features to philosophy and method in the social sciences.

This excess of attribution without real warrant is further demonstrated when Dominelli refers to the 'unfortunate' use of religious metaphors in 'Puritans and paradigms'. These are undesirable, she says, because they rest on 'stereotypes which are immediately conjured up by readers and shape their interpretation of words'. Now what exactly is Dominelli saying here? Is it that religious metaphors have been mischievously introduced to dupe the unsuspecting reader and seduce their critical facilities with powerful images that bear no relationship to what happens in real social life? In particular is there something about the word 'Puritan' that has derogatory baggage associated with it that then becomes attached to anti-racism and anti-sexism? But conceivably (and this is made with as much warrant as Dominelli's assertion to the contrary), readers hold an abundance of images when presented with religious metaphors. In the face of such pluralism (in which

Puritanism *may* have a very high value for example), it certainly seems unwise to declare that words have *one* meaning alone. In any event, 'Puritans and paradigms' does endeavour to proffer a non-evaluative definition of 'Puritan' that seeks to avoid stereotyping and misunderstanding through being as specific as possible about the properties of this ideal type. In doing this, the objective is, above all, to conceptualise the hitherto 'unnamed'. And it may be of course that there are some who would be 'proud to be Puritan', embracing the qualities as a mark of integrity: stereotyping and the negative assumptions may be Dr Dominelli's and not necessarily those of each and every reader.

Again, referring to the impact of legislation that has sought to extend greater equality, Dominelli seeks to weaken my argument that this has been *symbolically* important in legitimating restraint on social relations, by citing the limited impact these laws have had in practice. Now I acknowledge precisely this: my intent in this part of the paper is not with the material consequences, but with the cultural ones following on from what I argue is a new framework for regulating civil society. I think even the most casual reading of 'Puritans and paradigms' could reveal this as what I am driving at; legislative interventions signal a cultural shift that can be (and has been) *symbolically* appropriated by 'progressive forces'. Of course - and as anyone who knows the organisation will certainly aver, CCETSW does not lead in these initiatives, and nowhere did I suggest it might do so. But it *does* endorse, and the fact that it has effectively legitimated anti-oppression as a plank of social work training, is surely interesting. To put down the shift in the social work paradigm to feminists and progressive black people having exerted effective pressure begs just too many questions, and of the kind I was trying to both ask, and to speculatively answer, in 'Puritans and paradigms'. Dominelli's view of history and change in this area of social life does seem to be of a singularly Whiggish nature, which may I suppose be all well and good, but it merits some articulation if it is being held up as a superior explanation to what she clearly finds unsatisfactory in 'Puritans and paradigms'.

These more or less detailed points of dispute over substance or interpretation are but examples of the general misunderstanding to which I referred at the outset of this reply. There is one further instance though which is rather more serious, since it reveals an *ad hominem* agenda of some potential unpleasantness. Dominelli purports to show I have introduced racist notions about a (white) host society and (black) migrants or 'visitors' and in doing such have inadvertently revealed myself. She says this terminology is offensive, as indeed it would be had it been used in this way. But I did not use it in this fashion, and any careful reading would show as much. The term 'host'

society is employed when describing emergent value systems which borrow from the dominant culture, with the consequence that sometimes the content (and sometimes too the form) of oppositional cultures bears a degree of similarity to that of the dominant culture. I was trying to point up the (occasionally ironic) continuity between dominant and emergent world views. Using 'host' society in the section entitled 'The societal frame' has nothing whatsoever to do with white hosts, or with black 'guests' or with 'migrants'. Dominelli's response here is far too readily triggered, assumptions hurriedly made, a 'key word' taken to mean one thing only, and over eagerly ripped out of context in order to augment a rush to censure. Nonetheless, and even though Dominelli's confusion here seems almost wilful given the reasonable clarity of the context; hindsight suggests some lexicological caution might have been in order so that other readers do not fall into making similar mistakes.

'Puritans and paradigms' was an *attempt* - and the use of 'speculation' in the title announced a fairly evident tentativeness and caution - to situate, to explain and to excavate what I discern as a significant new cultural form in social work. The methodology - which Lena Dominelli finds incapable of doing the job asked of it - sought through radical disengagement, and the ideal type 'dramatisation', to extract that new form from its context and analyse it dispassionately. Clearly Dominelli sees this activity as having been compromised, yet we have from her no suggestion of a preferable mode of analysis of this new form, nor does her encounter with substantive points seem to undercut the general drift of the thesis in 'Puritans and paradigms'. Rather surprisingly, her strategy has not been so much a direct rebuttal or critique of that paper, but more a 'defence' of something that it was never sought to question or impugn in the first place. What that first place endeavoured to do was to *explain*. This seems to me a perfectly acceptable goal for a social work academy which might usefully think about coming clean on just how it is prepared to align itself with involvement or detachment. Lena Dominelli may put this down to hopelessly unreconstructed 'malestream' inclinations, but I happen to think that Norbert Elias provides a worthwhile rubric for our enterprise.

> The problem confronting those who study one or the other aspects of human groups is how to keep their two roles as participant and as enquirer clearly and consistently apart and, as a professional group, to establish in their work the undisputed dominance of the latter (Elias, 1956, p.237).

What do you think?

Note

1.   This phrase is Simmel's. It is cited in the paper by Merton from which is also taken my opening text in this rejoinder. His is an article worth returning to in any attempt to understand the bases from which truth claims are - and can be - made within a particular academic or practical discourse. I've drawn some inspiration from Merton's discussion of that 'autonomy which ... enables the pursuit of truth to transcend other loyalties' (p.44), though it is important to stress that he is by no means indifferent to the intellectual advances that can emerge from what he calls the 'group-influenced perspectives' of insiders. In British social work, Lena Dominelli's own contributions obviously fall within this 'insiderist' canon, as her writing on feminist and anti-racist social work testifies. So, of course, does, her comment on 'Puritans and Paradigms'.

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Competencies, contracts and cadres: common themes in the social control of nurse and social work education

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Summary *A number of convergences in the 'structure' of nurse and social work education are identified. These are seen as being marked by an increasing state direction that ensures a continuing and increasing subordination of any autonomous professional agenda. Interprofessionalism is taken as part of occupational de-regulation within the context of 'post-modern' demands for a flexible expert workforce, as demanded by Government policy towards community care.*

Key words: *Control; interprofessionalism; nursing; post-modern; social work.*

"Changes in the division of labour are creating a different concept of skill. The inbuilt obsolescence of whole varieties of skills reduces the significance of context-tied operations and increases the significance of general principles from which a range of diverse operations may be derived. In crude terms, it could be said that the nineteenth century required submissive and inflexible man [sic], whereas the twenty first century requires conforming but flexible man [sic]".   (Bernstein, 1971; p.67)

Introduction: 'reading' interprofessional care

This paper presents rather a different interpretation of interprofessional care than one which unhesitatingly celebrates and promotes it as a self evident good. It may indeed be this, but the approach here is more agnostic, and endeavours to place these developments in trans-occupational harmony within a historical, political and social context. Questions are invited about just *why* so much interest in interprofessional collaboration is currently being shown. The matter is not one of simply charting the remorseless progress in 'working together' as if it were an inevitable process of better sense prevailing; rather we might choose to consider these changes as an alternative set of announcements, or as a sub-text to what appears as the surface narrative or the tale of events themselves.

So it is that the promotion of interprofessionalism can be viewed as an attack on the privileges of restrictive practices and the control over demarcation boundaries that occupational closure allows. In *Professions and Power*, Johnson (1972) pointed to the 'exclusionary strategies' (Witz, 1990) by which the attainment of a particular occupational status serves to determine market position. The liberalizing and de-regulation of professional leverage is accordingly as much a project for a free market administration as is curbing the power of any other kind of organized labour (Alaszewski & Manthorpe,

1990). Those practices that had grown up under the 'rational' division of labour that the logic of the modern age had introduced, eventually became a threat to the material interests that that epoch had promoted to ascendancy. Marx, of course, spoke critically—if hopefully—of 'inherent contradictions', but the facts of an accumulation of power running contrary to the existing order have been likewise recognized by those of contrary political persuasion, and they have sought to break that power. So this paper is an essay in 'reading' interprofessionalism in such a fashion; as de-regulation in the guise of the injunction to co-operate; as new 'competency' driven initiatives in professional education as a mask for the superintendence of expert labour by the state; as the promotion of consumer, client, or user-responsiveness; as a vehicle for endorsing the increasingly market oriented context within which employers now operate. Hence interprofessionalism 'de-constructs' the hitherto established and secure; the old occupational 'framing' with its rigid boundaries is viewed as inhibiting, or no longer tenable in the face of a challenging 'real' world that does not accord with traditional practices; present spheres of influence are collapsed as occupations are allowed (and encouraged) to step into territory that would hitherto have required a professional passport.

Transformation of the kind just described is sometimes seen as indicative of a 'post-modern' social condition that is characteristic of economically advanced societies. There is, so the argument goes, something radically different emerging in much of contemporary social and productive life. In the confident certainties expressed in scientific rationality or the philosophies of social progress such as Marxism; in the soaring architectural ambition of Le Corbusier and the Newtonian 'harmony' of two balanced super-powers; in the international cultural hegemony of the West or the settled hierarchies within gender and race, all—and more—is now 'up for grabs'. "Post-modernity", writes Anthony Giddens, "is characterised by institutional pluralism, variety, contingency and ambivalence . . . (and) we are justified in treating the post-modern condition as a phenomenon to be investigated in its own terms" (Giddens, 1992; p. 21).

The metamorphosis from the modern to the post-modern is not seen as final or complete; vestiges of the old epoch run alongside the new. In the case of interprofessionalism in social work and health care, the liberalising 'post-modern' synthesis of nursing and social work to create a novel occupational blending is taking place under the auspices of a state with strong centralist and controlling inclinations. This paper offers an analysis of interprofessional care that is framed within precisely these contrapuntal tendencies.

Schön (1987) maintains that modernism's philosophy of scientific rationality has had its day with a more intuitive, reflective and inductive discourse taking the ascendant. He celebrates this on the grounds that technically such is the best way to proceed—or problem solve—and in so doing shows a concern for interprofessionalism that places it as a higher and more efficient strategy for the social organisation of expert labour than the defunct, inflexible, procedurally obsessive and philosophically myopic methods of established professional practices. If the world of automobile engineering follows a post-Fordist trajectory that takes us from old dirty Dagenham to new clean green Sunderland, then Schön is the spokesperson for a parallel 'post-modern' veer within the professions. Nonetheless, there is an underlying and consistent prompt or drive to these changes, whatever might be the shifts in knowledge, or in professional culture, or in occupational boundaries. Here—transparently—the imagery moves towards the deterministic, an account of changes more given over to constraining social structures than the purposeful action of individuals; an approach which views these alterations as associated with deeper political or economic scripts that set a framework within which courses of human action are worked out.

Such is the sensitising outline for approaching trends in the contemporary development of the caring professions, and particularly those moves that address links between social work and nursing. It sets an (heretical?) agenda that is unmoved by normative pleas for the "furtherance of whole person care . . . (and) the need for collaboration" (*Journal of Interprofessional Care*, 1992, p. ii); it is uncommitted as to whether interprofessionalism is good or bad and prefers instead to speculate on just *why* such moves in collaboration or co-operation may be underway.

are to converge?

The education of both nurses and social workers is also caught up in this process, and the changes that are current or looming for these professions illustrate a pathway or sequence that features, firstly, an *expansion* in control, secondly, a *decomposition* of 'specialist' knowledge and, thirdly, a *collapsing* of space between the two professions. Indeed I shall try to point to a remarkable and steady convergence in the structure of state control that is now exercised over them as they are hustled, jostled, induced and obligated to become more collaborative and less protective of jealously held identities.

Moves toward interdisciplinary collaboration are not just the expression of a liberal and egalitarian comradeship dedicated to the meeting of a need that knows no occupational frontiers, for these convergencies are also 'orchestrated', given structure, endorsed, or otherwise promoted. One example that is indicative of things to be, and which is drawn from the increasingly coincidental domains of social work and nursing will serve to illustrate this line of thinking.

There have been more or less successful moves to 'integrate' social work and nurse training within the field of 'learning difficulties', or what in the lexicon of nursing is still called mental handicap. Qualifying programmes, common for both, have been promulgated and validated by the National Boards for Nursing, Midwifery and Health Visiting and by the Central Council for Education and Training in Social Work (CCETSW). There has been a transformation in RNMH (Registered Nurse for Mental Handicap) courses to address 'the social'; there is a sense sometimes that the weakness of boundaries is such that a new occupation is needed as the old model that was institution and pathology oriented is supplanted by one in which community based provision allows people with learning difficulties to occupy a position, not of a defective 'mental handicap', but of ordinariness (see Webb 1989).

This humanizing trajectory stands alongside—or even within—the fiscally informed one that is as much a part of community care as is the ethical prompt for 'normalization'. With the 'deconstruction'—often in the quite literal manner of physical demolition—of that exemplar of the rigid categorization of social groups, namely the 'lunatic asylum', a more fluid and less regulatory (but not necessarily less supervisory) approach to human management becomes appropriate. Enablement replaces containment; the 'social' supplants the medical, the community rather than the carceral is the setting. The segmented world of *objects* that are mentally handicapped (who are nursed or residentially contained) becomes the integrated world of *subjects* who happen to have learning difficulties (who are empowered). A parallel occupational transformation meets and serves these changes through a weakening of professional boundaries, there is a jettisoning of the established settings (the hospital, the 'home') that define a profession; and organizational arrangements such as joint training like occupational culture from closure towards permeability.

There are then, several links between the wider setting or social context in which policy changes take place, and the inner world of professional conduct and contact. This brief example of interprofessional care also serves to suggest a 'structuring' of those moves that are entertained by individuals or groups as they adopt new or innovative occupational philosophies that offer preferences for dealing with the world that they encounter as 'professionals'.

Nursing and social work occupy a similar space in the social fabric, especially once community health care begins to take on more significance for nurses than the familiar picture of the clinical hospital based practitioner. Well worn discussions about the control function of the ostensibly caring need not be restated here, for I take it as now generally accepted that for both occupations their tasks involve a fluid combination of *help* (resource brokerage, technical skills for problem solving), *advice* (option giving, knowledge) and *surveillance/sanction* (legal progressing of social misdemeanours). (Harris & Webb, 1987; Abbott & Sapsford, 1990). Of course both professions stand largely within historic ambiguities of the Welfare State (see Taylor-Gooby, 1991), and it is because of this that their role is not unequivocally aligned either to social control or amelioration, or to some 'progressive' goal that puts them at the forefront of social transformation. Both practices doubtless occur in the

occupational routines of nursing and social work, but recent developments in training point to these professions coming under more direct state control, effectively curtailing their autonomy and discretion.

Rather than address each of these professions and the developments in education and training for them separately, it would seem more consistent with the particular approach that underpins this paper to take matters thematically or structurally and to identify convergences and commonalities by tracking empirical approximations to my earlier stated ideal type or model. The theme here is control, of course, and more particularly the progressive movement of this beyond the scope or influence of the profession itself. Now in each case under consideration the key agencies in securing control on behalf of the state are the validating bodies that variously promote, approve and inspect training programmes. With both social work and nursing these bodies are either substantially or part government funded and as such are appropriately accountable. Neither CCETSW for social work, nor the National Boards for nursing are in this sense independent and their 'charter' is inevitably circumscribed by some fairly obvious commitments, the most notable of which is probably their role in contributing to workforce planning for what are in effect publicly funded experts in health and the personal social services. This means too that the statutory bodies are obligated to ensure that the volume and nature of training is consistent with whatever is sought by employers, and that they deliver the necessary skill mix that is shaped by Government policy which effectively decides these occupational tasks. And since validating bodies are like any other organization, there exists within them a deep seated interest in maintaining or enhancing influence and authority; policy compliance is clearly an effective means of doing this.

For social work, recent changes in qualifying training requirements for the new Diploma in Social Work (Dip SW) (CCETSW, 1991) have seen the introduction of a two year higher education programme as the basic qualification (though for graduates it is possible to secure a higher academic award contemporaneously). Specialization figures in the second year. There are proposals (CCETSW, 1990) for an award beyond this basic one, which stands as equivalent to the second year of an undergraduate programme, and as such is a considerable advance on the much lower level requirements enshrined in the old Certificate of Qualification in Social Work. An inservice route to qualifying status is possible. Nursing, following the introduction of the Project 2000 proposals, (UKCC, 1986) has moved out of schools of nursing (where the 'students' were such in name only) into colleges linked to higher education that also award the new Diploma in Higher Education level qualifications for people who are now officially students rather than nurses in training. This is a three year programme, with 'branch' specialization during the last eighteen months and like the Dip SW is the academic equivalent of the second year of an honours degree course. Proposals are afoot for an advanced award that would secure an increasingly graduate level profession (ENB, 1991).

Control by the centre: 'enforcing' new training practices

This résumé has so far pointed descriptively to some commonalities in the shifts to qualifying training. The parallels are important because of what is something of a latent theme here—namely that *structural harmonization* makes much more likely *professional integration* and thereby greater *operational flexibility* in staff deployment. Nonetheless, it is important to revert to a thematic and conceptual frame within which more explicitly to see these changes and to offer an interpretation of what is happening. Within what I have already said is the theme of state control over professional education and training, some greater grasp of what this means empirically can be sought by looking at (i) *contracting* (to establish education's compliance with employer agendas), (ii) *competencies* (to set a national curriculum in professional education that allows for consistency and reliable transportability of the qualified worker), and (iii)—not entirely for alliterative purposes—the creation of a *cadre* of qualified workers that will be less a cohort of quasi-independent professionals, and rather more resource managers and care planners. The extension of specialization and the gradual emergence of higher post-qualifying awards are further elements within this.

Contracting

It has become common to contrast the movement of nursing into higher education and the strengthening of its social scientific knowledge base, with the tendency in social work education to remove disciplines that have been viewed as somehow disloyal or troublesome to professional purpose. It is certainly true, as the discussion in the next session is meant to show, that social work has become much influenced by competency based education as a way of guaranteeing quality, but it would be a mistake to see nursing meandering off into a world of academic indulgence. For both nursing and social work are now squarely employer led activities. Nurse education indeed may be linked with higher education, but the 'contract' to train is with Regional Health Authorities (Department of Education and Science, 1990), and not with the education funding councils. Well versed in mercantilist purchaser-provider protocols, and with a strong sense of workforce needs, it is clear where the power in this relationship is likely to be located, and it is not difficult to imagine the agenda which feature in these contracting arrangements as the RHA draws up its specification for training. Hence the apparent 'progress' that marks the new Diploma course for nurses, and the assigning to these of full student status, is undercut by giving employers unmediated access to the cash nexus as a means of exercising more or less express control over nurse education.

The situation is in some respects more *indirect* in the case of social work, but the effect is broadly the same nonetheless, and marks a significant curtailing of the education institutions' autonomy. Under the regulations for the Dip SW, the Council makes it obligatory for programmes to be submitted in the form of partnerships between colleges and agencies (CCETSW, 1991). No social work course can be validated without such an arrangement which also entails—in theory anyway—collaboration with employers in all aspects of teaching, assessment and monitoring. Judging by the alacrity—if not enthusiasm—with which institutions have settled into partnerships, it would seem that if there are objections to these new arrangements then they have been quickly set aside in the interests of sustained existence. And since the only institution in these partnerships that depends for its immediate survival on the Dip SW also desperately needs student placements to keep in business, it is clear who holds the whip hand over participating colleges.

So in both nursing and social work the shots are effectively called by the employers. Breaking the independence of the academy whilst simultaneously upgrading the academic level of training has meant that government has had it both ways; it means too that the academy can be obligated to change or redirect its curriculum in a manner that reflects employer requirements rather than the fancies of airy fairy theoreticians with their obdurate and obstructive notions that refer to abstractions rather than to practicality (Sibeon, 1990). Those employer-led events found elsewhere in education—TVEI, CPVE Compact Initiatives, NCVQ—are echoed in both social work and nursing as training has become more closely yoked to workforce demands. And it is in the specifying of occupational competencies that a skills based outcome *training* rather than a process oriented professional *education* has been gradually established.

Competencies

Competency based education insinuates a national curriculum into professional training; it rests upon the premise that occupationally derived tasks can be isolated and converted into identifiable outcomes capable of assessment. The influence of industrial work study practices is clear. Promoted actively through the government funded National Council for Vocational Qualifications, competency based training sets attainments at a series of levels denoting job size, responsibility, skills and knowledge. The scheme offers a framework designed to harmonize and rationalize what was seen as the ramshackle plethora of vocational, technical and occasionally professional training schemes where comparability was vague and scope for protectionist occupational isolation rife. Only through a 'lead industry body', with its considerable employer representation, can a National Vocational Qualification go forward

for ratification; no longer can a college engage in vocational training without being massively circumscribed by demands set by employers.

This vocationalist discourse has had a considerable impact on both social work education and nurse education. The requirements for the new Dip SW and for Project 2000 have been couched in phrases heavily influenced by the language of 'competencies' (see CCETSW, 1991; UKCC, 1986; 40–41). Whilst all this may be no more than validating bodies cynically taking a strategic decision to adopt the Government's lexicon in order to curry favour (and resources) for implementing chosen ideas, on the assumption that the new framework for education will become routinized, solidified and reified into teaching practices, it is likely that the consequences will be more far-reaching than perhaps the strategists in CCETSW or the UKCC originally intended.

Competencies, when linked to a training scheme that is employer driven, become a set of stipulations that effectively limit the latitude or discretion available at the periphery of an education system, and it is for this reason that the imagery of a national curriculum has been introduced in order to convey a sense of the State's expanded role in defining certain knowledge and practices. So it is that a 'liberal' strategy of interdisciplinarity (in which old fashioned restrictions on co-operation and collaboration are set aside as counterproductive to consumer care), occurs alongside a strengthening of the centre's control over the direction of those professions should they 'elect' to come together in various ways.

The theme of *convergence* has featured in the discussion so far—that there are correspondences in the *structure* of social work and nurse education which point up how both have become similarly placed within the 'training for care agenda'; that as semi-professions they are malleable and have proved amenable to recasting in terms of a new itinerary for training; that they are subject to advancing degrees of control by the state as part of an increasingly explicit subordination to policy agenda; and that any discretion or latitude that ever applied to these bureau-professionals (as 'caseworkers' for example) has been channelled elsewhere.

Cadres

There is a third common theme that applies to these occupations, and that is of an emerging *cadre* of specialists. Within both the Dip SW and Project 2000 there is an emphasis on progressive differentiation of training for increasingly specific duties—in the case of social work, a 'Particular Area of Practice', and of nursing, 'Branch Studies'. But it is also at the levels below and above qualifying training that significance lies. Beneath lies an increasingly homogeneous group of care assistants or aides who will carry out the more routine and less discretionary aspects of social work or health care. Just as ambulance personnel have become distinguished (in the wake of a bitter dispute) between paramedics and what are in effect chauffeurs for the non-ambulant, so too vertical occupational stratification within the caring professions has become greater as lateral integration between them has intensified. The conditions for greater interprofessional collaboration may therefore be associated with boundaries that are more rigidly set between those levels that were hitherto often blurred and without rigid or precise adherence to title (the previously generic 'nurse' or 'social worker'). It remains an open question, of course, whether these newly emerging cadres, especially at the post-qualifying level of Higher Awards (in nursing) and post-qualifying and advanced awards (in social work) will segment into firmly set occupational entities. The confidence that comes from ratification of position may enable more effective co-operation than when occupations are only tentatively and precariously holding on to standing and identity. It seems highly likely that the latter will be encouraged, with any tendencies towards fragmentation being circumscribed by the stricture of control that is now exerted over these expert workers.

So it is that strengthening the cadre, which is both consequence and intent of the arrangements for expanding and refining education for the caring professions, establishes greater conformity through the standardization of expectations. Such of course is the influence of the NVQ driven curricula

that have percolated into social work and into nursing. Yet simultaneously employer directed, contract-sanctioned control makes for flexibility through shaping training better to address the exigencies of Government policy and the consequent nature of service delivery. Hence it is that in both nursing and social work there are signs that the cadres are being restructured or 'reshaped' as a 'new animal' (UKCC, 1991:17; UKCC, 1986:33) to reflect fresh occupational demands. The historic divisions between, say, health visiting and district nursing would be subsumed within an integrated entity of Community Health Care Nursing, in such a way as to be consistent with "organisational change (which) will . . . affect the kind of care offered by agencies and the composition of caring teams" (UKCC, 1991:10). And this requires a new knowledge base that is itself more integrated, looser in its classification between life science and social science. In social work likewise, distinctions between client group driven considerations which often promote operational inflexibility (such as amongst those concerned with the elderly or with mental illness or those with learning difficulties), has been replaced by a new 'specialism' of community care management in which agency determined practices draw upon skills that are highly transferable. (Alaszewski and Manthorpe, 1990).

The emergence of cadres as a distinctive feature in the caring professions of nursing and social work reflect not so much a solidification or culmination of old professionalising tendencies, in which the semi-professions follow in the footsteps of the good (the clergy), the great (medicine) and the rich (the law), but rather these cadres are low on independence, and exemplify the new 'sponsorship' to which those professions are subject. Their position and support are conditional on them giving in return that flexibility which is a feature of the 'post modern' division of labour that Basil Bernstein suggests in this paper's opening quote is increasingly demanded in the organization of contemporary social activity (see also Alaszewski & Manthorpe, 1990).

Conclusion

As an ambition, interprofessional activity in the caring professions emerges from somewhere; it has its own 'sociogenesis'. Certainly there are individual champions of such 'progress' and there are sponsors such as this journal that promote collaboration as an infinitely preferable way of addressing the totality of human existence than is allowed by an antiquated demarcation by specialists. But all this—desirable though it may be—sits within a context, and it is the consideration of this that gives a measure of 'reflexivity' to the pursuit of interprofessionalism, even though in so doing a degree of sociological bleakness falls over yet another scene of human endeavour.

The paper locates developments in nurse and social work education within a framework of control, in which both are becoming increasingly subject to direction by part of the state apparatus—namely the statutory validating bodies. Although the academic enhancement of programmes of study suggest an embryonic attempt at the emulation of conventional professions, the increasingly close superintendence of nursing and social work training indicates that autonomy and independence will remain low and that they will be subject to labour market requirements to a high degree. Interprofessional care, however much inspired it may be by sentiment and reason, is also subject to an imperative for workforce flexibility that is important to a neo-liberal administration repugned by restrictive practices and by 'archaic' task demarcations.

The paradox of a liberal, progressive or humane social activity—which is what interprofessional care is announced as ushering in—sitting within a structure that is defined by mechanisms of control is perhaps not an attractive one. However, it would be by no means inconceivable for a utilitarian view to be taken in which the virtue afforded by the restructuring of the professional sphere is greater than the harm occasioned by the breaking of old occupational liberties that are no longer suited to the principle of the greatest good. Either way though, it remains the case—or at least the case advanced here—that understanding the progress of interprofessional care cannot be separated from the wider context of political, ideological and economic interests that are embodied in the state.

Acknowledgements

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Chapter 10

Regulation for radicals
The state, CCETSW and the academy

David Webb

There's nothing more guaranteed to excite the sociologist than the opportunity to uncover the gap between humanity's good intentions and prosaic reality. Exposing and then disposing of idealist illusions in the face of materiality remains a staple analytical device of sociology, despite the rather breathless rehabilitation of human agency in the discipline's explanatory repertoire. And what better subject on which to try out this debunking tactic than anything to do with the welfare state and those that work within it. Here we have charitable, doubtless well-intentioned and often reformist sentiment, individuals too who frequently possess the noblest of attitude and who look to serious changes in the way society ought to be organised. Yet what is the picture portrayed by those who are sociologists or who have come under their influence? That the welfare state is fiscally dependent on capitalism, thereby making a sham of anything but the most modest and conditional transformations; that welfare practitioners engage in practices that routinise cases in order to process them more readily; that these same welfare workers are reproducing social relations and transmitting ideology or, as the Foucauldians have it, are 'distributing norms'; that they support racist and sexist practices; that the 'helping' organisations within which they work are patriarchal and oppressive of disadvantaged women employees. Although claims made in the past – such as social work being what Halmos (1965) called 'altruism under social auspices' – seem endangered and naïve when set within a sociological framing of social work which casts it as politically compromised and morally suspect, it would be wrong to assume that the same scepticism should not be brought to bear upon contemporary and equivalent claims for ethical perfection.

More recently, social work (like social welfare more generally)

has been pictured as swept along by post-Fordist shifts in the nature of production and underpinning work tasks, as the organisation of welfare begins to emulate that found in other spheres of the economy (Burrows and Loader, 1994). Decentralisation, team-based work, purchaser–provider quasi-markets; the decomposition of social work as a coherent (if semi-)profession in the face of a prospective independence of probation training, and signs of indivisibility between certain social-work and community nursing tasks, all suggest that something quite significant is happening to the roles and tasks of the social worker. And as sociology has charted the admittedly contested onset of postmodernity, so too has social work been set within this putative rupture in how we approach truth, reason and culture. In short, and not surprisingly, we are told that social work simply cannot stand alone and outside capitalism, trying somehow to have both its cake and eat it by existing simultaneously within and against the state. Indeed, if anything, social work is 'overdetermined' by that economic and social formation so that its status is best seen as relatively subordinate rather than as relatively autonomous. Put at its most uncompromisingly straightforward, state welfare is an element within the state apparatus, and as such will be to some extent articulated with it at both ideological and material levels. While it would be too teleological or 'functionalist' to 'read off' the nature of social work from the nature of the state, at the same time it does not take any special sociological insight to realise that the relationship between the two is worthy of reflection as we try to understand the nature of social work under conditions of con-temporary change.

What passes for social work is the product of the varying capacity of certain institutions and agencies to give it a particular definition, to shape what it is that constitutes legitimate professional knowledge and the manner in which the delivery of services should be organised. In both respects this means that the nature of social work is an accomplishment, a construction, or the product of what Althusser called 'ideological practices'. In view of the role that social work plays in remoralising the poor, or in returning people to utility, or in policing the boundaries between waywardness and righteousness, then it is understandable that a great deal of political interest will be shown in the manner by which these duties are discharged by welfare professionals.

All this is but a continuation of that sociological worrying about how things are not as they seem, and that in our enquiries we need

to search endlessly for better (or perhaps more adequate) under-
standings of what is 'really' going on. It is this which allows
sociology (or at least certain traditions within the discipline) to claim
that it is a science. In truth, sociology cannot long stay with
description alone nor with the purely empirical. It is weak in resisting
the temptation to explain, to generate causal explanations, to put this
or that institution or event sequentially and conceptually before
another so that some order can be imposed on experience. It is
something that David Matza (1964) some time ago called 'soft
determinism' and which has had a contemporary echo in Giddens'
theory of structuration, whereby there is an attempt to cope with the
sheer limiting materiality of human existence without succumbing
to anti-humanist determinism. Although this shies away from re-
ducing human activity to the remorseless and invariant force of
social circumstance, permitting instead some latitude for what is
sometimes termed 'action' or what Giddens terms 'agency', there
remains the sociological equivalent of the *deus ex machina* – the
looming presence of causal antecedents, of structure, of materiality,
or of inescapable 'social facts'.

OFSWET – THE OFFICE OF SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION AND TRAINING: A NEW NAME FOR CCETSW?

Of course social work is caught up in a wider trajectory than a history
of its own making. Its form under what is sometimes called
'postmodernity' is clearly what exercises much of this book, reflect-
ing previous concerns to locate socially within this meta-narrative
the reasons for certain shifts in the *practices* and discourses within
which the enterprise may sit (Parton, 1994a; Howe, 1994). This
particular chapter is only obliquely about the *practice* of social work
and the various changes to the organisation of welfare agencies or
the typical work tasks of individual practitioners. Rather, it continues
an earlier attempt to say something about the role of a particular 'key
definer' of what passes for the nature of social work (Webb,1991).
Howard Becker used the notion of a 'moral entrepreneur' to capture
the motivations and interests of those competing to secure the right
to declare the boundary between virtue and waywardness. Here the
accumulation and investment of cultural and moral capital is being
managed by the statutory body responsible for the education and
training of social workers as it seeks to define the nature and scope

of competent practice and professional ethics. The Central Council for Education and Training in Social Work (CCETSW) has always done this since it was established by statute in 1971 'to promote training in relevant social work for staff in local authorities, health and social services boards in Northern Ireland, the probation service, the education welfare service and the voluntary and private sectors' (CCETSW, 1994b: 7). CCETSW sets down the content and standards of training programmes and therefore determines what it is that a proficient social worker needs to know and do. It has also an inspection role by which the Council supervises training programmes in order to assure quality, something which gives it licence to lay down expectations of those universities that are associated with professional education, a point of some significance for a 'regulator' and one that will be given more attention later in this chapter.

It goes without saying that the role of CCETSW as a legitimator and definer of social-work knowledge and skills is not the product of a genteel debate among the good and the wise about what it would be nice to see in qualifying training for social work, though there is a suspicion that in CCETSW's past this may indeed have been the case. The Council has become increasingly answerable to government as an instrument for policy control over skill mix and the workforce superintendence that accompanies placing social-work training under the auspices of employers (Jones, 1989, 1994; Webb, 1992). And CCETSW with its Chair and up to 25 members appointed by the Secretary of State is nothing if not an extension of employer interests.

There have occurred a number of recent modifications to the requirements made of those centres providing social-work training and education, and it is with these and what they express about the social location of social work that this chapter is concerned. In large measure the exemplification of change is to be traced through CCETSW's Paper 30, the document that ushered in the new Diploma in Social Work (DipSW), setting down expectations and regulations about the key themes of training, morality and partnership, around which this chapter will range. Although this document has been reviewed and although there look to be revisions to the training regulations, the underlying form of the Council's strategy remains largely unaltered. There is, however, a particularly significant textual amendment which has attracted some attention. The original Paper 30 spoke about the basis for one particular aspect of its moral thrust

as resting on the 'endemic racism' in British society. Not surprisingly, this was not well received in certain quarters of the administration and alone probably accounts for why CCETSW has been required to revise something which was only launched two years before this DipSW review was announced. Needless to say, the inflammatory (though empirically verifiable) utterance no longer appears in the new documentation that CCETSW has produced, accompanied no doubt by murmuring about the hubris being visited on the Council.

The revisions to Paper 30 notwithstanding, its initial appearance marked a paradigmatic shift in the discursive practice of social-work education and training. These cultural and ideological changes in the preferred content of social-work education are ones that I will try to assess as having properties that are *postmodern*. There is at the same time an equally interesting move in the way that skills and competencies are being reconstituted by CCETSW that has a distinctly post-Fordist air of workforce flexibility about it. Analytically, these general and conceptual points can be approached through seeing the Central Council as seeking to frame social work within three extremely significant and inter-linked domains: first, the stipulation of practice competence by means of a discourse around 'training'; second, the requirement of demonstrable moral conduct towards social oppression; and third, through the insistence on 'partnership' in delivering social work there is the de-centring of the academy as the site within which what passes for social work knowledge is set.

STRATEGIC CHOICE, SETTLING SCORES AND CCETSW'S SURVIVAL

Regulation occupies an important place in the analysis of modernity. Its role is in securing essential predictability for the control of productive forces and for the surveillance of the social relations which flow from these forces and upon which they depend. The panopticon was regarded by Foucault as exemplifying proximate hierarchical surveillance operating through concrete and empirical solutions to the problem of order, whereas the emergence of social control by the moral and psychological reconstruction of a person through the benign interventions of the psy-experts presents the regulation of actual or potential deviants in a 'new' form – and one that is in some way postmodern. However, neither Foucault nor

Donzelot speculates on what happens if the norm distributing agencies fail in their objective of what in an earlier epoch was called (by the Victorians – rather presciently) 'gentling the masses'. Foucault, for example, seems to consider only a progressive and unilinear trajectory of increasing complexity and sophistication as remote surveillance triumphs over proximate control. However – and Parton (1994a) alludes to this exhaustion, or crisis, of tutelage – the predicament within the welfare approach to social disruption does not automatically lead to the perfection of yet more efficient and subtle techniques of norm distribution. It leads instead to techniques of *behavioural* change, a backtracking to the future with practices involving hierarchical surveillance and more or less unmediated regulation. What we are presently witnessing (in social-work education as in social work itself) is an instance of conservative modernisation, in which economic liberalisation joins with increasingly desperate measures brought to bear in order to secure compliance with political and economic objectives.

Whilst a political and moral endorsement of the 'social' (and its psy-experts) exemplifies high modernity in securing conformity through self-regulation or by the legitimate interventions of the 'secular priests' in the resolution of personal malfunction, this inevitably depends on some sort of concordat between the state and these 'distributors of norms'. But if this breaks down, the issue of governance becomes critical. And indisputably it has broken down in the case of social work and how its training is conducted. The 'fragile discursive practice' (Parton, 1994a) of social-work education is once more under further investigation for its failure to deliver reliability of product. The evidence is clear: yet another 'functional analysis' of the roles and tasks of the social worker in order to find out exactly what it is these unreliable, if not treacherous, welfare workers actually do (Jones, 1994); and, as we have already seen, there is a politically inspired review of the DipSW almost before its first award-holders have hit the streets, as well as a Home Office 'scrutiny' of probation training with the transparent objective of recovering control of what was relinquished in the heady days of generic training in the mid-1960s. Something appears to be on the verge of a break-up: there are signs in these events of the decomposition of old certainties, with difference, fragmentation and hyper-pluralism becoming increasingly the postmodern world within which social work struggles to survive.

Despite the value-talk centred on anti-oppression – which not only

cynics see as having been offered as a strategic concession to some of its constituents (Dominelli, 1991) – CCETSW exists as a quasi non-governmental regulatory body that operates only with the permission of the departments of state which sponsor and fund it. It is an element in governance that constitutes or constructs the way in which social-work education is formed and the practices and knowledge that are permissible therein. Within a context of the problematic superintendence of what the Victorians called the dangerous and threatening aggregates, social workers need to become reliable state agents and CCETSW must perforce play its part in ensuring precisely this. The recent, and as we have seen, the continuing history of the organisation revolves around its struggle to secure sufficient credibility to remain in sponsored existence. Though this context constitutes an environment which significantly shapes the possibilities that CCETSW is able to mobilise, measures taken by its senior executives within this set of imperatives should still be seen as conscious designs on how to secure the organisation's future. It is in this sense that we can use the notion of strategic choice that has played a part in the study of organisational behaviour (Bryman, 1993).

A current means of meeting the goal of corporate survival is to emulate the neo-liberal regulatory machinery that government has employed to police the activities of organisations which have been freed from the shackles of corporatism. Managing the productive forces within contemporary capitalism is set within this seeming paradox of organisational decentralisation on the one hand and centralised strategic control on the other (Hoggett, 1994). But it is only an *apparent* paradox, for there is a seamlessness to the apparatuses that play a complementary role in the maintenance of order, with the present arrangements for the administration and superintendence of social-work education serving as something of a case study of these new forms of integrated and multi-level social control. These strategies of intervention work through those three interlinked domains of training, morality and partnership that have already been identified as the new frame for social-work education. The remainder of this chapter is concerned with isolating each of these elements in turn.

TRAINING, COMPETENCIES AND PERFORMANCE

The emphasis on training and the specification of competencies has set a tightness to CCETSW's regulatory project since it allows an

intrusiveness into the academy that was hitherto not possible. Up until the introduction of the new Diploma in Social Work the training requirements for professional education were relatively permissive and accordingly gave scope for a greater emphasis on knowledge than on skills. This had given the universities and colleges sufficient space to determine matters in their own light and to write the curriculum according to agendas that were only partly determined by the concerns of narrow technical proficiency. There can be little doubt that the expansion in the social sciences of the late 1960s – and sociology and more latterly 'critical' social policy exemplified this – led to a major shift in the prevailing conceptual framework through which social-work knowledge was transmitted (Jones, 1994). It seemed that control of professional socialisation had been ceded to most unreliable custodians. The independence of the academy posed an increasing problem for CCETSW, as the universities' claim for academic freedom led to doubts about the Council's capacity to give direction to training that was not going to be compromised by the mischievous meddling of people for whom academic values had supplanted professional ones. Quite simply this meant that it would never be possible for CCETSW to exercise leverage (and thereby secure its own future) unless that autonomy could be broken.

From the early 1970s onwards there has been a frequently articulated – and more often than not politically orchestrated – set of public utterances doubting the calibre of social workers, with various strategies of shaming, mockery and degradation being brought to play in repudiating not only state welfare workers, but those whose social incompetence or deviance found them in the inept clutches of these 'do-gooders'. Much of the 'evidence' that something was seriously wrong with the capabilities of social workers was supplied through the increasing number of child abuse enquiries. CCETSW did not demur from this (Jones, 1989), and behind the scenes contributed to the dissemination of the view that training needed a thorough overhaul. The then professional qualification – the Certificate of Qualification in Social Work (CQSW) was portrayed by CCETSW itself as inadequate as a basis for contemporary practice as it sought to show government how it would put the world of training to right. Key (if maverick) opinion-formers within the academy such as Martin Davies (Professor of Social Work at the University of East Anglia) and Robert Pinker (of the London School of Economics) also played a significant role in the framing of this challenge to standards in social-work education, largely from a

sociological 'logic-of-place' perspective which owed a good deal to structural-functionalism. Attacking both the excesses of ambitious (often politically radical) social-work-driven meta-narratives of social change as well as the corporatist interferences of CCETSW in the academy, these neo-liberal voices added to the increasing destabilisation of the enterprise of social-work education.

As so often, a moment of crisis coincides with, or prompts, changes in personnel. In 1986, a new director was appointed to CCETSW. Quite clearly he was charged with putting matters straight and with mounting something of a last ditch attempt to show that CCETSW had a future. Central to this would have to be the delivery of an improved social-work training. It was an initiative that required various endorsements, although at that particular moment of supreme confidence within the Thatcher administration there was little inclination to be forthcoming except for the most hawkish of developments. The answer for CCETSW to this problem of providing sufficient robustness, and the key to government support, was the employer-led initiatives that were taking place in vocational education more widely and which were (and still are) guided by the National Council for Vocational Qualifications. CCETSW promoted very actively employer involvement in the various designs for the new award that it laid out, principally on the grounds that education had become so deficient that the only way that universities and colleges could remedy these failings (for which they were represented as accountable) was at long last to heed the voice of the 'consumer'.

It was clear that 'collaboration' (or the rather more palatable 'partnership') was to be the linchpin of the strategy to bring the colleges into line. Part of this was the concerted promotion of the Certificate of Social Service (CSS) as equivalent to professional education, something that it had never been designed to be. This award, which had been introduced in 1977 as an in-service route for social services staff generally in residential settings, had always been set as a lower-level academic qualification to the CQSW, although there was a widespread view among employers that it produced competent workers. But its most significant distinguishing feature was the *joint management* arrangements that saw the mandatory involvement of social-work agencies in determining the nature and content of education and training. Without such involvement educational centres would not secure CCETSW's approval to operate the scheme. Despite all the evidence about the expense and the cumber-

someness of the managerial structures of CSS, it emerged in effect as the model for the future Diploma in Social Work, almost entirely because of the partnership between colleges and agencies upon which it rested. And interestingly, the CSS resonated with a strong anti-elitist sentiment in some quarters of the educational world, especially that in the further education sector which had been assiduously courted by CCETSW as it sought to build new strategic alliances that would cut across what would otherwise be an unhelpful educational unity. CSS was the Trojan horse welcomed by the academy (or at least some sections of it), from which spilled the proposals and plans for what was to become the Diploma in Social Work. CCETSW would bring the querulous secular clerics of a recalcitrant academy into line and at the same time offer a way to restructure the welfare workforce through a realignment of the training and education mix (Pinker, 1984). In this way CCETSW was an eager exemplar of social work's own post-Fordism of flexibility, decentralisation and market plurality. It 'appeared' to loosen its direct control over education, creating instead pseudo-autonomous programme providers operating as quasi-businesses founded on semi-contractual mutual partnerships in order to meet the 'specifications' set by the Council.

These moves are aspects of recent shifts in the relative weighting given to education and training within social work, and in particular the emergent emphasis on the specifying of tasks to be done rather than knowledge to be gleaned. The movement is from the depth explanations of modernism's concern with transcendent truth to postmodernity and its multiplicities of surface performance. But postmodernity is not an epoch which is beyond control: rather, it offers a vision of other modes by which control is exercised. Thus the performance of *tasks* or competencies is in the public domain, so these are capable of being owned, set and controlled to a high degree by others. They are observable and therefore verifiable and predictable. *Knowledge*, on the other hand, tends towards being more private, less open to the specification of what it should encompass. It is less calculable and more idiosyncratic: it smacks of abstraction and unreliability – you cannot know what someone is thinking, but you can see what they do. Because the regulatory discourse that CCETSW has embraced must perforce operate with certainties and the measurable, the pedagogic consequences within social-work education have followed accordingly, with the consequential de-centring of the academy.

Through this reconstruction the social-work academy has become a virtual extension of the National Council for Vocational Qualifications (Jones, 1989). Geared to, and obsessed by,.the prosaic achievement of competence (and only the English could erect policy around the humdrum of competence rather than the excitement of excellence), the new approach to training produces superficially accomplished performers able to demonstrate through appearance and exhibition their entitlement to certification. The dramaturgical connotation is significant, with identity in high modernity being more and more built around the 'face work' of bearing semblance (Giddens, 1991).

Social-work education seems to have become firmly established as a surface-oriented activity: in fact the traditional Arnoldian idea of education sits ever uneasily within the enterprise as an 'old-fashioned' diversion just as does the modernising project, which is about exposing the errors and limitations of pre-scientific, partial and superstitious thought. 'Education' for all its civility and compromises with the dominant culture, wrenches the heart out of the cherished and taken-for-granted as it inspects and interrogates. Training, on the other hand, cannot be bothered with these questions of deep structure. It looks rather to the observationally verifiable. It suspends consideration of the existentially or epistemologically troubling. 'Training' takes to some sort of ultimate resolution the empiricism of English modernity because it deletes the radical and querulous refutationist elements that empiricism contained. Training leaves us with only the illusion of certainty because of what it otherwise suspends.

Training for competence therefore yokes social workers to the requirements of those who purchase their labour as professional expertise becomes increasingly commodified through the breaking of any semblance of generic unity. Through functional analysis of the social worker's job (as CCETSW is currently doing) is generated a strategy for the control both of employees and of education since the contract for delivering these becomes capable of very high degrees of precision. The fragmentation of occupational activity by the more or less exact specification of skills lends rational measurement of use value through the segmentation of those skills. Less tied to any one particular job or post, these skills can now be transferred from setting to setting, and across boundaries which were hitherto set by the restrictive practices of occupational and professional power. The initiatives in joint training between social workers and

community mental health nurses stand as an instance in which labour flexibility is being facilitated through the involvement of validating bodies – which in this case includes the national boards for nursing alongside CCETSW (Webb, 1992). Functional specialism has also enabled the Home Office to begin its long-planned move to withdraw probation officer training from generic education, on the ostensible grounds that separate and specific skills are needed which can no longer be provided through the Diploma in Social Work. There is little reason not to see this as a further instance of how differentiation of task leads to fragmentation of activity and an expansion in the subordination of welfare workers to very tightly specified employer concerns (see also Pinch, 1994).

THE STYLE COUNCIL?

Parallel with the regulatory character of the new award with its highly prescriptive stipulation of competencies was a wider set of injunctions within social-work education: as we have seen, judgements of capability are increasingly set in terms of the superficial certainties that come from task specification and competencies. And this has generated an orthodoxy reflected in the new morality that is enunciated through CCETSW's declarations. This is not to enter into a foolhardy discussion about the rightness or wrongness of that discourse, but it is rather to see it as an expression of an emerging process of 'surface' competencies that must be demonstrated behaviourally. For good reason or not, the requirements that have been promulgated about anti-oppressive practice are part and parcel of the same training mentality that has pervaded the rest of the regulator's view of social-work education. Superficially radical, this approach to values none the less exists within a performance-orientated discourse which has been set within a similarly behavioural/surface mode to the other competencies that are now required to be demonstrated by the tyro social worker.

I have elsewhere offered what I called a speculation on the 'socio-genesis' of this 'new moral discourse', something which is marked by righteousness, censoriousness and certitude as well as by the preparedness to implement the sanction of ban (Webb, 1991). I called this 'puritan', arguing that the momentum within social work was encouraged by earlier modifications to the law which 'progressive' forces in the 1960s and 1970s had applauded as successful interventions in civil society around the social divisions of gender, race

and childhood. But the cultural forces at work are again contrapuntal. Although there are here advances in the protection of vulnerable citizens, these changes in social solidarity expressed through the law also entail permission to renounce an earlier ethic of forgiveness which can now be replaced by one marked by the superficiality of retribution. The sinner has no hope of experiencing the abstraction or tentativeness of redemption, or of receiving philanthropy under social auspices, but is instead cast out into the community, that modern equivalent of a wilderness.

I did not in that earlier piece locate my speculations within a set of considerations that looked specifically at the features of social work in the modern age, though I think that by implication the discussion in 'Puritans and Paradigms' approached this question, for it remarked on the formal similarity between the rhetorical certainties of Thatcherism and those of the new paradigm. However, I have sought here to extend those ideas a little by taking another perspective towards this new moral discourse. CCETSW's value-talk around oppression issues is carried out within what Callinicos (1990) discusses as the abandonment of class and the de-politicising of resistance, substituting the realist categories of the social sciences with a list of oppressions jostling for attention and action. It is also divorced from any account of causation or of inter-relationships between social categories. As David Howe has noted, this expresses a postmodern preference for ontology over epistemology, where truth resides in the being of various status positions rather in elaborate systems of 'abstract' social categories such as, for example, the less resiliently experiential one of class. Truth then becomes de-centred and localised (Howe, 1994). Certainly the enunciation of those differences which have not hitherto been represented within discourses of social division constitutes a lifting of amnesia within the humanities and social sciences. Yet fragmentation around a multitude of oppressions and the politicisation of difference have a resonance with the seductive discourses of locality, community and empowerment that have figured within the rhetoric of neo-liberalism. It is difference rather than commonality that CCETSW has found itself endorsing. Ostensibly progressive, at the same time this sits within a set of cultural practices in a way which Machiavelli probably would have found commendable.

None the less, there is inherent instability within the new discourse that CCETSW has sought to establish within the value-talk of social work, demonstrating that there remains a tension between various

domains of certainty and orthodoxy. As part of the most recent review of qualifying training CCETSW has been forced to withdraw the declaration about endemic racism in Britain that appears in annex 5 to the original 1991 regulations for the Diploma in Social Work (CCETSW, 1994a). Not surprisingly, given its manifest clash with sentiments about the basically decent nature of Britain, the clause had caused consternation in ministerial circles: it was clear that a new chair of Council (appointed in the summer of 1993) was set as a high priority the task of seeing the offending passage removed. Ironically, what seems to have made this victory relatively easy lies with the way in which CCETSW had effectively excluded the very social sciences (and in effect the social scientists too) that could have been brought to bear on demonstrating empirically that racism (and any other oppression for that matter) *is* indeed structurally endemic. But because CCETSW has consistently failed to acknowledge the complexities in conceptualising oppression (and in particular the analytical problems of determining system and personal attributes), it has found itself manifestly unable to mount a defence of its position. Furthermore, since its approach to anti-discrimination has been framed around competencies to the almost total exclusion of analysis and 'knowledge', it remains epistemologically unstable. By this I mean that anti-discrimination becomes precarious and easily eroded, as undoubtedly it has been for CCETSW in its capitulation to those who would seek its removal from Paper 30.

It is in this sense that CCETSW exemplifies certain features that could be regarded as quintessentially postmodern. There is the absence of a deep structure (about 'causes', for example) to the new moral discourse, which remains primarily framed within the super-ficiality of rhetoric and competencies. There is the excising or obscuring of complexity and a reluctance to give much space to the interconnectedness between oppressions which instead become rend-ered as competing, almost 'individualistic' characteristics (Graham, 1992). There is the associated imagery of oppressions being some-how choosable, arrayed almost as in a market for selection. Further-more, CCETSW has in general given licence to a strong essentialist inclination of the kind that Robert Merton some time ago called 'insiderist' (1972), whereby the possession of certain physical attributes (gender, 'race') become not only necessary but sufficient to guarantee that the individual can convey an appropriate position on the matter at hand. As Roger Sibeon puts it after his very detailed consideration of the reductionist tendencies within the current value-

talk of social work: 'essentialist theoretical categorisations that conflate . . . complex empirical realities have inevitably produced an ineffectual politics of . . . fragmentation and division' (1991). And this is precisely where CCETSW has ended up, unable to sustain a stance that it has so forcefully demanded of others. The consequences of all this for the social-work academy have not been insignificant either, as it has become caught up in the educational and moral re-alignment that has been orchestrated by the validating body.

NO DIRECTION KNOWN: DERACINATING THE ACADEMY

The activity of social-work education has been noticeably reframed, culminating in the cluster of changes associated with the Council's Paper 30. There has been the supplanting of education by training; the sequestering of discourses of depth by those of surface; the setting aside of knowledge for skills, and the general triumph and solemnising of 'competencies' over the complexities of abstraction. This is about casting anew the definition of what passes for social work as a practical and conceptual activity. It is about synchronicity winning over the diachronic.

CCETSW has established a range of regulations and requirements for the education and training of social workers, which, if the academy is to remain in the business, it has been obliged to accept. This new agenda has altered the balance of autonomy hitherto enjoyed by social-work education, and instead through 'programme partnerships' has brought it into a direct and subordinate client relationship if not with employers, then at least with the new manager cadres of the personal social services. CCETSW, for all its pronouncements about 'combating oppression' has effectively notar-ised relationships of a kind that are fully consonant with those of conservative modernisation. Its *structural* position is set four-square within what were once called the ideological state apparatuses: 'surface' exhortations to repudiate discrimination sit alongside what is in effect an endorsement of neo-liberalism.

All this is in its widest sense about an alignment to two sets of moral obligations, both of which run through the enterprise of social-work education. These concern the pursuit of truth, and its transcend-ence of other loyalties, alongside the recognition that what Merton called 'group-influenced perspectives' about social divisions have

indeed contributed significantly to sensitising us to matters that rightly demand our intellectual attention (Merton, 1972: 44). Somehow there needs to be a resolution of these increasingly conflicting demands if social work is to hold a place within the academy. With the 'new direction' taken by CCETSW pushing the venture in a particular way, then it may be timely to wonder whether the interests of social-work *education* might not be best served by rethinking, perhaps quite radically, the relationship between qualifying training and the social-work academy.

IN OTHER WORDS ...

The new Diploma in Social Work did lots of things, all of them consistent with CCETSW's stated or covert objectives. *First*, and as living expression of an anti-intellectual 'component of the national culture' (Anderson, 1968), the organisation revenged itself on the universities, who had been seen as uppity, too clever by half and unwilling to bring the sociological 'radicals' within social-work education into line. From now on the universities would be unable to move without taking into account the 'sensible' concerns of welfare agencies, something which would be guaranteed to check the indulgences of the academy. *Second*, CCETSW was able to demonstrate to government that it could deliver reliably within the prevailing NVQ-driven and employer-led ethos of vocational training. It thereby acted as a 'relay' of government policy to secure a trustworthy and predictable labour force of welfare workers whose previous unpredictability, unreliability and autonomy were seen to be the source of the ills that they should be solving (Jessop, 1994). *Third*, it served as a vehicle for integrating new and sometimes querulous entrants to social work. By virtue of the changing demographic and ideological profile of both practitioners and, increasingly, members of the academy, there was a danger that training was on the verge of meeting its own particular 'legitimation crisis'. *Fourth*, CCETSW used the new award at least to try to repair the years of indifference that it had shown to probation training and therefore to the Home Office, because it had a means to demonstrate that the needs of all branches of social work were now fully encompassed by its flexible and competency-specific model. *Fifth*, and as accumulation of the other achievements, CCETSW was able to secure its own position as an increasingly reliable agent of government and ministerial and departmental concerns.

This chapter has been an attempt to understand the way in which social workers, as 'technicians of normalisation' are constituted as agents of a particular strategy of governance via the injunctions issued through the validating body which sets the training agenda. It considered the paradox of superficial radicalism occurring within the shell of a reactionary neo-liberal state and speculated about the degree to which what I have elsewhere called the new moral discourse of social work is an expression of 'life-style' adjustments to the postmodern world that social work has come to inhabit. Above all, the chapter considered the role of CCETSW as the instrument for securing the *dirigiste* restructuring of professional training through framing professional social work as a flexible, technically specific (and highly specified) enterprise in which skill-mix considerations are put to work at the behest of employers. As part of this enterprise we saw that CCETSW has deleted the abstractions, scepticisms and meta-narratives of the social sciences in favour of surface renderings of complex social and moral dilemmas as predominantly technical difficulties. In one guise CCETSW has promulgated a set of moral axioms, while in another has contributed to the 'modernisation' of social care so that it can be contained within the framework of employer-led considerations. Seemingly progressive in the domain of surface representations around words and statements, the deeper structure of compliance and complicity with the neo-liberal state's agenda is only revealed when we suspend our infatuation with CCETSW as a disseminator of utterance but read it instead as 'an almost perfectly designed vehicle' for the implementation of the conservative modernisation of social work (Brewster, 1992).

The theme that has been pursued here is of course about the regulation of social-work education. This reflects the widespread neo-liberal practice of setting boundaries to the liberties and freedoms that have been promulgated through ideological rhetoric and organisational deregulation. Variety and local conditions may appear to empower and legitimise local consortia which 'deliver' training, but in reality the regulatory framework and the specification of competencies is doing no more than establish a national curriculum in social work. The creation of programme consortia into which have been inserted the interests if not of employers then of a new cadre of public-service managers has simply exemplified the cross-flowing features that are widespread throughout contemporary political economy. This 'dissipates and splits into a plethora of localised and

partial policies pursued by local or partial interests' (Parton, 1994a: 28). So CCETSW promotes decentralisation of programme delivery while simultaneously imposing a set of requirements, regulations and monitoring obligations that significantly expand the intrusiveness of the state into the determination of the social-work curriculum. CCETSW, whatever its pronouncements about the value base of the profession, is part of the state apparatus, and to overlook this is to be seduced by the appeal of idealist postmodern utterances of limitless possibility.

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A 'REVENGE' ON MODERN TIMES: NOTES ON TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY

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Abstract   Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) results from cerebral damage caused by a blow to the head, for example in a road traffic accident. The frequency of TBI means that it has been characterised as the silent epidemic of modern times. The majority of those who are head-injured are young men. This paper argues that the social reaction to head injury is testament to the latent eugenicist and mentalist suppositions within modernity. The brain-damaged person cannot readily overcome disability with the assistance of the technological aids available to those whose handicapping condition is physical. The consequences that head injury has for the mind and for the 'self' entail the special sequestration of those who are head-injured from modernity's concerns with reflexivity and with the paramount cultural and material importance of the mind, whatever is said about the sociological significance of 'body matters'. Because TBI brings in its wake the liminality of being 'neither here nor there', of young men who become once again 'children', the implications for family dynamics are both distinctive and profound. The 'future', around which much of modernity revolves, is denied to those whose catastrophe arose from these same modern times.

Keywords: Disability, mind, modernity, traumatic brain injury.

But then we learn that we can do without appendix, gall bladder, parts of our stomach, without limbs, without eyes; that we can do without our own kidneys, and even without our own heart. All this teaches us that our bodies are, to a surprising and even shocking extent, expendable. And this teaches us that we cannot simply identify our personal selves with our bodies.

(Popper and Eccles 1977:117)

... This staff nurse just turned round and said, 'Oh you can forget the son that you had. You'll have another one that will emerge. A totally different Stephen.' Just like that you see. And my husband cried on the way back to the car. He said, 'I loved the one I'd got. I don't want another one.'

(Mother of a head injured son, in Higham *et al.* 1996:173)

The genesis of sociological enquiry is inevitably varied, and this paper is no exception. Something that began as a contribution to research into the residential needs of people who are traumatically brain injured (Higham *et al.* 1996),[1] became an engagement with several personal and sociological puzzles, even though for various biographical reasons neither the substantive area itself nor the contingent theoretical ones were especially familiar to start with. But there was something about being moved – sometimes to tears – by what was

told to us by those in our study. Above all there was the frightening recognition that were it not for the good fortune of a hairbreadth judgement by another driver, or the fortuitous curve of a particular road, then we could as well have been parent-respondents as social scientist 'investigators'. 'There but for the grace of God' might never feature in the catalogue of reasons for 'doing sociology', but for good or ill this happens to be the sentiment which lies behind what follows.

A 'Condition' – And Its Social Context

A Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)[2] arises from cerebral damage caused by a blow to the head, arising for example from a road traffic accident. TBI can be distinguished from Acquired Brain Injury brought about by medical or congenital conditions, such as Alzheimer's disease or cerebral palsy. In view of its contemporary prevalence head injury has been characterised as the silent epidemic of modern times (Brock *et al.* 1995); in Britain about fifteen people are taken to hospital every hour with a head injury and every two hours one of these will die. Estimates indicate that by the year 2000 there will be in the region of 135,000 people with TBI in the United Kingdom, with a severity that varies from total recovery, to mild impairment through to a completely vegetative state. Causes are primarily, though not exclusively, attributable to accidents involving motor vehicles, with motor cyclists forming a sizeable proportion of those affected. About a third of TBI incidents are the result of falls or assaults, with sports and playground injuries being other typical examples of how traumatic brain injury can happen. A majority – three quarters – of those who are traumatically brain injured are young men, usually aged between 16 and 25 (Higham *et al.* 1996).

Over and above the rather obvious sociological and economic causes for an increase in head injury – prosperity, mobility and the (particularly masculinist) cultural adulation of speed, cars and motorbikes – the principal reason for this increase in the prevalence of TBI is cruelly ironic. Medical intervention in life expectancy as well as design improvements that give greater driver and passenger safety to motor vehicles mean that there is now a far greater chance of surviving those accidents which in the past would have resulted in death. As has been argued elsewhere (Higham *et al.* 1996), this illustrates something of the inconsistency between the ability of modernity to rescue life heroically through advanced medical technology and the high-speed drama of emergency services, and its capacity (or willingness) to adequately provide 'mundane' or routine long-term care. The situation is in fact replete with the kind of paradox that neo-conservative commentators on modernity (like Illich, and perhaps the writer of this present piece too) seemingly delight in announcing as nemesis, which 'for the masses is now the inescapable backlash of industrial progress' (Illich 1975:154). Never slow to

expose our foolish hopes and pretensions, Illich employs some of his usual hyperbole when he says that 'the medicalisation of society has brought the epoch of natural death to an end' (1975:149), but his gloomy thesis that modernity's arrogant conquest over death is followed by an appropriation of humanity, captures with some insight the social and psychological consequences when that corporeal triumph leaves in its wake a traumatised brain and a sequestered mind.

Head injury can have a variety of physiologically induced consequences so far as an individual's functioning is concerned. There are the obvious effects on motor performance and co-ordination, on cognition and on intellectual performance. To some commentators it is the frequent presence of quite dramatic changes in the individual's expression of affect through altered emotional, interpersonal and psycho-sexual behaviour that is more incapacitating than any straightforward physical impairment (Kreutzer and Wehman 1990), with these disturbances in conduct amongst the most disabling and most persistent in Traumatic Brain Injury. Aggression is a particularly frequent behavioural excess, although it would be sociologically naive to attribute this solely to organic causes. The interactive loop where primary brain damage causes irritability and impulsivity and is then amplified by secondary reactions of frustration, loss of confidence and depression shows the undoubtedly complex interrelationship between the physical materiality of the initial disabling injury and the subsequent handicapping symptoms. Rather reassuringly (at least for the purpose of our methodology), this sociological abstraction has graphic resonance in the everyday explanations of those who are themselves head injured, or are involved with TBI people. As a mother said of her son: 'The more pressure he is under the more anxiety he has, the more frustration, the worse he is. It's a mixture of frustration, anxiety, panic. The more, then he starts to break down.' (Higham et al. 1996:176). And a head injured person summarised the amplificationary spiral that led him to becoming a drug addict. It was not, he said, 'so much the head injury itself as sort of second-order effects, no help available, no services available and I just got angry about that because as far as I was concerned I was just the victim of an accident. I did get put in a psychiatric hospital for a short period because I was misdiagnosed as a schizophrenic' (Higham et al.:185).

The paradox of traumatic brain injury is that survival, or even seemingly full physical recovery (and 90 per cent of head injured people do in fact make reasonably good progress in this regard), can merely add to the nature of the catastrophe. The triumph of the body is poor compensation for the sequestration of the mind, where memory loss, impairment of attention, slowness in processing information and reduced speed of thought are all common. Further difficulties often also occur in perceptual, language and reasoning skills and in the awareness of self and others (Higham et al. 1996:14), all of which lead to challenges in the effective management of intersubjectivity.

The head injured person may well be apparently 'normal' with a post-accident recovery of their bodily appearance. In this case, disability cannot simply be read off from the conventional empirical markers of 'what is seen'. The difficulties of being without the dramatic announcement of disability that comes with physical impairment – the stigmatising inscription on the body (Fox 1993:32) – means that the person who is TBI may well disadvantageously pass for normal in their dealings with significant others (Shakespeare 1994). In fact, managing the invisibility of disability that is frequently associated with head injury is a theme in a number of the interviews with carers of TBI people (Higham *et al.* 1996), as they look for ways to ease the passage of the TBI person to a world that might scale down its expectations. 'Passing for normal' is ironically no asset for those to whom the hidden nature of their disability is especially disabling, where prejudice against the 'mentally incompetent' and the vernacular disdains of everyday life reflect the wider structural and ideological eugenicist-cum-mentalist discourse of modernity. From the Enlightenment this thread is clearly discernible. It begins with the 'benign' neo-Malthusian social engineers of the nineteenth and early twentieth century eugenics movement (Weeks 1981), is given a tyrannical twist through the mental hygienism of the holocaust (Bauman 1991; Proctor 1988) and is rehabilitated by means of the technically precise, 'scientifically' validated and meritocracy-justifying measurement of intelligence (Ryan and Thomas 1987). The 'choice enhancing' prospects offered by genetic screening and the 'eugenic elimination of impairment' (Shakespeare 1995:24; see also Pfeiffer 1994) are amongst the latest in a constitutive set of legitimations for the mental gradation of moral entitlement and the consequential social or physical expulsion of those who 'fail the test'.

Traumatic Brain Injury, with its typical sufferer being a young man injured in some way or another following a car or motor bike accident, stands quintessentially as a disabling condition (both in its causes and in its consequences for carers) with which we are culturally ill equipped to deal. The individual who is incapacitated through brain injury is unable to overcome their difficulties with the mechanical aids and cybernetic micro-processors which announce the prowess of the technological fix for the person who is physically disabled (Stone 1995). This means that the technical augmentation that serves a triumphal restorative function for physical disability is less likely for the person whose brain is injured. Furthermore, in so far as head injury has an impact on interpersonal relations – and essentially those between a now newly dependent child and a parent-carer – then we see a profound dislocation in a whole range of assumptions about reciprocity and exchange in the life course of the family (Oddy *et al.* 1978; Brooks 1984).

The subject broadens out at this stage. In seeking to establish some point of conceptual departure for theorising the particular disability that arises from Traumatic Brain Injury,[3] there may be some merit in turning – at least initially – to the portmanteau utility of the interactionist's favourite standby of

'social reaction'. It is an attractive entree, since it has some heuristic value as an explanatory key to understanding the control of deviancy or 'otherness', whether by censure, by care or by medical (or quasi-medical) 'treatment'. It hints at the importance of the social psychology of interpersonal relations, as those coming into contact with people who are 'out of the ordinary' struggle to cope with a dislocated assumptive world in which the taken-for-granted has to be suspended. It invites too an acknowledgement that those who are themselves outsiders have an identity that is recursively shaped by the controlling relations into which they are perforce obliged to enter by virtue of their subordinate status. This is the interactionist dynamic which sees personal change in adult life arising from the way in which 'the stigmatised person learns and incorporates the standpoint of the normal, acquiring thereby the identity and beliefs of the wider society' (Goffman 1973:45). ·

But 'social reaction' also contains the germ of an analysis that is more to do with the *discourses*, or cultural representations, within which certain matters are framed at an institutional level. It says – or at least implies – something about what may still be called 'ideologies', those more or less systematic world-views that can be analytically located within a firmament of particular material interests. It is to do with uncovering the politics and economics behind the social distribution of applause and condemnation, and the agendas that deem certain behaviours righteous and others wayward. It is about the social topography of normality's high ground and the shadowed valleys of 'abnormality'.

This cluster of 'sensitising concepts' sits behind an account of Traumatic Brain Injury as a disability having its own particular social and psychological handicapping dynamics. The emphasis in this paper is principally with giving some consideration to mapping the constituent social reactions to Traumatic Brain Injury, from how it is constructed within the discourse of mentalist ideology, to the psychodynamics that typically characterise the family within which the head injured person is cared for. And all this is set within the context of how the mind and the body are sites for certain sorts of meanings within modernity.

The Mind, the Brain and the Body

Locating the origins of the socially constituted (and socially contingent) self has long featured in sociological enquiry, with the interplay between the acting individual and the 'structure' of society a persistent theme in the history of the discipline. Within one of these sometimes discrete 'two sociologies', the concern with consciousness – with the 'reality' of subjectivity and the consequentially variable understandings held of social objectivity – has served as an important conceptual focus. It was within – and to some extent against – this idealism that the sociology of the body emerged as an attempt to set out

the importance of the corporeal as a site of social control, a way of approaching matters to do with the physical embodiment of the self in terms of its organic materiality. The accent is on the surface of the body as something that is 'lived'. As such, questions about the management of a particular physiology are of inevitable conceptual importance, since these often reflect the negotiations that must be entered into (and repeatedly sustained) by those whose bodies constitute some sort of socially contested domain. Not surprisingly then, manœuvres around the cultural representations of gendered body shapes or the manipulation of the censure of disability feature significantly in the more empirical excursions found in the sociological study of the body.

This general approach, with its strong emphasis on 'body matters', in fact depends on the capacity of a reflexively competent subjectivity to do the work in making sense of the body. The sociology of the body announces the complete sovereignty of the mind over the corporeal, and it assumes this more or less unproblematically. Without the competent mind there is no sociology of the body. There is too the much wider (and delicate) question about the relationship between subjectivity and our conceptions of 'being human', which run around (and are implicit within) both the sociology of the body and some facets of disability studies. Confronting sociologically the consequences of head injury therefore touches on our discipline's reliance on the brain-mind-self propositional infrastructure. Others remind us of this: Popper and Eccles (1977) write about the importance of the brain as a means of actively and recursively affirming the self. They maintain that *acting* bodies – that is those that are not simply behavioural entities, but which are expressions of *agency* – are inspired through the capacity of the mind to be activated by the brain. Popper and Eccles' radical cerebralism would invite us to be cautious towards that which has issued from that 'corpus' of knowledge that is concerned with the body and society. Rather they claim that 'the present view may be formulated sharply and somewhat shockingly by the conjecture that the flawless transplantation of a brain, were it possible, would amount to a transference of the mind, of the self'. (Popper and Eccles 1977:117).

Although the perfection of the body constitutes an important narrative of high modernity, this is increasingly subject to a challenging deconstruction where the scope for plurality is introduced, in substantial part through the celebratory efforts of activists who reject the hegemony of able-bodied assumptions and practices. This may be increasingly feasible because of certain material pre-conditions to the overcoming of physical disability, even though the social distribution of these enhancements needs to be considered. Compensatory intervention can come about most notably through the application of technology, so that (at least some) people who are physically disabled can have a measure of functional parity with those who are able-bodied (Stone 1995). But those whose physical disability is of the *brain* are not so well placed. In so far as impairment of motor co-ordination is a consequence of

head injury then it is likely that technology could offer something, but with a physical injury that impairs the *mind*, then the specifically technological resolution to disability is almost impossible. Whilst modernity might have its cultural icons of physical attractiveness, it is important to acknowledge equally the mentalist celebration of intellect, the triumph of even an almost disembodied mind over material impediment, such as in the case of Stephen Hawkins. Within an emergent 'virtual world' physicality becomes of less importance than the transformative capacities of imagination and intellect. Turner points out that who we are rests crucially on having a specific *body* (1992:37) – which is true, but only to a point. At the same time who we are rests as much on having a specific *mind*, as Popper and Eccles repeatedly insist. Indeed the case here is that with a physiologically damaged brain comes the likelihood of a fractured mind, and that consequently this will have a bearing on the person's capacity to existentially 'live their body' – to reflexively experience it. When the brain is damaged, and where as a result this has an impact on the way in which the body is subjectively apprehended, then we need to consider the issues that arise about the 'lived body' and its possibilities, or what Turner (1992) refers to as its 'phenomenological domains'. The existence of the head injured person is, to a greater or lesser extent primarily corporeal, their essential reflexivity thereby compromised or otherwise diminished.

High Modernity and the Perfect Mind

An analysis that focuses on physical disability is therefore unlikely to open up an account of the specific social constructions that are employed in the case of those who are traumatically brain injured. More or less implicit mentalist assumptions about the nature of disability as a generic category in effect neglect the specifics of disabling head injury and simply replicate the convention that it is all simply a case of 'body matters'. Oliver (1990:85), who takes a radically constructionist stand on disability ('dependency is not an intrinsic feature of their impairment but is socially created by a disabling and disablist society'), barely mentions what might come under the generic heading of 'learning difficulties' in a book which – ironically in the light of the above – is titled *The Politics of Disablement* (1990). His approach to impairment is an exclusively embodied one, since it is defined as 'lacking part or all of a limb, having a defective limb, organism or mechanism of the body'. Consequently Oliver's concern with the social creation of disability is analytically focused on a critique of a 'contemporary social organisation which takes no or little account of people who have *physical* impairments' (1990:10, emphasis added).

In a similar vein Frank writes that 'the disabled, and by extension all the ill, exist within the limitations imposed by bodies experienced as failures of self.

They live their lives with a self-consciousness of experiencing a subset of what a healthy society defines as a full life' (Frank 1990:142). However this assumes that for the disabled or ill person there is the discursive capacity for unproblematic reflexivity or self-consciousness in the first place, something that could surely find the TBI person ruefully observing: 'if only'. Although Frank's project was no doubt important in establishing the place of the body in sociological enquiry, at the same time it seems to occupy a discourse which is itself 'socially located' within high modernity, exhibiting as it does a conceptual emphasis on the management of appearance and with the reflexive performance of 'identity work' through the workings of a competent mind.

Physical disability and overcoming of it is certainly an instance of modernity's victory over the adversity of nature. Utility can be recaptured by harnessing technology to conquer or subdue the frailty or rectify the flaws of the human body. But the triumph of the will is no longer expressed through the perfection of the body alone, but in the transcendent potency of the mind to rise above the mundaneness of the corporeal. In high modernity the body has a diminishing *productive* significance, and it becomes increasingly a site more of recreational indulgence than labour power as such. In this context, it is catastrophic to be denied the opportunity to participate in the identity constituting reflexivity of late modernity (Giddens 1990). In so far as brain injury has as one of its sequelae the loss of memory – and very often it does – then being a competent social agent is further thwarted by the incapacity to generate a coherent personal narrative or biography. We certainly need to be cautioned against reductively explaining the mind in terms of neuroscience, and there are eminent neuroscientists to warn us about doing just this (Rose 1992). Nevertheless, because the reflexivity of the self is mediated through memory, there are clearly material links between the brain as an organ and the self that is socially constituted through biographical narrative. 'We know who we are, and who other people are, in terms of memory. Lose your memory and you, as you, cease to exist' (Rose 1992:1).

Brain injury, although the prospect of remission may be tantalisingly offered, often presents the TBI person and their carers with the termination of life projects. More than this particular ending of progress, it almost invariably leads to a reversal of attainments so far achieved. The mind and with it the chance to have command over the future may well have been permanently endangered. The everyday, taken-for-granted prospect – even if it is never realised in practice – is that within the future-oriented culture of modernity promise is always yet to be fulfilled, and head injury compromises that opportunity. This is particularly significant for younger head injured people for whom the reflexivity of planning and the structuring of 'what is to be' has to be set aside. Despairing of this participation in the contemporary importance of 'time to come', one of the head injured respondents in our study remarked: 'life is now and I see nothing there for me. This is what I have' (Higham *et al.* 1996:182). Another (ibid.:180) put it in a more concrete, less existential way:

'Well, I have no pressures now as such but, if you like I would like the pressures of having a house, having a wife, having a normal life if you like.'

Brain Injury and Social Exclusion

It is something of a refrain in this discussion that high modernity revolves around a mentalist discourse in which greater importance is given to the mind than the sociological talk of 'body matters' suggests. Whilst there may be an increasing celebration of the plurality of physiology as a contemporary counter-culture repudiates particular norms of appearance or physical attractiveness, there is no such tolerance of those whose waywardness is mental. Perhaps a little controversially (because it raises the divisiveness of a hierarchy of oppressions), the proposition here is that those who are head injured have a greater propensity to be socially excluded than do the potentially more productive group of people who are physically disabled. In locating this differential 'expulsion' within the culture of high modernity where its influence is exerted over individuals through the mentalist domain of what Donzelot (1980) called the 'psy complex', we can note the social favouring of an intact mind over an intact body when it comes to the gradual and reluctant admitting of outsiders to the fold of utility.

The reliability and capacity of mind is accordingly imperative, but because this is not similarly amenable to electro-mechanical alleviation as is physical disability, those who are mind-impaired are consigned to the wastelands of social exclusion. This is not just a case of analytical excess inspired by Foucault. A telling empirical index of the subdued social acknowledgment of TBI emerges from a very brief excursion into the social distribution of health care. McMillan and Greenwood (1991) point out that head-injury rehabilitation is the poor relation of major surgical technology. In manifest contrast to the existence of a network of National Health Service centres for the rehabilitation of spinal injury patients, there is a more or less complete absence of comparable services for victims of TBI, even though the incidence of head injury to spinal injury is marked by a ratio of about ten to one.

The horror of promise unfulfilled is much more poignant than that of a promise that was never present. The inhabitants of modernity can just about cope with the misfortune of congenital mental impairment or the visitation of mental illness, since these natural contingencies can be rendered meaningful through secular commonsensical legitimations that refer (say) to the vicissitudes of nature, as opposed to the intervention of divine punishment (see also Voysey 1975:ch. 7). Traumatic Brain Injury is, however, occasioned by modernity itself, the very culture in which so many have invested so much. Head injury is somehow a consequence of what we have done (and the 'we' here is because of our tacit subscription to the 'dysfunctions' as well as the virtues of our society). In this way TBI becomes a particularly powerful source

of uneasy collective trauma and guilt. There is, in short, no clarity about the categorisation of those who are head injured. The person becomes 'someone else', an everyday recognition that it is the mind (more than the body) which signifies what it is to be a person. If the mind itself is seriously impaired then it is no longer able to mobilise the body to create the *physical capital* which might compensate for the run on *mental capital* occasioned through head injury (Shilling 1991). Again parents recognised the bankruptcy to identity brought about by this liminal state in which the biological condition to existence is virtually exhausted: 'The only thing we thought', said a mother of her head-injured son, 'was that we were grateful he was still alive. But then we've sat back and thought, for what? What is his life? At times I feel so fed up I wish he hadn't lived' (Higham *et al.* 1996:183).

The Re-awakening of Childhood and the Psychodynamics of Care

The profound adjustments that are necessary in the case of caring for head injured young adult sons and daughters – and young men especially – are particularly significant. In order to address the emotional 'deep structures' within the transactions between care-giver and the recipient of care, the interiority of the relational aspects of care deserve close attention. The feminist literature on 'care' of course broaches this because it explores the ways in which internalised role expectations (and more material 'ideological practices') sustain the social and psychological subordination of women. Illustrative of a long tradition of this approach, Hand and her colleagues (1994) discuss the ways in which families caring for a member with (what they call) an 'intellectual handicap' show highly gendered role performances. Mothers have feelings of introjected guilt, whereas fathers cope with the situation through an instrumental disposition and benign and businesslike authoritarianism. These behavioural and rhetorical strategies doubtless reflect the social distribution of gendered scripts, but beyond the surface of these performances there is likely to be a deeper structure to the relationships – or the feeling states – of care. Arising from the psychodynamics that prevail in the giving and receiving of care, this is to be understood as a consequence of an adult reverting to being a 'child' following head injury. Independence, perhaps only reluctantly ceded by parents (and mothers especially), is catastrophically reversed. The resolution of the psychodynamic ambiguities that once surrounded the relinquishing of a particular filial autonomy have to be revisited, with associated work needing to be done on constructing revisions to self-conception and identity (Voysey 1975:217). As one of our head-injured respondents said of his own experience of this infantalisation process: 'it's like being a kid all over again. You know: when you teach kids to cross the road?' (Higham *et al.* 1996:176).

In the aftermath of head injury there is likely to be a suspension of the

conventions around reciprocity and affiliation that characterise the inter-subjectivity between parents and children. Shakespeare refers to this rupture of habitual contact as the 'dynamics of otherness', and he explores with considerable insight the psychology of the interpersonal relationships between able-bodied and disabled people (Shakespeare 1994). In attempting to establish a theorised understanding of the distinctively liminal domain of head injury, Shakespeare's suggestions about the ambivalences of emotion surrounding the social reaction to disability are important. He points to the troubling co-presence of love and fear in these circumstances. Parents' 'natural' expression of love for a child will be overlaid by a quasi-contractual duty, and running alongside all this will be the lingering fearfulness and guilt that arises from knowing that the future may see their child consigned to a 'dustbin of disavowal', however benign this might be. Shakespeare suggests too that there is an undercurrent of anger and resentment that arises in the transactions between these distinct yet related categories of person, with obligations serving as a constant reminder that the relationship is highly 'morality-dependent'.

The projection of feelings is of course a generic feature of all close relationships, but this deep emotionality takes on a particular form in the psychodynamics between TBI people and their carers. The assumption that there will be a progression in the unfolding relationships between the generations is suspended. The cognitive domain of potential and promise being unfulfilled will certainly shake the participants' confidence of modernity with its sense of the future being amenable to control. The survival of the body alongside the transmutation of the mind will throw into doubt everyday categorical assurances as to the very nature of being. Furthermore, the place of the mind in transcending the demise of the body calls forth worrying uncertainties in everyday thought about the dependency of the sacral 'soul' on the capacity of an alert mind (Mellor and Shilling 1993). The body may indeed share in the immortality of the soul, but what is to happen to the coherence of that transcendent spiritual existence if the crucial shaping force of the mind is flawed?

Traumatic Brain Injury therefore disturbs our sense of time and order – what was once going to happen will not now do so, and the various relationships that it was earlier presumed would unfold in a more or less predetermined fashion are also brought to a halt. Underlying this domain of the cognitive is the psychodynamic, where the complex emotional merging and detachment that mark the acquisition of adulthood are gradually revisited. Once the elation of physical survival is absorbed, signifying thereby the medical triumph of delivering a life, the newly dependent person with TBI calls forth from the psyche of their family carers memories of emotions that lay buried in the subconscious, memories that it was assumed could comfortably be left there as the child became an adult. The infantilising of adults with disabilities is a product not only of the physiological dependence they

have on their parent-carers (Hubert 1995), but it is also an expression of the return to earlier dynamics within the deep psyche of family relationships – what Fox (1993:117) refers to as the 'oedipalisation of care'.

The ambivalences that mark the tussle between labour and love as the imperative to parenting are reawakened with a vengeance as what was once seen to have been finished becomes a new and unexpected moral obligation. Another mother's observations about the consequences of her son's injury reveal this complex set of obligations and emotions in which the past, the present and the future are collapsed in a radically revised assumptive world: 'it was like having a baby back in the house, but a baby that isn't going to grow up . . . he's never going to be independent of me, he's always going to be dependent on someone looking after him . . . I'm always going to be here as a carer . . . you know for a fact that you are going to die before he is' (Higham et al. 1996:185).

Traumatic Brain Injury has a particular impact on those who play a care-taking role, with family disturbance and emotional distress a feature not only of those affected by the injury, but of those who are responsible for providing the care (McMillan and Greenwood 1991; Crisp 1993). Many TBI people are discharged into the care of relatives, without these carers receiving advice on how to manage day-to-day situations, with the result that carers have to establish their own, often precarious, understandings of the new relationships into which they and the TBI person will have to enter. For example, the small-scale study by Hubert (1995) suggests that the head-injured person tends to take emotional control of the household, with carers ceding power in order to avoid painful confrontation in the early days of rehabilitation. These relationships then become sedimented into dysfunctional social and emotional routines as the consequences of the initial injury spiral outwards. This trajectory is understandable. The liminality that brain injury brings in its wake, and the 'suspended state' which characterises those who are TBI, generates profound confusions as the 'nomos' of negotiated interpersonal reality has to be re-constructed. People who are head injured are 'neither here nor there', reminding those close to them or caring for them of the existential presence of death. Something about a person has so obviously ended even though they are still physically proximate. There are, as well, emotional ambiguities around the triumph over mortality alongside the simultaneous sequestration of life, a temptation to withdraw from those inhabiting the penumbra of the 'almost dying'. A mother of a head-injured women talked to us about this Stygian state (Higham et al. 1996:181). She explained that her daughter 'is just stuck in a room most of the time, nobody to talk to, nothing changes. It's just an existence for her at the moment . . . she is 32. She could live another 50 years and just lying there in a bed, it must be terrible. I can understand her wish to die, I really can.'

Not surprisingly, being left with an adult child who will never grow up to lead a 'normal' independent life is exceptionally challenging, since it

introduces unanticipated demands on the management of the emotions – of the carer and of the care-recipient. There are none of the readily available stocks of knowledge, or recipes which serve as reference points as happens with the routinised care of children whose developmental sequence is 'normal'. Neither can these children be comfortably regarded as inhabiting the twilight of their lives, as it might be existentially feasible to sustain in the case of a dependent parent with Alzheimer's for example. This domain of acceptance and adjustment exemplifies the aspect of care that is called 'emotional labour' (Thomas 1993:663) – and it can be hard emotional labour at that. A mother explained to us that caring for her daughter 'breaks my heart. When I'm all right I can cope, but if I get run down then it gets to me and things upset me. Sometimes she will look at me and that look in her eyes goes straight in there. It is horrible because there is nothing you can do. She looks at me as if to say, why me? All I can do is keep a brave face and just keep doing the best I can' (Higham *et al.* 1995:173).

A Cautionary Tale

It would be artful to present an ending which suggests a carefully reasoned culmination to what has gone before. Long before academic conventions gave shape to this paper, its various conclusions had already been mentally rehearsed. These have been subsequently interwoven with a collection of findings, conjectures and assorted disputations through which a semblance of scholastic custom has been lent to matters of some personal relevance. In fact, what has been written about here is something tragic within the lives of people who have been disabled through head injury. It is tragedy because the cultural saliency of the mind (or its sociological derivative, the reflexive self) makes it extremely difficult to render Traumatic Brain Injury in terms other than the sorrowfully dramatic. This gloominess is further prompted by the uneasy recognition that we are all to a greater or lesser extent caught up in modernity's endorsement of much that 'causes' head injury, something that is particularly true for those of us who, through a host of everyday practices, routinely and unreflexively construct the iconic supremacy of fast cars and fast bikes. At the same time there is the lingering, and decidedly pre-modern, fear of being touched by some sort of awful retributive force, as hubris wreaks its corporeal violence as well as bringing irreversible mutations to the psychodynamics of our parent–child relations.

Notes

1. The study was commissioned by Headway, the National Head Injuries Association, and was funded by the Tudor Trust. The brief for the research was to assess the long-term residential care needs of people with TBI. The research was undertaken in three different settings of care – the generic residential care home, the residential home dedicated to those with head injury, and the community care setting. Fifteen head injured people, their carers and their families were interviewed, generating life history narratives as well as judgements about the appropriateness of various ways in which TBI people are supported (see Higham *et al.* 1996). There were thirteen men and two women with an age range of twenty-six to seventy. Interviewees consisted of head-injured people, their family and carers. In five of the fifteen cases the head-injured person was not interviewed. The interview transcripts generated data on life history; results and effects of the head injury; needs and quality of life; services received; services wanted; future hopes and fears.
2. The technical term is Traumatic Brain Injury – known by its initials TBI, though often the more easily understood term 'head injury' is adopted in the literature. 'Traumatic Brain Injury', 'TBI' and 'head injury' are all used interchangeably in this paper, with no variation in meaning.
3. The focus of this paper is on general trends in the social and psychological contexts within which a preliminary theorising of the sociology of Traumatic Brain Injury might be set. It necessarily involves abstraction, typification and generalisation. Such an approach should not imply that what is said here will apply to all TBI people or to their carers and families, and it is not intended to cause distress by suggesting that this is the case.

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Chapter 10

A balance of possibilities

Some concluding notes on rights, risks and the mentally disordered offender

David Webb

There is no one body of knowledge that holds a monopoly either of concern for, or explanatory authority towards, the mentally disordered offender. Contributors to this book have reflected that plurality, with elements drawn from both the administrative and the critical domains of criminology, from the interventive narratives of probation practice and social work, and from socio-legal perspectives on the 'processing' of those who are both mentally ill and are offenders.

This book began with a chapter written by an outsider, who, while familiar with the broad disciplines that bear in on the subject of the mentally disordered offender, professed no immediate familiarity with the substantive matter at hand. The same goes for this concluding piece, where some form of sociology guides how matters are to be approached. There is a definite connection, though, between the interests of the specialist and those of the academic outsider. Society's reaction to the complex amalgam made up of an individual status on which is inscribed both mental disorder, and a delinquency of conduct that announces criminality, says much about the wider culture of which the phenomenon is a part, and it is this which offers the entrée for the generalist. Returning to the broad sweep, this concluding chapter draws on – and, we hope, draws out – some of the themes offered by our specialist contributors. Above all it focuses on one of the particularly enduring narratives within what is written on this subject, namely that we continue to find this fragment of human waywardness (requiring as it does an unstable mixture of care, control, punishment, medication, tolerance, watchfulness), so repeatedly perplexing that there remains the suspicion that the amount of talk is in inverse proportion to the securing of anything even remotely approaching a solution. Matters have not been helped by the fact that the area has become so ideologically contested, so wracked by debates that reach to the heart of contemporary western thinking that it is difficult sometimes to see a way out of these various positions. Higgins (somewhat despairingly) characterises the disputed territory that is occupied by our consideration of the mentally disordered offender as

> the disturbance of the settled, cosy and pragmatic relationship between psychiatrists, courts and the bureaucracy by the appearance of civil liberties

lawyers and criminologists raising issues such as: the right to be punished; the right not to be punished; the right to be treated; the right not to be treated; the justice of indeterminate sentences especially when associated with treatments of debatable efficacy; and the poor predictability of dangerousness.

(Higgins 1984: 11)

With all this stacked up against the topic of managing the mentally disordered offender, it is perhaps surprising that any headway at all is made in moving constructively forward. Of course we hope that our contributors have indeed effected some progress on these matters, in line with the hammering out of advances in this perplexing field that has characterised the interventions made by Herschel Prins himself over the years.

Despite the occasionally labyrinthine disquisitions on the subject of the mentally disordered offender, the topic has sometimes seemed deceptively straightforward, and we can do no better than be reminded once again of matters with an economical statement from Seymour Halleck:

> Mentally disordered offenders are formally identified on the basis of two general criteria. First, the evidence that they have committed a crime must be sufficient to lead to their arrest and arraingement. Second, an agency of the criminal justice system must suspect that they have a mental disorder of such proportion as to question the fairness and utility of subjecting them to the usual criminal justice process.

(Halleck 1987:1)

The consequential *principles* of intervention are themselves more or less straightforward – again on the face of it. The administration of justice demands both equity and fairness – that concern for what Hudson notes as 'individuality, singularity, the precise match of remedy to situation' (1996: 156). This is so that there should be some form of relationship which is self-evident, and widely supported, between a particular infraction of the legal code and what society subsequently sanctions by way of the penalty that must be borne by the wrongdoer. This of course, rests on the assumption that all individuals have the capacity to understand that their actions will indeed lead to certain outcomes, and that they grasp that they might at some future moment be held to account for the rightness or wrongness of their actions. But in so far as there are in fact differing capacities to control behaviour, so it follows – at least in the kinds of humane jurisdictions that Herschel Prins enjoins us to adhere to – that there should be differential treatment of that behaviour. As Halleck again rather nicely expresses it, 'the quest for fairness and beneficence limits the severity of retribution based on the notion of desert' (1987: 19).

These are matters addressed through what might be called 'substantive justice'. This is less to do with the formal application of invariant rules, but rather a concern with the way in which those rules might be given appropriate interpretation in

specific instances. The resulting attention to the particularities of this or that individual case, while demanding flexibility, discretion and interpretation, means that the longer-term legitimacy of those rules is that much more secure. In his chapter Robert Harris talks about the way in which this is resolved in Britain through the blending of formal statute with common law, so that while sentencing 'by the book' generally occurs, it need not do so, if good sense suggests that the characteristics of the offender demand otherwise. Due consideration of individual circumstances can thereby be introduced flexibly, and without disruption to the overall 'framework' of law. Those with demonstrably lower or lesser levels of competence, blameworthiness and responsibility thereby become exempt from the strict application of formal rules governing the administration of punishment. This, though, puts something of a functionalist gloss on the pragmatics of jurisprudence: the way in which the medico-juridical 'system' operates towards mentally disordered offenders might indeed create the *impression* of humanity for those wrong-doers who are without reason. In his contribution, John Wood suggests that a certain symbolism of attentiveness in reviewing the incarceration of the mentally ill (through the machinery of the Mental Health Review Tribunals) is the thing that matters, almost irrespective of the infrequency of successful appeal. Likewise, Judith Pitchers' discussion of the operation of parole applications for mentally disordered offenders paints a picture which could be construed as a process driven more by the caution of professional and institutional interests than by the application of reasonably well-informed risk assessments. In short, the whole business of managing the mentally disordered offender is shot through with equivocation and hesitancy. It is for this reason that as a sub-title for this book we have taken – or rather adapted slightly – a telling phrase from one of Herschel Prins's papers: 'the people nobody owns' (Prins 1994), since this conveys if not the statelessness of these citizens, then their 'statuslessness' – internal refugees moving between administrative domains which only accept them with reluctance and on a temporary basis.

A test of the civilising process[1]

The mentally disordered offender presents a series of 'tests' to challenge the capacity of society to respond to its wayward citizens who are not only troubled in themselves, but who are also troublesome to others (Craft 1984; Shah 1993). Their disturbed psychological state sets them firmly within the social deviancy of mental illness, and in transgressing the moral boundary between observing the law and breaking it, they are also demonstrably 'criminal'. In this way the mentally disordered offender has been subject to two particularly significant and powerful social censures – mental illness as the judgement over rightness of mind, and the imputation of deviance as a judgement about behavioural admission to civilised society, though in truth they are treated more on the basis of the former. (the status of what he or she *is*) than on the basis of their conduct (what he or she has *done*) (Duff and Garland 1995). We do not need much reminding that society

is especially fearful of offenders who doubly transgress: those who are not only law breakers, but who in their mental deviancy are outside the domains of rational cognition, carefully modulated affect and the sophisticated role-playing that are demanded by the complexities of modern times.

These are people whose 'role performance' is severally compromised, and in their waywardness they fall under the tutelage of two of modern society's most powerful professions – medicine and the law. The claim of these occupational groups to speak authoritatively on the subject is sometimes competitive: presuming the rationality of human agency and of the willed nature of wrong-doing, legal concerns have had to acknowledge that incapacitated mental processes constrain the applicability – as well as the legitimacy – of what might be called 'pure' legalism (Busfield 1996). But if the law has been held in check when it comes to the formal enforcement of retributive justice, this is not to say that there has been wholesale and successful diversion from the criminal justice system to more appropriate domains of social intervention. Far from it. More often than not, these people are caught between hospital and prison. Consequences of the reluctance (or at best the conditional willingness) to set the treatment of mentally disordered offenders within the domain of mental health, despite a long-standing policy commitment to doing just this, is a recurrent theme in Herschel Prins's work, and is echoed here in this collection. What are ostensibly rights granted to mentally disordered offenders under statute, such that they might be entitled to appropriate health care to meet their illness, become instead further limitations on their freedom if the machinery to implement that protection is either ill-designed or poorly maintained. Not surprisingly, there is a view – widely and respectably held – that those who are mentally disordered are too frequently managed within the criminal justice system, for no other reason that the capacity of psychiatric provision – whether institutional or community-based – is simply unable, or unwilling to add another risk to those that it would be carrying anyway. In so far as recourse to criminal justice reflects the inadequacy of mental health care, then there must be serious concerns about the rights of people who ought to be 'patients'. As Judith Pitchers argues in the conclusion of her chapter, the tendency to play safe so far as mentally disordered offenders are concerned – the case with which she is concerned being that of parole – does indeed lead to injustices for particular individuals being accepted as unfortunate, if inevitable, expressions of that most enduring utilitarian maxim – the greatest good of the greatest number.

Halleck refers to the alternating tendency to meddle and to ignore that marks the social reaction to people whose existence confronts our sometimes flawed capacity to address the philosophical complexities around mind, disorder and crime. 'We are unwilling to leave them alone', he writes, 'yet most agencies seek to avoid responsibility for their care. We confine them to prisons and to prison-like hospitals where they are sometimes treated worse than offenders' (Halleck 1987: 11).

Various professional domains ostensibly responsible for mentally disordered offenders do not always sit easily together, and again the literature is replete

with the complexities arising from the almost ineluctable imperative of multi-professional collaboration when faced with people whose problems are impossible to set with any one disciplinary or professional discourse (see Preston-Shoot; Grant, this volume). Against this particular logic which points to working together, is another that leads in the opposite direction. The empirical and common-sensical underpinnings of the law, easily connecting with taken-for-granted everyday ideas about wrong-doing, have to reach an accommodation with something altogether more difficult and arcane. The business of assessing mental processes, while relying almost invariably on the observable behaviour of the individual, is often suspected of deriving from something that is part witchcraft, part mumbo-jumbo. And of course, there is always the deeply held suspicion that anyone who would seek to account for the impact of mental incapacity on wrong-doing is simply trading in excuse-mongering, something which occasionally sees itself being played out in the very public gaze of celebrated criminal trials. So it was in the case of Peter Sutcliffe that the unseemly disputes between rival psychiatrists did nothing for the jury, who rejected entirely any idea that the defendant was mentally disturbed, but was instead simply culpable for his horrific actions. (See Prins 1983).

Fathoming out the respective weights of madness and badness when explaining wayward behaviour is exemplified when thinking about 'criminals' who are also mentally ill. We might recognise that these people are incapable of meeting the tests of rationality, culpability and capability that underpin admission to judicial processing and sanction, and indeed the diverting of them from the criminal justice system is regarded – as it is by Paul Cavadino in this volume – as essential if we are to operate a humane approach to those offenders whose reasons for law-breaking are unintelligible. But as the case of Sutcliffe reminds us, there is always the residual cultural sentiment that sees offenders who are mentally disordered as somehow escaping the criminal sanction if they receive medical treatment that smacks of 'therapy' (Hodgins, 1993). Sometimes this still shapes the social reaction to offenders who are mentally disordered, towards whom the residual cultural predilections of Benthamite justice-grinding are directed (Peay, 1994). Seemingly, neither professionals, nor state agencies are exempt from this fixation with the almost exclusively corporeal, with for example McConville (1995: 284) pointing out that '(p)rison medical services, obsessed with malingering, have always been more at ease with bodily rather than mental illness'. The fact that so often mentally ill people (whose condition, even without the assessment of an 'expert' would point them towards being self-evidently 'patients') find themselves in prison, suggests that whether by occasional lapses into prejudice by those who are involved in the everyday workings of juridical–welfare administration, or because of the kinds of 'structural' failings in the system that are described for example by Philip Bean in this book, we have yet to resolve certain of these ambiguities in the management of this particular social deviance.

Actuarial welfare and managing the mentally disordered offender

The history of the way in which mentally disordered people have been 'managed' is replete with the outrages that have been visited upon them – sometimes out of fear, sometimes out of ignorance and sometimes out of a misplaced sense of doing good (see for example, Donnelly 1983; Sedgewick 1982). Added to this is the ease with which battalions of critics have been able to 'deconstruct' the very existence of mental disorder, showing it to be the consequence of social labelling, or arising from the iniquities of particular societies and their failings in, say, distributive justice. Not surprisingly, this legacy of anti-psychiatry and labelling theory rings hollow to those for whom mental illness has a powerful, limiting and materially constraining reality to it (Sedgewick 1982). And in cultures under the sway of rationalist, individualistic ways of thinking, mental disorder – with its connotations of behaviour driven not so much by human agency but by some sort of motivational corruption arising from an ill mind – has to compete with an inclination to regard human action as intended and as consequentially aware.

The determination of mental illness more often than not entails a measure of judgement by the person making the assessment, and it is because of this that the various categories of mental disorder have been sometimes seen as being 'socially constructed'. By this is meant that diagnoses are less the reflection of secure scientific knowledge, and more the product of moral evaluations about various forms of socially unacceptable behaviour that vary and alter across time and space. There is also a view that the determination of what stands as 'dangerous' is indeed dependent on certain mores, with particular groups more likely than others to fall within this estimation of potential disruption. In his chapter Paul Cavadino suggests that it is precisely this that applies to black offenders, echoing a point that was made in the report into the death of Orville Blackwood chaired by Herschel Prins (Prins, 1993c). The assumptions and 'typifications' that are held about black people by those with front-line responsibilities for containment and care in the prison hospital have self-fulfilling consequences, not only for those who are being treated or contained (who may 'take on' the attributions to which they are subject through social labelling), but also for those charged with their supervision.

These few observations – let alone those that have accumulated in the preceding pages – serve as a reminder that to speak of 'managing' members of this social group is to invite a measure of controversy. Might not there be something impersonally 'technical' about this subject? To talk of 'management' perhaps shows that we are not really concerned with the *care* of our fellow citizens who have a disturbance in their mental functioning. Rather, we want to 'take charge' of them, and subject them to the surveillance and regulation to which we habitually subject the various deviants who disturb conventions of the moral order. Or does the reference to management echo the medical discourse within which troubles of the mind have to be coaxed or driven to submission, in the same way that physical

illness or disease is brought under control? 'Management' – the casually dismissive may say – regards those who are mentally ill as objects to whom things are done. But there is an alternative interpretation, one which we believe reflects something of the approach taken by Herschel Prins (see Prins 1994).

Management implies the coordination of resources and service provision and the shaping of policy in order to meet desired objectives, and much of this book has referred to how this might be done. It need not necessarily refer to direct involvement with individual offenders, but with a wider reach of concerns. Webster and Menzies convey with some feeling this idea of management as having 'system-wide' properties when they set down proposals to address the deficiencies in services for mentally disordered offenders that they identified in their study of a large North American city:

> The challenge must be one of sitting with administrators and planners from various government ministries, including housing authorities, in the hope that we can create a 'hybrid' scheme that will reduce the imposition of actually unnecessary sentences, lower criminal recidivism and at the same time improve the mental, physical and social well-being of such unfortunate people so evidently in need.
>
> (Webster and Menzies 1993: 36)

The term 'management' conveys, not entirely inappropriately, the ascendency of the actuarial over earlier narratives that spoke of individualised medical or welfare 'treatment'. This line of arguing maintains that rather than the reformist goal of what Pearson (1975) refers to as the restoration of the deviant to 'utility' (so that they might come to share in the values of the community), the new actuarial regime looks to the careful calculation of risk and the efficient deployment of resources at those for whom predictive indications suggest that they pose the greatest threat (Hudson 1996: 154). The goal of welfare actuarialism is to warn in advance of human behaviour taking place – to engage in the corporate manager's equivalent of 'future proofing' by anticipating the consequences that will flow from a careful uncovering of the 'signs' that are all around us, yet to which so many are oblivious. The 'reading' of an individual's biography in order to reveal their code of abnormality, and the assigning of this to a particular category within a taxonomy of ideal-typical waywardness, is a way of generating security of knowledge in a world that otherwise would be marked by randomly bizarre behaviour.

As it happens, an insistence on fact garnering for the purposes of prediction had earlier seen its place in Prins's recommendations to practitioners (Prins 1975), though the writer of the present chapter took some exception to this, arguing that we only tend to know why facts are pertinent once we re-construct preceding salience with the benefit of retrospective interpretation (Webb 1976). It is something that Jill Peay refers to in her contribution as the exaggeration with hindsight of what we could have predicted with foresight. In fact, if we were to

identify not so much thematic continuity in Herschel Prins's work as a gentle realignment, it would point to a movement from the pursuit of positivist certitude about individual psychological malfunctioning, to a probabilistic and contingency-slanted approach. In this, the interactions between individual offenders and the apparatus of the criminal justice system figure more prominently in 'creating' a symptomatology which is more to do with what Busfield (1996) calls the 'role performance' of the mentally disordered than with a reductionist psycho-physiology.

In any event, there seems to be a wide recognition that predictive diagnoses of dangerousness are often inaccurate, leading to obvious concerns about punishing, or 'treating' people not so much for something they have done, but for what they might do – or perhaps more importantly, what they might not do (Duff and Garland: 1995). This of course echoes what we have already said about the 'category confusion' that dogs almost everything about the mentally disordered offender – between, on the one hand, the status of who they are, and, on the other, the conduct in which they have engaged. The tendency – in the administration of risk taking – is to play safe, as several of our contributors have shown.

Nevertheless, it has to be acknowledged that incapacitating the potential wrong-doer might well protect the community, even if this limits the rights of individuals about whom we are merely suspicious rather than certain. This does depend, though, on minimising the errors of false positives such that the abrogation of contract between citizenry and state is not jeopardised without legitimate warrant. The careful balance demanded by this set of simultaneous imperatives makes the business of risk assessment that much more important. Morris argues that the most robust basis for predictive intervention, and what he calls 'risk shifting', is indeed the actuarial. In this, the evidence is assembled to show that people who are like the particular offender before us, situated within the same conditions as is 'our' offender, have behaved in a certain way in the past. Given the similarity between the individual and the generality, the inference can be drawn (with varying degrees of confidence) that the person in question will behave in the future as others in the same position behaved in the past (Morris 1995). Theoretically at least, this approach might point towards a mechanism for limiting the uncertainty in the management of the mentally disordered offender, such that some sort of equilibrium is reached between the right of the community to be protected, and the right of the individual not to be incapacitated without warrant.

It is something of a recurrent theme in this collection that there is a special significance when the mentally disordered person is also an offender, for this points to an accumulation of jeopardy in the face of social control which is invoked to meet the multi-dimensionality of moral transgression (see also Shah 1993). The fact of mental disorder and the unpredictabilities in conduct that arise from disturbances in mental functioning are indeed socially troublesome. However, recognising that society itself has a responsibility to those of its members who are rendered vulnerable through their own misfortunes may have some merit:

'a danger to themselves or to others' remains the basis for the socially sanctioned restraint of those who are mentally disordered, and within this it is possible to discern the germ of a principle that recognises, as Rotman (1995) argues, for rehabilitation as a constitutional right; a duty owed by the state to the imprisoned mentally ill. It is this paternalistic obligation which finds expression in the principle of *parens patriae*, where the state assumes to itself the care of those of its citizens who cannot care for themselves, offenders or not.

Central to such an obligation is the accountability which must follow in the wake of any failure in discharging that appropriated duty with proper care. It is this which presumably lies behind Louis Blom-Cooper's staunch advocacy of public rather than private hearings when things have gone wrong, since these represent a greater good to the community than the harm that might befall those who have to account for their actions within these open forums. Of course, the point at which responsibility rests when what Rotman calls 'a constitutional right' (or we might term 'natural justice') is abrogated is a moot point. When it comes to restoring the social contract between wronged citizens and those in whose charge they have been placed, both Blom-Cooper and Jill Peay touch on the difficulty of assigning culpability to individuals (through professional negligence, for example) as against an indictment of diffuse social arrangements, such as 'racist cultures' in Special Hospitals, though our sense is that increasingly – and rather encouragingly – adverse 'social arrangements' are seen to be somebody's responsibility, and often this is someone occupying a position of some power.

Embedded within the way in which we approach the management of the mentally disordered offender are those calculations concerned with the likely danger posed to the community by the disturbed law breaker. It is for precisely this reason that the detailed forensic understanding of these various disturbed states – and their likely behavioural *sequelae* – is of such importance. Once another utilitarian axiom, namely that of universal capability, is questioned, then the principle of automatic punishment for infractions can be that more easily set aside. If the mentally disordered offender is not judged to be dangerous either to themselves or to the community, then the objectives of management can be beneficent, whereas if dangerous, the case is made for specialised programmes which are principally concerned with social protection (see Halleck 1987).

However – and fine principle notwithstanding – it is perhaps not surprising that this area of work is sometimes marked by vacillation in both policy and in professional practice. It is more than an intellectual or cognitive matter. It is true that the co-presence of mind, disorder and crime – all of which are themselves of enormous substantive, philosophical and moral complexity – makes the mentally disordered offender an especially challenging category to think about (Hollin and Howells 1993). But beyond this is something less amenable to such a distancing narrative. Herschel Prins himself has pointed out that managing the mentally disordered offender poses many challenges, often of an existential nature, and that the subjective feelings of those working in this field need to be acknowledged. Coming to terms with revulsion at horrific or bizarre acts, or

coping with disruptions in thought processes which are both profoundly irrational yet firmly held; reconciling the competing responsibilities towards the rights of the offender on the one hand and the interests of the public on the other; the high personal investment that is made once a particular therapeutic path is taken to address complex difficulties – all make for difficulties in holding a particular line so far as people who are 'unloved, unlovely and unloveable' are concerned (Prins 1993b: 54). This acknowledgement of the hard facts about mentally disordered offending, and the preparedness not to shy away from it is important. Recognising – and naming the fact – that these individuals constitute a 'constantly shifting mad, bad and sad group' (Prins 1993a) is an important step in coming to terms with the sheer multi-dimensional complexity of what has to be faced in the management of these individuals (Stone 1995; Grant, and Preston-Shoot, this volume).

Offender, deviant or patient?[2]

A reminder of the bases upon which we ought to approach these of our fellow citizens is surely important, given the difficulties that they pose to those who are charged with their 'management'. Jill Peay has elsewhere argued 'that the mentally disordered offender be treated as a person first, as an offender second, and as mentally disordered third' (Peay 1994: 1123). But this is not just a set of ethical imperatives, designed to rescue a measure of humanity from the frequently hard to love, or an injunction to remember that mentally disordered offenders are not a homogeneous group. The three-way separation of attributes also refers to the three professional domains that are of relevance here. Social work, law and medicine (the last of these – doubtless unfairly – having to serve as a portmanteau term that covers those professions associated with medicine, and in particular mental health nursing) are in their different ways primarily responsible for respectively understanding the person-in-situation, for assessing the substance and culpability of their legal infraction, and for determining the mental conditions which might have lessened a capacity for rationality.

Inevitably, these domains are difficult to separate out, and while the contributors to this collection write within one or other framework, they inevitably stray beyond the boundaries of their discipline of preference. Indeed, this eclecticism has long marked the approach that Herschel Prins has himself adopted, pragmatically calling upon this or that body of knowledge to further the scope of his enquiry. What they have in common, though, is an attempt to ensure that the bases upon which the mentally disordered offender are judged ought to be consistent with various principles of justice and humanity. Eclecticism – sometimes derided for its lack of philosophical robustness – is warranted in an activity that draws its analytical blade across such alternating territory. Countenancing the possibility of a crime being rationally committed, alongside the equally feasible possibility of an incapacitated mind at work, invites a merging of categorical certainties about those who are mentally disordered and

those who are not. There may indeed be shades of grey in the capacity behind all human motivation, suggesting that a measure of philosophical diffidence rather than the certitude of forensic science may – at least for some of the time – be the preferable way of approaching the waywardness of those who are mentally disordered. Hudson (1996: 156) draws on Levinas in offering an approach to justice which to our mind connects so well with what Herschel Prins (and the contributors to this *Festschrift*) are looking to secure – a balance between over-riding general principles and the particularities of individuals – that it can well stand as the final sentence to this collection:

> Justice is recognition of the Other, who is like myself in some ways, and unlike in others; justice involves recognition of the likeness in the sense of shared humanness, but not insistence on reduction or elimination of difference, rather the respecting of differences.

(Hudson 1996: 15)

Notes

1 The 'civilising process' is a phrase borrowed (in rather cavalier fashion and with what is almost certainly insufficient regard to the conceptual sophistications of its origins) from the work of the sociologist Norbert Elias (1897–90). His concern was with the ways in which the coercive restraints of pre-modern society are superseded – or not – by moral obligation and the increasing awareness of the consequences that our actions have not only on the material circumstances of others but on the subjectivities of their minds too. The extent to which our treatment of the mentally disordered – whether offenders or not – exemplifies the process that Elias sought to demonstrate in his historical sociology is, of course, the matter at hand in this book. For those who find *ad hominem* things interesting, Norbert Elias's visiting professorship in the sociology Department at Leicester University overlapped with Herschel Prins's time at the School of Social Work at the same university. As far as I am aware they had no professional contact, though a resilient optimism and a sorely tested belief in humanity could be taken as a shared 'meta narrative' to their work, reflecting certain biographical commonalities.

2 This sub-heading is, of course, the same as that of one of Herschel Prins's books (Prins 1995). It summarises neatly the various 'discourses' which have something to say about the mentally disordered offender, the various roles to which these people can be assigned, and the endless possibilities for confusion about which in its more impatient moments, this book has made great play.

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Appendix 1

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Appendix 2

'What's in a name? A comment on 'Puritans and Paradigms'.
Lena Dominelli, <u>Social Work and Social Sciences Review</u>, Vol 2, no 3, (1991)

'WHAT'S IN A NAME?'

A COMMENT ON 'PURITANS AND PARADIGMS'

LENA DOMINELLI

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Would 'a rose by any other name' smell as sweet as Shakespeare suggests in *Romeo and Juliet* or could a name cause offence? This question will be considered in relation to David Webb's article, 'Puritans and paradigms'. For me, the answer is affirmative, despite Webb's repeated claims to 'a strenuous commitment to detachment' and 'a decisive absence from the normative or the prescriptive'. Webb provides a stimulating analysis of the rise of anti-racist and anti-sexist perspectives in social work. But, the paper is permeated with 'the inevitable whiff of semiological arrogance' he eschews. Its allegedly neutral tone thinly disguises the disapproving and subtle barbs launched at identified targets.

Language is laden with value judgments and hidden power relations embedded in its social context (Spender, 1980) which we can ignore if we wish to reproduce collective myopia. The location of Webb's article within 'malestream' sociological thought is epitomised by his alleged personal and methodological detachment from the subject. The terminology and conceptualisation of the issues embody a scientific approach which is assumed beyond question for it relies on a methodology which is valued and male. Detachment also stands in opposition to 'involvement' which is deemed emotional, unscientific and female (see Gamarnikov *et al.*, 1983). Webb's choice of religious metaphors is unfortunate, drawing as these do on stereotypes which are immediately conjured up by readers and shape their interpretation of words. Additionally, the twists encapsulated in some terms are offensive. For example, the unequal relationship between 'guests' and 'host' implied in 'host society' is currently being massaged to signify the damage 'migrant' workers impose on the 'host' whilst ignoring the 'host's' exploitation of black people and women (*Race and Class*, 1990); calling anti-racist initiatives *jihads* is profaning religious sensibilities in a climate rife with Anti-Islamic sentiments.

Webb describes the shift to the new moral order in social work a move from 'individualism', 'self-determination', 'non-judgementalism', and 'ethical neutralism' to 'certitude and orthodoxy'. In reaching this sweeping conclusion, David Webb performs a logical somersault, vaulting over critiques of social

work orthodoxy elaborated by women and black people. These have exposed the sham on which social work's commitment to these self-evident virtues has traditionally rested (see for example, Ahmed *et al.*, 1987; Brooke and Davis, 1985; Marchant and Wearing, 1986; Dominelli and McLeod, 1989; Hanmer and Statham, 1989; Mama, 1989; Bryan *et al.*, 1985; Ahmed, 1990). Their writings do not endorse Webb's projection of the Central Council for Education and Training in Social Work (CCETSW) as the 'key definer' - the 'guide to the direction being sought for the future of social work', despite the incorporation of insights gleaned by feminists and black people into its rhetoric. Most developments in anti-racist and anti-sexist practice have occurred outside CCETSW's auspices. It leads when pushed from behind.

Critiques of social work written by feminists and black people have questioned the detachedness of liberal social work, also promoted by CCETSW and exposed a hidden hegemonic ideology which allows injustice to be perpetuated by ignoring its existence and decontextualising individuals' experience. Liberal orthodoxy has assumed that we are all the same regardless of the different baselines from which our life-course begins, whereas the personal and group realities manifest in work undertaken by feminists and black people have demonstrated how our life chances vary according to class, gender, racial origins, age, and sexual orientation. Additionally, their critiques have identified the unequal weightings ascribed to an individual's worth and contribution to society. The dominant ideology permeating evaluation rates highly white heterosexual males' efforts, individually and collectively (Brittan and Maynard, 1984). Moreover, feminists and black people have highlighted the interdependent nature of politics and morality and demonstrated how a given political stance legitimates a particular morality. Arguing that taking no moral stance endorses the status quo and inequality, we have sought to ensure that under a new moral order, client self-determination becomes more than paying lip-service to an empty ideal. This aim is pursued through the active participation of users and workers in creating, developing and evaluating services within an egalitarian framework as an intrinsic feature of the delivery process. Process and outcome become equally important in our work (Cook and Kirk, 1983). Respect and dignity are integral to, and must permeate, both ends and means.

In pursuing his 'Puritans' and 'Paradigms' analogies, Webb seeks the unswerving definitiveness of purpose evident in Cromwellian times. Whilst making interesting copy, the analogy is fallacious. Neither the revolutionary situation prevailing then nor the political and military powers held by Cromwell and his supporters are evident in the present conjuncture. Today's anti-racists and feminists follow a more modest project than the *boulversement* envisaged by Cromwell. Standing firmly for social justice, they pay attention to the means

whereby social change is achieved; a sharp contrast to Cromwellian indifference to this. The certainty evident then is absent in both the CCETSW papers on which Webb premises his discourse and the writings of those developing anti-racist and feminist perspectives in social work. These perspectives are riddled with controversy around the specifics of practice, offering primarily general guidelines, a critique of poor past practice and case materials reflecting their current developments (see Ahmed, 1990). Striving to provide sensitive and non-dogmatic responses to the injustice experienced by users, practitioners following feminist and black perspectives have not embarked on a search for the elusive paradigm which consumed the energies of radical social workers in the 1960s and 1970s (see Leonard, 1976). Nor have they prescribed blueprints for others to emulate. Even CCETSW has failed to provide more than general guidelines for either academics or practitioners, leaving the development of specific provisions in the hands of individual programme providers.

Feminist and black perspectives have a dialectical understanding of the world rooted in the complexity of social phenomena, their interdependent nature and people's capacity to act for themselves by interacting with their environment. Whether subjected to violent forms of social control or less coercive, consensual ones, individuals will adopt responses maximising their control over situations.

By focusing on CCETSW, Webb simplifies the philosophical traditions he attacks. There is a marked lack of authors writing from black and feminist perspectives in his article. It also ignores the continuity between feminists' and black people's views on good practice and ideals propounded earlier by giants in social work education such as Charlotte Towle (1967). Moreover, modern feminists' and black activists' interest in the morality and value base of social work has been expressed over a number of years (see for example, McLeod and Dominelli, 1982; Ahmed, 1978). The point they emphasise is that social workers make their moral stance explicit throughout their practice rather than cloaking it in subterfuge or benign neglect.

The Age of Aquarius has yet to come, but its dawning has questioned the cultural relativism characterising 'liberal' beliefs and norms. For these have enabled their adherents to judge others from the safety of their own comfortable corner. For the politically powerless, its 'tolerant relativism' is experienced as repressive tolerance. How can they applaud a tolerant state that stands by as its homeless wander the streets, elders freeze to death, and children are assaulted at home. Feminists' and black activists' challenge has undermined liberal confidence in the assumption that because 'anything goes', nothing matters. However, their challenge doesn't presuppose dogmatic absolutism as the only alternative to 'tolerant relativism'. The life of the white adult male

does not have to provide society's one and only benchmark. The denial of citizenship for those on the wrong side of this social divide is no longer acceptable to women and black people whose consciousness of other alternatives has been aroused. Their project has been to shatter the illusion that the post-war welfare state has been ideal. Moreover, they have queried the nature of the connection between civil society and the state, though the boundaries between them are often blurred. The convergence of military, fundamentalist religious and statist objectives have undermined diversity and the right of people to be physically and culturally different without sacrificing economic, political and social equality. This aspiration for an egalitarianism transcending equality of opportunity has been poorly accommodated within the liberal democratic framework.

The relative autonomy of the state does not occur in a vacuum. Nor should it be conceptualised in class terms which disregard other social divisions. Freedom of manoeuvre for women and black people is expressed in forms of social control which constrain rather than extend their choices and life chances, thereby reinforcing their subordinate status. The state's regulation of their personal morality remains undiminished whether it's through women's lack of reproductive rights, immigration control, or Clause 28. Feminists' and black people's concern with a range of social divisions has prompted them to ensure, albeit imperfectly, that tackling one does not hinder their dismantling others.

Webb argues that the rise of anti-racist and anti-sexist social work has been facilitated by society's social context and identifies legislative imperatives as its key determinants. This interpretation of events can be challenged empirically. Equality legislation has not substantially altered women and black people's inferior position, but I'd rather highlight another element ignored by Webb: the role of women and black people in creating their own destiny. Organised pressure exerted on CCETSW as the regulator of social work education by the oppressed themselves has been crucial to CCETSW's decision to promote anti-discriminatory principles as part of good social work practice in Paper 30. By drawing on the women's and black people's movements, the oppressed have ensured that progressive changes in social work education are underpinned by the broader struggles of people defining for themselves the constraints which impinge on their lives. CCETSW's response to this historic moment has been half-hearted and lacks the clarity of vision and direction Webb's article assumes. The resources for training the educators and trainers are not in place. Neither are the alternative provisions which will enlarge people's range of choices. Feminist and black people themselves have developed these largely in a fragmented and unfinished

way in an under-resourced voluntary sector. CCETSW has done no more than genuflect in non-oppressive directions. Thus, its response has not moved beyond rhetoric and tokenism, albeit its current stance lacks the flabbiness characterising earlier positions.

In conclusion, the key terms in Webb's discourse do not for me signify the complexity and enormity of the task feminists and black people have taken on board. Nor do they symbolise the sensitivity which feminist social workers and black people display in their practice. But they provide useful labels for point-scoring in debates and debunking serious and difficult work. Names do matter, as Romeo and Juliet found out in a lesson that took their lives. Let us hope we can learn from our mistakes in less fatal ways. Maybe we could focus on the language of birth and love rather than death and battle. What do you think?

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