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Building counter culture:

the radical praxis of

social movement milieux

Volume 1 of 2

Laurence Cox

Submitted for the degree of PhD

Trinity College, Dublin

1999

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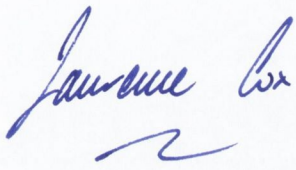

(Laurence Cox)

Acknowledgements

It is a requirement of academic theses to claim that they are the product of the author's own work and that of no-one else. To the extent that this is the case, I would think I had failed in a thesis whose main point is to attempt to articulate the skilled activities with which friends and comrades try to organise and make sense of their own lives, and which does so with the use of the theories of earlier generations of movement activists. The particular direction from which I have engaged with the counter culture, the political and personal context within which this was written, and the idiosyncracies of my own understanding of our shared experience and action are certainly mine; but I would hope that they do not dominate the text.

Thanks are thus due above all to my fellow-participants in the counter culture: friends, comrades and internal opponents; the activists who have built the institutions of the counter culture; and the theorists who have attempted to articulate what we are up to. My debt to them all is enormous. In particular, I am indebted to my friends who were willing to expose themselves to often difficult interviews and to trust me with the results: Ciarán, Das, Frank, Jim, Josh, Mark, Ruth, Steve and Tina. For obvious reasons, they cannot be given their own names; but insofar as this thesis is part of an ongoing conversation between us over nearly a decade and a half, it is theirs if it is anybody's. I hope they will find something of value for themselves within it, even if they do not agree with all its conclusions.

The "academic mode of production" (Stanley 1990), though apparently more isolated, is itself an illustration of the argument I make in chapter six that individualisation has to be socially produced. This is especially true for colleagues who are themselves activists; and I owe a great debt to participants at the annual Alternative Futures and Popular Protest conferences in Manchester, at which many of these ideas found their first expression. In particular, I would like to thank (in alphabetical order) Colin Barker, Tom Cahill, Max Farrar, Pete North, Simon Parker, Alex Plows, Ben Seel and Bronislaw Szerszynski for comments and critiques.

Hilary Tovey has been an excellent supervisor, willing both to let me pursue my own course and to make her own disagreements with it manifest, and this thesis has

benefitted enormously from her critique. Thanks are further due to James Wickham, who supervised the BA dissertation from which this project developed, as well as supervising one year of the PhD. I also want to thank (in alphabetical order) Linda Connolly, Simon Jones, Shane Kilcommins and Anna Mazzoldi for comments on earlier papers or on drafts of this thesis; and to Martin Geoghegan, Maeve O'Grady and Ruth Smith for teaching and supervision situations which have helped me develop some of the ideas presented here.

Ideas have to be materially produced. Thanks in particular are due to Anna Mazzoldi for constant assistance and support through the years; to Wendy and Richard Cox for unfailing practical help; to Giorgio and Maria-Teresa Mazzoldi for the refuge in which this thesis was completed; and to Alessandro Denardo for the loan of a computer for the final version. Financial assistance came from the Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst; a scholarship from the TCD Graduate Studies office; a teaching assistantship from the TCD Dept. of Sociology; and conference support from WIT School of Humanities. I want to thank John Ennis and Niall McElwee in particular for enabling me to take two weeks at the start of term to complete this thesis.

Lastly, but most importantly, I want to thank Anna Mazzoldi, who has shared the experience of living through and working out how to live against the current, as comrade, lover, flatmate and fellow survivor of a society which has little space for human needs that go against the grain, and who has lived with the ideas articulated in this book for many years.

I wandered out in the world for years

while you just stayed in your room

I saw the crescent

you saw the whole of the Moon

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Summary

This thesis falls into two parts. The first (chapters one to three) states the problematic of the research, develops a critique of the dominant "social movements" literature as unhelpful for understanding the counter culture and argues that the latter can more effectively be theorised in terms of the implicit theory of social movement found within agency-oriented Western Marxism and socialist feminism. This latter theory is developed as an understanding of movement as direction, developing from the local rationalities of everyday life through articulated but partial campaigns to a "movement project" which attempts to deploy such local rationalities to restructure the social whole. Within these terms, it argues for an understanding of counter culture as a movement project from below within disorganised capitalism. This mode of analysis is seen as that of a historical sociology geared to the production of open concepts which can be used by participants to theorise the context of their own choices.

The second part (chapters four to eight) theorises the issues involved in researching social movements within this perspective, entailing the need to engage with tacit knowledge, to thematise conflicts and collusion between researcher and participants. The findings chapters use qualitative interviews from a Dublin movement milieu to develop an analysis, grounded in participation, of the local rationalities of the counter culture. In this section the key findings are a rationality of autonomy as self-development, which is shown to underlie processes of distancing and problems of commitment, and a rationality of radicalised reflexivity, which resolves the problem of institutionalisation through the deployment of a wide range of "techniques of the self". The analysis attempts to locate this reading within the life-histories of participants but also within the historical development of the counter culture, examplifying the ability of the concepts developed in this thesis to engage with the problems facing participants.

Thesis abstract

Building counter culture: the radical praxis of social movement milieux

Laurence Cox

This thesis draws on a rethinking of existing theories and on reflexive research in a Dublin "movement milieu" to develop a theorisation of counter culture as a historical concept. The dominant "social movements" literature, as a narrowly field-specific theory bound by the methodological assumption of instrumental rationality and of use largely to movement elites and their state opponents, is contrasted to the implicit theory of "the social movement" contained within Western Marxism and socialist feminism. This latter perspective, which sees social movement as a direction of collective action developed from the local rationalities responding to given social situations through their organisation into explicit campaigns and their abstraction as social movement projects, aiming to restructure the social totality in terms of a particular movement rationality, does not presuppose an institutional "level", a homogenous rationality or a single vantage point. Within this perspective, the counter culture can be understood as a historically specific movement project.

The thesis aims to research the local rationalities of one particular movement milieu, active in Dublin for over a decade, within a reflexive perspective which both identifies the specific relationships between researcher and participants and enables the production of knowledge relevant to participants in the counter culture. The routine "collusion" between academic researchers and full-time activists is criticised in favour of an attempt to make explicit the local rationalities of ordinary participants. These latter include in particular an orientation towards autonomy as self-development, which necessitates a complex process of distancing from existing rationalities and produces a constant tension around commitment and institutionalisation; and an orientation towards the radicalisation of reflexivity, which entails the deployment of a complex of "techniques of the self" to sustain this new lifeworld. The results are theorised critically, both in terms of the limits of these strategies within participants' own lives and more generally in the course of an

analysis of contemporary movements from below, which aims to show the ability of the concepts developed in the thesis to engage with the problems facing contemporary political activists. The thesis includes a sample interview as an appendix.

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List of abbreviations

For the sake of readability, I have kept explanations of abbreviations to a minimum within the text; thus CAT (movement institution), KP (slang) or SMO (technical term) are explained, not DIY (everyday abbreviation), NATO (well-known organisation) or PCI (political party).

CAT Centre for Alternative Technology (North Wales)

CND Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament

DIY Do it yourself (used for roads protest-type politics)

DKP Deutsche Kommunistische Partei (West German Communist Party, from 1968)

FDP Freie Demokratische Partei (Free Democratic Party, German liberals)

FRG Federal Republic of Germany

HUAC House Un-American Activities Committee (McCarthy period)

KP Kitchen porter (cleaning and food preparation)

KPD Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands (German Communist Party, to 1968)

LETS Local economy trading systems (alternative currency schemes)

LSD Lysergic acid diethylamide (acid)

NATO North Atlantic Treaty Organisation

NGO Non-governmental organisation

NS Nationalsozialistisch (Nazi)

NSM New social movements

NVDA Non-violent direct action

PAR Participatory action research

PCF Parti communiste français (French Communist Party)

PCd'I Partito comunista d'Italia (Italian Communist Party in 1920s and 1930s)

PCI Partito comunista italiano (Italian Communist Party, post-war)

PDS Partito democratico della sinistra (Democratic Left, Italian post-communist party)

POS Political opportunity structure

RAF Rote Armee Fraktion (Red Army Faction, German urban guerrillas)

RMT Resource mobilisation theory

ROI Republic of Ireland

SMO Social movement organisation

SPD Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (German Social Democratic Party)

TEFL Teaching English as a foreign language

WG *Wohngemeinschaft* (intentional community)

Chapter one: stating the argument

Defining the research project

Introducing the thesis

In this thesis, I try to find a way of imagining and talking about some important aspects of contemporary social struggles. This leads me into three related intellectual landscapes. In the first, I consider the available languages for discussing social struggles in general, and conclude that the narrow focus of both instrumentalist and culturalist approaches to "social movements" is inadequate to the range of experiences, needs and intentions of movement participants, and that such theories reify "movements" as unusual activity against essentially static backgrounds. As against these, I draw on the "movement theories" of Western Marxism and socialist feminism to distil a concept of social movements as the more or less developed articulation of situated rationalities, from the faltering attempt to express new needs to the development of full-blown challenges for societal hegemony. This is, I think, a new reading of this literature; I will try to show that it is historically and conceptually justified.

Within this general framework of analysis, I offer the historical concept of "counter culture" as a way of theorising what seems to me an important movement project within disorganised capitalism. In this landscape, then, the background is given by the suggestion that the praxis-oriented theories of radical social movements themselves constitute a theory of social movements, albeit one which is not normally recognised as such; in the foreground stands the colourful and disconcerting figure of the counter culture, which I try to show is at home in this theoretical world.

The second landscape is represented by my exploration of the everyday "local rationalities" of ordinary participants (as opposed to full-time activists) within a particular Dublin movement milieu. Members of a network formed in the movement struggles of the mid-1980s, they have remained regularly involved in movement activities of different kinds during the subsequent decade and a half, but this overtly

political mobilisation is not the centre point of their lives. Part of the interest of this thesis, then, is that it turns the spotlight away from movement elites towards the wider networks and milieux whose mobilisation or otherwise determines the relevance or otherwise of those elites.

Drawing on in-depth qualitative interviews, I try to elucidate something of the nature of the way participants organise and make sense of their lives, offering the concept of a "reflexive autonomy", oriented towards self-development rather than towards the attainment of taken-for-granted goals, and the concept of a "radicalised reflexivity", which moves from the critique of everyday life to the attempt at its restructuring, as ways of capturing this structure of feeling. This landscape, then, offers an interpretive counterpart to the theoretical critique of reified theories of movements as unusual activity, by replacing mobilisation within its wider context of participants' daily lives.

The third landscape consists of a reflexive attempt to understand the nature of this kind of exploration, trying not only to identify my own agenda as a kind of local eccentric who is trying to make particular kinds of sense of the people he shares a life with, but also to understand how they in turn make sense of me - and by extension something of the more general nature of relationships between movement participants and researchers. I suggest in particular that unreflexive research on movements is marked by a routine collusion between researchers and full-time, politicising activists which obscures the ways in which ordinary participants fit the activities of the militants (and researchers) into their *own* agendas.

This relationship is not a static opposition, but one grounded in shared orientations; and I examine the question of how these shared orientations can be best expressed and in particular how committed and reflexive research can contribute to this process of self-development on the part of a movement. This landscape is an unusual one within contemporary academic writing on "social movements", which has taken its distance from engagement and is correspondingly weak on reflexivity. It is marked, then, by an aesthetic which does not try to offer the painter an Olympian standpoint or hide the fact that they are painting for a determinate audience: these pictures are finally

intended as sketchmaps illustrating one understanding of our situation, produced by one participant in an ongoing engagement with others.

Identifying the problematic

This research project grew out of attempts to understand and locate my own experience, which I have since come to think of as that of a participant in the counter culture. Initially the matter presented itself rather differently: growing up within the Dublin movement scene of the late 1970s and early 1980s - CND, Amnesty, anti-apartheid, development issues - and with the alternative culture of previous generations - Ginsberg, Dylan, Marx, Thompson - I experienced a painful and radical split between this approach to life and that dominant in the south Dublin suburbs where I grew up. This was manifest not only in the micropolitics of challenging religion in school or not fitting into versions of masculinity as essentially physical and aggressive but also in the macropolitics of opposing the Falklands War, joining the Dunnes Stores picket line or expressing affinity with New Travellers in Britain around the time of the Battle of the Beanfield.

Over the next few years I was surprised (and delighted) to find this same sense of affinity present in other contexts and other countries: in Norway, where I spent a year living with a socialist family, busking, demonstrating and hanging out with hippies and junkies; in college in Dublin, where I discovered a libertarian left in student politics and a complex subcultural scene; among the Greens in Strasbourg, where I spent a year as an exchange student; in Hamburg, where I spent a year's fieldwork in an impressively developed "alternative scene" in the midst of Green Party faction-fighting, anti-Gulf War protests and conflicts over squats; returning to Dublin, in street politics and the ecology movement; intermittently at home with my partner in Italy, slowly discovering its rich history of struggle and the alternative imaginary of the post-68 generations. I was less delighted, but increasingly less surprised, to find similar attacks on this shared world: criminalisation, political exclusion, routine abuse and polemic, down to the same risks of violence I had met in school.

Such experiences obviously call for a personal response in the form of some way of making sense of what is happening, identifying what the conflicts are about, and

learning to engage with solidarity or resistance as appropriate. I am reluctant to call this "just" a personal response, in that at a certain basic level it needs to *work*: as a migrant one needs to be able to identify potential sources of solidarity and elicit it in practice and to be aware of potential risks and danger zones in public and in polite conversation. As a participant (with increasing responsibilities: in Hamburg I helped organise a peace camp during the Gulf War and was later one of two people holding together the local Green Party branch in the midst of electoral and internal crisis) I needed to be able to live and work effectively with others, under pressure and with few resources, in situations where people are not reluctant to express disagreement (assembling a leaflet to give out to visitors at the camp, for example). While there are obviously many ways of managing this sort of situation, any effective resolution has to go beyond a purely personal solution to identity crises and involve an understanding with some purchase on a wider reality.

Beyond this, as I encountered increasingly sophisticated *theoretical* discourses as part of the context of everyday choice and action within the movements I was involved in, I found myself pushed more and more to develop an understanding marked as far as possible by logical coherence, theoretical purchase and ability to convince as well as by empirical "workability"; and one which would be able to handle not only the immediate situation I found myself in but say something to those other experiences and other places as well. Hence I found myself reading the alternative press voraciously, and later exploring political theories, movement history and elaborations of alternative cultural identity with more and more interest, at the same time as my undergraduate studies - in the history of European ideas, political history and sociology - convinced me of the need for explanations which would be more than local and ad hoc.

Having tentatively identified the relevant period as roughly the last third of the twentieth century (in particular since the late 1960s, but including precursor movements and "scenes") and the relevant area as the core of the capitalist world-economy, particularly in urban areas, I could give the provisional name "counter culture" to this space and set out to attempt to find an adequate analysis. Retrospectively, I would say that I set three criteria for such an analysis. Firstly, I wanted an understanding which would have a reasonable explanatory power for the

range of experiences involved, in other words which would hold open the possibility of a general understanding if such a thing could be achieved, rather than making an a priori choice in favour of fragmentation. Secondly, I was looking for an analysis which would engage in a convincing way with participants' own experiences and understandings, in other words an ethnographically sensitive reading of the problem. Thirdly, I needed a theory which could offer some practical purchase on the day-to-day questions and choices brought by involvement, including those faced by participants other than myself.

These criteria, discussed further in chapter two, came out of the experience of involvement in a range of different movement milieux, making me suspicious of overly fragmentary analysis; of the repeated experience of cultural conflict, which undermined the credibility of theories that assumed that movements and their opponents shared the same basic orientations; and of my situation as an activist in search of effective and convincing theory. From 1989 I had identified the possibility of learning from research on the West German situation, and carried out research there from 1990 to 1991 (Cox 1992). From 1992 I had a more general sketch of a possible research project on counter culture, and from 1995 the present project was in progress. This involved me increasingly in teaching and research contexts where I related to this material as an academic rather than as an activist; but as chapter four indicates the activist orientation remained present, and the major substantive breakthroughs in the research have come from the need to engage with changes in this experience. While this thesis aims at satisfying disciplinary standards, then, its basic problematic derives from this movement experience.

The complexities of the literature

> "Would it be reasonable to suppose that the civil rights movement, the counterculture, and the New Left of the early and mid-sixties were the soil for the growth of feminism and gay liberation in the latter half of the decade, for environmentalism and later ecologism in the early seventies, for the persisting communitarian and localist movements in both decades that nourished the anti-nuclear, peace, and citizen activism of more recent times - each forming an aspect of a common development with shared roots and expressive of richer phases in the definition and struggle for freedom? We have not tried to interpret the sixties and

> seventies as a whole, as a rich continuum that has brought out in ever greater fullness the potentiality for freedom that is latent in our era with all its varied and rich articulations. In any case, each such articulation - be it feminist, or peace-oriented, countercultural or environmentalist, communitarian or localist - remains vibrantly structured in the other and exists as part of a whole" (Bookchin 1986: 45 - 46).

As I proceeded to read up on the subject, I discovered that there is an unfeasibly vast literature in this area, produced both by traditional intellectuals (academics, conventional journalists) for conventional contexts and by organic intellectuals (activists, movement writers) for movement contexts. A significant proportion of this is also cross-cultural in scope and historically sensitive. Its major difficulty - apart from sheer size - is that it is essentially fragmentary, usually handling isolated aspects of the counter culture in relation to their apparent functional equivalents in the rest of society and rarely engaging in any direct theoretical exchange with writing on other aspects of the counter culture.

Not that such a connection is denied, if anything rather the reverse. Movement writers and journalists alike (e.g. Horx 1985, Seyfried 1991, Loveday 1991, Gold 1993, Fo and Karen 1994) draw on a common-sense understanding of a shared history, set of issues and way of life which is also reflected in directories of counter cultural institutions (e.g. Saunders 1975, Stattführer Hamburg 1981, Færøvig et al. 1990, Boyd 1993, Jaubert et al. 1974). Similarly, academic writers (e.g. Brand 1987: 30 - 44, Gitlin 1987: 420 - 438, Raschke 1993: 19, Pepper 1991: 208 - 211) routinely draw on an understanding of the historical background, social context, political implications or cultural sources of their specific subjects which shows that they are also alive to this broader picture, but this does not lead to a recasting of the terms of analysis - a point underlined by the fact that the place to look for these recognitions is normally in introductions and conclusions, not the body of their analyses. The exact contours of this wider context are obviously not identical from one author to the next, but they are sufficiently close to point to the need for a broader analysis.

To give an idea of the scale of the problem, it is sufficient to mention some of the subjects of these separate literatures:

- the dramatic "world-revolutionary" (Katsifiacas 1987) moment of 1968, when states as diverse as France, Czechoslovakia, the USA and Mexico were faced with

"wars of movement" organised around what was recognised at the time as a qualitatively "New Left" (see e.g. Fraser's massive oral history project (1988), Isserman's (1989) review article, or Katsifiacas' Marcusian analysis (1987), as well as retrospective reflections by participants such as Gitlin's (1980) analysis of the role of the media, Viénet's (1992) Situationist account or Capanna's (1998) defence of the 1968 legacy);

- the less dramatic, but more sustained, "war of position" (Gramsci 1971) which to an extent preceded as well as followed this moment, mobilising large numbers of ordinary people in ways which marked a shift in the "repertoire of contention" (Tarrow 1998) around what were in some cases new issues (gay and lesbian liberation), in others a revival of somnolent themes (feminism) or a change of scale large enough to mark a change of kind (peace). This literature covers struggles over issues such as ecology, anti-racism, Third World solidarity, civil rights, issues of power in the workplace, struggles over the democratisation of education and health, squatting, freedom of information, up to contemporary "DIY politics" (out of a massive body of writing, discussed in part in chapter two, Brand's (1982) overview of the early debate, the round-table debate in Schäfer (1983), the 1985 special issue of *Social Research*, Roth and Rucht's (1987) collection on Germany, and Jordan and Lent's (1999) collection, as well as the dedicated *Forschungsjournal neue soziale Bewegungen* (1988 - present), exemplify an ongoing academic debate, not to speak of the activist and thematic literature);
- the creation of "Green" and "New Left" political parties representing or supporting (some of) these movements and capable of gathering enough support within a couple of decades to find themselves sharing power at local, municipal and regional levels on a regular basis, and increasingly at national level, along with the appearance of severe tensions within established parties and unions of the Left around these issues (see, for example, Müller-Rommel (1989) and Richardson and Rootes (1995) as attempts at comparative analysis, Raschke's massive (1991, 1993) research project on the German party, and comparative accounts by participants such as Parkin (1989) and Feinstein (1992));
- the growth of a large and variegated alternative press, with offshoots in publishing and pirate or local broadcasting, as well as the appearance of a strongly anti-

authoritarian community media (see e.g. for the academic literature Duncombe (1997) or Atton (1996, 1997a, 1999), as well as participants' accounts such as Mungo (1990), analyses such as Fountain (1988), and directories such as ID-Archiv (1991));

- the appearance of an immense range of new subcultures, once limited to "youth" but now encompassing multiple generations (hippies, punks, New Travellers, rave culture etc.); a shifting territory of "free spaces" (Bey 1991) sustained within these contexts, from urban "alternative scenes" to settled and mobile rural communities and households via transient events like festivals and "free parties" (the literature is enormous and itself highly fragmented, with large academic literatures on subjects like subcultures (McKay 1996), communes (Pepper 1991) and more general "culture shifts" (Inglehart 1990) as well as a massive participant literature such as Earle et al. (1994) on New Travellers, Houriet (1973) on communal living or Consorzio Aaster et al. (1996) on Italian *centri sociali*);
- the flowering of "new religious movements" whether based on the deliberate re-creation of a utopian past, the importation and transformation of religions from other cultures or the re-interpretation of existing religions, as part of the spread of a range of new "techniques of the self" (Foucault 1988), from psychedelic and designer drugs to meditation and yoga (good academic accounts include Heelas (1996) on the New Age, Lopéz (1998) on the Western reception of Tibetan Buddhism and Hardman and Harvey's (1996) collection on neo-paganism; examples of good insider or journalistic accounts might include Stevens (1993) on LSD, Adler (1986) on neo-paganism and Batchelor (1994) on Buddhism in the West);
- and the generation of a wide range of alternative economic projects, from cooperative and "social economy" activity to local economy trading systems (LETS) and foodbox schemes (see e.g. North (1996, 1998), Kennedy (1996), Dürrschmidt (1997) and movement theorists such as Huber (1980) or Gunning (1993)).

- and this is without examining (for example) life-history, biographical and generational accounts, counter-movements, and related developments within the

academy. I found, then, a wide range of separate literatures, isolated from one another by institutional contexts and frameworks of understanding, all offering to make some contribution to understanding the areas I was interested in, but no systematic attempts at relating one to the other, despite the frequent recognition of some degree of affinity.

The need for ethnographic sensitivity

As well as the fragmentary nature of these analyses - that is, the systematic preference for referring the explanation of their subject directly to general features of dominant social structures rather than examining more deeply their connections with their implied context or theorising the implications of their *conflicts* with the social structures that supposedly explain them - one other weakness stood out from this reading of the literature. As a participant I often found it hard to find any sense of what their subjects were *like* in their theoretical perspectives: any real analysis, that is, of the difference in frames of reference between the university classroom and the demonstration, of the emotional and practical understandings shared between activists or in the crashpad, or even of what it feels like to participate in an occupation. For the earliest authors this had been one of the overriding issues to explain, both for academic observers like Musgrove (1974), with his "ecstasy and holiness", Berger, Berger and Kellner (1974) with their "de-modernizing consciousness" or Reich (1971), with his "consciousness III" - as well as for participants then and later, illustrated by the titles (and content) of Gaskin's *Haight Ashbury Flashbacks* (1990, orig, 1980), Gottlieb's *Do you believe in magic?* (1987) or Fo and Parini's *'68: c'era una volta la rivoluzione*[1].

Tom Wolfe, already an experienced journalist of youth culture and style scenes, was struck by this cultural difference in his encounter with the Merry Pranksters. After discussing his uncomfortableness with their toilet arrangements and observing "Suddenly it hits me that for the Pranksters this is *permanent*. This is the way they live", he goes on:

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[1] "Once upon a time there was the revolution".

> "Back inside the Warehouse. Everything keeps up. Slowly I am getting more and more of a strange feeling about the whole thing. It is not just the costumes, the tapes, the bus and all that, however. I have been through some crewcut college fraternity weekends that have been weirder-looking and -sounding, insane on the beano. The ... feeling begins when the Flag People start coming up to me and saying things like - well, when Cassady is flipping the sledge hammer, with his head down in the mull of the universe, just mulling the hell out of it, and *blam*, the sledge hammer, he misses it, and it slams onto the concrete floor of the garage and one of the Flag People says, 'You know, the Chief says when Cassady misses it, it's never an accident -'
>
> [...] At first this struck me as phoney. But then it turned to ... *mysto*, as the general mysto steam began rising in my head. This steam, I can actually hear it inside my head, a great sssssssss, like what you hear if you take too much quinine. I don't know if this happens to anybody else or not. But if there is something startling enough, fearful, awesome, strange, or just weird enough, something I sense I can't cope with, it is as if I go on Red Alert and the fogging steam starts ... (1969: 16 - 17)

This account, which could be paralleled for other contexts, is a classic statement of culture shock and the routine problems facing ethnographers in coming to terms with a new culture, although the culture in this case is local, not abroad. For "insiders", of course, the problem is reversed: I feel at home with other participants in a way I cannot with colleagues at work. As we have seen, these issues of culture and experience were immediately recognised in the early literature. More recently, for reasons which I discuss in more detail in chapter four, these ethnographic issues have been largely bypassed, either in the sense of taking the experience of by now less newsworthy ways of life for granted or in the more damaging sense of projecting one's own cultural assumptions onto others; consistent with this, it is only in the area of new mobilisation (Dix 1998) and revolutionary high points (Barker 1997) that the experience of participants has been much of an issue.

What is involved, I would suggest, is something close to what Raymond Williams describes as a common "structure of feeling". The phrase is often used loosely, and it is worth quoting Williams' statement in full:

> "It is only in our own time and place that we can expect to know, in any substantial way, the general organization. We can learn a great deal of the life of other places and times, but certain elements, it seems to me, will always be irrecoverable. Even those

> that can be recovered are recovered in abstraction, and this is of crucial importance. We learn each element as a precipitate, but in the living experience of the time every element was in solution, an inseparable part of a complex whole. The most difficult thing to get hold of, in studying any past period, is this felt sense of the quality of life at a particular place and time: a sense of the ways in which the particular activities combined into a way of thinking and living. We can go some way in restoring the outlines of a particular organization of life; we can even recover what Fromm calls the 'social character' or Benedict 'the pattern of culture'. The social character - a valued system of behaviour and attitudes - is taught formally and informally - it is both an ideal and a mode. The 'pattern of culture' is a selection and configuration of interests and activities, and a particular valuation of them, producing a distinct organization, a 'way of life'. Yet even these, as we recover them, are usually abstract. Possibly, however, we can gain the sense of a further common element, which is neither the character nor the pattern, but as it were the actual experience through which these were lived [....] I think we can best understand this if we think of any similar analysis of a way of life that we ourselves share. For we find here a particular sense of life, a particular community of experience hardly needing expression, through which the characteristics of our way of life that an external analyst could describe are in some way passed, giving them a particular and characteristic colour [....]
>
> The term I would suggest to describe it is *structure of feeling*: it is as firm and definite as 'structure' suggests, yet it operates in the most delicate and least tangible parts of our activity. In one sense, this structure of feeling is the culture of a period: it is the particular living result of all the elements in the general organization [....] I do not mean that the structure of feeling, any more than the social character, is possessed in the same way by the many individuals in the community. But I think it is a very deep and very wide possession, in all actual communities, precisely because it is on it that communication depends." (1965: 63 - 65)

There are obvious difficulties with this statement, both in terms of the rather different ways in which we now think about culture (due in part to Williams' own work) and particularly in terms of the incommunicability of this structure of feeling as Williams theorises it. In chapter four, and again in chapters five and six, I attempt a rather different way of discussing these issues, in terms of shared forms of local rationality - ways of engaging with and making sense of the world. To research the

counter culture cannot, for obvious reasons, be to research the incommunicable. But it can, I think, start from such an experience and try to *understand* it: to theorise what makes it possible, to abstract from specifics in a search for connections and to show what can be shown.

It may not be possible to come closer than this abstraction within what can be effectively communicated: if, as Williams argues, what we are dealing with is more like the shared presuppositions of communication than the communication itself, this is hardly surprising. What is at stake, in other words, is a necessarily tacit recognition or establishment of particular communication situations: people with whom it is safe to talk about particular things, people who will understand what you mean by particular statements, people who will share your emotional response to particular events. A recognition, in other words, of when were are "safe" or "in enemy territory", as critics of the German Left put it - necessary considerations for anyone whose political and cultural activities conflict with dominant arrangements.

To give just one example: in the institute of technology where I work, counter cultural participants come to recognise one another, make contact and bond closely in a way reminiscent of nothing so much as conventional images of the lives of gay men in small towns. There is a meeting of eyes across the room, an awkward extension of feelers designed to give the other person a chance to show recognition (a reference to political experience, to particular books and films, to drug or music scenes), and a sudden opening up which may last for weeks of simply talking about and establishing a common ground of experience. And yet there is rarely if ever any explicit verbalisation of experience. Even smoking dope, to take one of the more obvious (and more necessarily clandestine) of such symbols, is in such exchanges far less important than the recognition of a way of life in which it is a normal part of the scenery.

The scope of the analysis

I wanted, then, to produce an account which was sensitive to this ethnographic dimension of these contexts. If my practical experience, that this structure of feeling "works" in these contexts and not in others, holds true, this would beg the question as to why that might be: why here, and not there? why now, and not then? Two

kinds of reasons suggest themselves. One is that, as Katsiaficas (1987) points out in relation to revolutionary periods, significant conflicts within the world-system happen *throughout* the world-system. Authors like Arrighi, Hopkins and Wallerstein (1989) and Lash and Urry (1987) have historicised this argument to suggest that the extent to which social organisation takes place at a national or global level is itself a historical fact. If either position is correct, there would be as little surprise in finding recognisably similar structures of feeling in counter cultural contexts as there would be in finding recognisably similar forms of class consciousness. As Lukács (1971) in particular has stressed, from a Marxist perspective the determining category is that of totality, or of the world-system.

The other kind of reason, which does not contradict the first, is to suggest that it is not simply a matter of people being in similar situations responding similarly, but that those responses are themselves interlinked in complex ways. Just as Williams argues that the structure of feeling forms a basis for communication, so social movement writers have argued that culture is a necessary prerequisite for the co-ordination of action (in that it enables trust in the other, a sense of identity, solidarity and common purpose, and a meeting-point for understanding) on the scale described above (see chapter two for an account and critique of this perspective). As we shall see in chapter five, participants do indeed recognise themselves in other contexts and draw on the experiences accumulated and skills developed in other times and places as part of their own process of group self-creation. Co-operation, then, is not necessarily simply a mechanical process of instrumental alliance formation, but is also a result of contexts which have organised themselves around ways of acting and thinking that relate them to other contexts.

On a macro-level, authors like Fraser (1988) and Caute (1988) share with Katsiaficas (1987) a stress on the international nature of "1968". Research on Green Parties has been similarly comparative (see the works already cited). Tarrow (1998) has stressed the development of "global social movements" and global movement organisations, from the 1980s peace movement to Greenpeace to Tibetan solidarity campaigns. On a more micro-level, the alternative press networks from one country to another; movement bookshops and presses distribute one another's material; and as with my own experience, many other individuals circulate from one city and country to

another (della Porta and Diani 1999), finding in the process close or distant equivalents to their own local experience. These shared ways of doing things, then, make it possible for this widely-scattered, enormously diverse, internally conflictual, externally pressured counter culture to exist practically, in people's lives and action, and not simply as a typological exercise.

It is not unreasonable, then, to think of the counter culture as an international phenomenon, rather than a primarily national one. Although for obvious reasons I cannot hope to do more in this thesis than offer an ethnography of *one* counter cultural context, as we shall see its participants are highly mobile and have been involved in movement contexts in several different countries as well as participating in mobilisations around a range of different issues. By showing how this analysis is located within a more general theory of counter culture, I hope also to offer the tools with which it might become possible to explore how far this counter culture does and does not extend, what internal differences of culture can be identified, and indeed to identify more sharply those other structures of feeling with which the counter culture coexists, whether in open opposition or uneasy alliance (see chapter eight).

For the moment, however, it is enough to register that it *may* be possible to think of the counter culture in more holistic terms, and that it *may* make sense to look for elements of cultural difference from dominant institutional contexts; what of the third criterion, that of a perspective that might also be of use to participants?

Historical concepts

This thesis was conceived within the framework of a historical sociology, using "sociology" to mean a systematic approach to arriving at theoretical understanding and one that (unlike "pure" social theory or philosophy) does not find its method in a withdrawal to the world of thought alone but rather in a consistent relationship between knower and known. The qualifier "historical" involves a recognition that the knowledge thus produced is not universal, but at the same time that it is not arbitrary or particularistic. Historical sociology, then, would be a field of discussion, or a method, rather than a theoretical position.

Given these constraints, a number of theoretical approaches are possible; not, however, an infinite number. Marxist and Weberian historical sociologies are possible, for example (not that all Marxist or Weberian writing can be described in this way); a post-modernist historical sociology would probably be a contradiction in terms, in relation to the rejection of particularity and the consistent relationship between knower and known. My own theoretical position, outlined in chapter three, is that of an activist materialism, which sees the production of distinct social formations as the result of conflicts between materially-grounded (hence non-arbitrary) social movements; this process is historically connected and in principle knowable on Vico's *verum-factum* principle: that human beings' capacity to know the social world is grounded in their ability to produce it (Jay 1984: 108 - 116).

Such a theory will want to avoid two kinds of category error. One is reifying local empirical regularities as universal categories; the other is multiplying rationally-produced concepts devoid of (explicit) empirical grounding. Either, through its universalism, fails the historical criterion. This is not to imagine that a historical sociology can ever finally break free from the tendency to turn its own taken-for-granted context into universals, or that it can avoid the need for any universal assumptions to ground its own understanding. It is to say, though, that the most thoroughly historical sociology possible will be one that restricts its universals to the most abstract micro-analyses of human action and to the most general macro-perspectives on social order. The concepts of totality, movement and skill introduced in chapter three are intended to be of this order.

So far, this relates historical sociology more tightly to an epistemology than to a theoretical position in the conventional sense. In broad terms, that epistemology falls within what McLellan (1981) and Bhaskar (Collier 1994) call, with different shades of meaning, critical realism. On this account, an epistemology is realist insofar as it holds that the world is in need of explanation; in other words, insofar as it seeks to engage with the world as we know it (and is thus not a rationalist epistemology) but holds that what we know directly is produced and structured by something that we can only know indirectly (and is thus not an empiricism). It is critical (rather than affirmative) insofar as it holds that this indirect knowledge is not a matter of pure observation and extrapolation, but is the product of active engagement with the

directly known, for example, through experiment, interview, labour, or politics. Normally this entails the proposition that such engagement is situational, and that some engagement situations are likely to produce better (more systematic, less limited, etc.) routes to indirect knowledge than others; though (since these engagement situations represent different modes of employment, self-legitimations and political perspectives) there is naturally furious debate over which are most appropriate.

Historical concepts

What *kind* of knowledge, then, can we expect of such a historical sociology? I want to suggest that the answer is "historical concepts", by which I mean analytical tools by means of which ordinary actors can re-organise their understanding of the world by relating local appearances to historical totalities (Mills 1970). "Counter culture" is one such concept, which seeks to re-organise our understanding of specific local phenomena like those discussed in the literatures already mentioned by relocating them within a more general perspective on movements from below in disorganised capitalism. As I argue in chapter seven, such tools may be of use to participants insofar as their attempts at developing their existing "ways of struggle" run into limits which can only be overcome by broadening their framework of understanding and practice.

Such historical concepts are neither laws nor universal categories; this is both their strength and their weakness. They do not offer final answers so much as tools for thinking, because of the historically contingent nature of the subject matter. Within materialist epistemologies of the kinds argued for in chapters three and four there is another reason for this, namely that what is ultimately at stake is human praxis; however constrained by material context and social totality, it is a mistake to think that small numbers of systematic thinkers can mentally exhaust the practical creativity of far greater numbers of people. At best, as with Weber's ideal-typical rationality (1984: 19 - 41), they can offer an understanding which consists of a framework for organising the much greater complexity of the world. To suggest "counter culture" as a category for grasping the form and direction of struggles from

below in disorganised capitalism is thus not to offer a definition but to suggest a perspective for analysis.

Historical concepts, in other words, are forms of open knowledge, suitable to the open systems (Collier 1994) represented by even the most closed totality - open because no form of exploitation and domination can exhaust the "wealth of human needs", the creativity of human praxis, and the complexity of its natural context, however brutally it may degrade them or however subtly it commodifies them. Open knowledge consists of tools for organising and understanding experience: understanding in the pragmatist sense of adequacy to the nature of our engagement with the real (but critical insofar as they ask after the nature, and implications for knowledge, of our specific forms of engagement).

Consistent with the critical stress on knowledge as the product of a situated engagement with the real, the concepts of a historical sociology bear the shape of tools for understanding, in Weber as much as in Marx, in Foucault as much as in Williams (though obviously the nature of the engagement is different in each case): instrumental rationality, class struggle, discipline, culture. They are not the putative endpoint of knowledge, but the point where "science" ends and "technology", in the sense of the deployment (and thus reaffirmation, but also remaking) of such concepts in specific situations, begins.

Such a form makes historical concepts socially available without the need for the authorised interpreter or professional expert, but retaining their critical edge in the level on which they are formulated: they explain existing dichotomies in "common sense", connect theory to practice, relate previously unrelated phenomena, point to the rational core of mystifying theories and help us understand and engage with ourselves and our world more lucidly. Thus a concept which is *not* an abstraction from and reorganisation of everyday experience and action is of little use: it becomes simply a renaming, a replacement of one arbitrary sign by another. A historical concept, then, does not claim to be true in the absolute; rather, it sets out to be a useful contribution to the process of thinking about the human world for human purposes.

The concept of counter culture

The concept of counter culture is proposed in this thesis as a category for grasping the form and direction of movements from below in disorganised capitalism. To say this much is to open a can of worms, which is why (breaking with usual practice) I do not leave it at that and refer further discussion to the theory and methodology chapters, but give some preliminary qualifiers and explanations at this point.

These essentially have to do with definitions and referents. "The form and direction of social movements from below in disorganised capitalism" is not a closed and homogenous set, but neither is it completely arbitrary. Hence it would certainly need to include provisionally (i.e. pending further research) the various phenomena mentioned at the start of this chapter, as some of the most striking features of this context, together forming a significant part of the counter culture as institutional complex. This thesis argues, however, that that institutional complex is the result of participants' abstraction and extension of specific local rationalities of "reflexive autonomy" and "radicalised reflexivity", this being the characteristic and "essential" part of counter culture, in conflict with other rationalities.

Thus it is entirely possible (say) that Green parties will become so "mainstreamed" in personnel, policies, structure and electorate as no longer to bear any relationship to the counter cultural rationality or institutional complex, by the process long known in Italian politics as *trasformismo* (cf. the argument to this effect in Statham 1999). The institutional boundaries of counter culture are not fixed, then - and it would be an odd social movement of which this could be said for any significant period of time, since the point of social movements, from above or below, is to contest the control of different areas of social life. (This is not to say that static boundaries never develop, of course; the process known to political scientists as "pillarisation" is another name for this condition.)

New social movements or a new left?

Although it seems natural to examine the most strikingly different features of social movements in disorganised capitalism, I am *not* proposing the category of counter culture as a substitute for the concept of "new social movements". That argument,

elaborated by authors like Melucci (1989, 1995) and Brand (1987) and criticised by authors like Scott (1990) and Barker and Dale (1997), rests on what seems to me a fundamental confusion (widespread in the literature) between the *issues* around which movements mobilise and the *nature* of those movements. To counterpose ecological and peace movements to class and ethnic movements and to argue that one is replacing the other is to compare colours with books, and argue that books are going out of fashion because people prefer colours. Saner voices (such as Bagguley 1992) have argued that contemporary social movements remain class - and often working-class - movements, even if their issues and forms of struggle are changing. Similarly, Tovey (1993) has argued for a reading of environmental movements in Ireland in terms of class and ethnicity. Nor does it seem plausible that "old" movements remain in some sort of timewarp; rather, the concept of counter culture implies that (for example) the ways in which working-class or women's movements organise have changed; that not only the struggles, but also the actors, of disorganised capitalism take on new forms.

A closer translation would be to the distinction, made in the 1950s and 1960s, between an "old Left" and a "new Left" (see e.g. Jacobs and Landau 1967 or Thompson 1977a, but also Wainwright 1994) - a distinction I take to be essentially accurate in suggesting that what was changing was the *form*, not the *source*, of social movement activity. (Incidentally, this is not the first time such a shift has happened: in chapter seven I argue for a tripartite periodisation which includes the decline of libertarian and cultural-revolutionary elements after the defeat of the revolutionary wave following the First World War and the rise of Stalinism and Social Democracy.)

Movements, then, are still ultimately about exploitation and domination; in a world-system which can still be usefully analysed as capitalist and patriarchal, relations of class, gender and ethnicity remain important. But insofar as that capitalism can be described as disorganised (Lash and Urry 1987), as private patriarchy is giving way to public patriarchy (Walby 1990) and as the cycle of inward investment is giving way to a cycle of financial expansion (Arrighi 1994) the form of these "movements from above" (see chapter three) is changing; and it is unsurprising if that of movements from below also changes (Thompson 1997).

Periodising politics

Numerous authors have argued for a shift in the social relations of capitalism from some point in the 1960s or early 1970s. For Lash and Urry (1987), as for Offe (1984), this is a shift from "organised" to "disorganised" capitalism. Marxist postmodernists (the basic argument is that of Jameson's title, *Postmodernism, or the cultural logic of late capitalism*) such as Harvey (1990) or Jameson (1990) stress in particular the new forms of culture associated with "post-Fordist" production structures. Arrighi (1994) has argued that what is central is the changeover from investment in commodity production to investment in financial expansion, a process that he argues is a routine part of the development of capitalist cycles of accumulation. Lastly, Wagner (1994) has deployed a formidable apparatus to argue for a shift from "organised modernity" to "restricted liberal modernity".

While these analyses are not identical, they are close enough for my purposes to form a backdrop to the suggestion that the "politics of closure" of organised capitalism, within which both movements from below and those from above mobilised in authoritarian ways around (would-be) taken-for-granted cultural understandings of what constituted meaningful goals, ran into deep crisis in the 1960s in particular (an argument I develop further in chapter three). Since that point, movements from above and below are replacing these strategies with what Magnusson (1996) has called the "flexible specialisation" of grassroots campaigners as much as of managerial restructuring, in both cases geared to a "politics of openness" which adopts a rhetoric of libertarian ideals and a critique of taken-for-granted cultural routines. As in organised capitalism, however, the key point at issue is *how far* the openness and cultural critique (then, how far and for what purposes the social closure) should be taken: in particular, whether it is to maintain, create or undermine relationships of domination and exploitation. The counter culture, then, represents something of the current mode of organisation of movements from below in this context.

Thus the unofficial labour militancy of the late 1960s and early 1970s (Darlington and Lyddon 1998), the "new regionalisms" of the 1970s (Melucci and Diani 1992), the collapse of orthodox Stalinism and the fragmentation of Social Democracy (Thompson 1997), the revival of anti-authoritarian Left traditions such as Trotskyism and anarchism (Jacobs and Landau 1967), the participatory orientation of much

working-class community activism (Geoghegan 1998b), the various interactions between the "traditional left" and feminist (Rowbotham et al. 1979), anti-racist (Farrar 1997), ecological (Antunes et al. 1990), disarmament (Hinton 1989), civil rights (David 1997) and similar campaigns suggest that the counter culture is present on what now thinks of itself as the traditional Left, as well as in more recognisably "new" kinds of activity.

In my Dublin material, certainly, no sharp distinction is present: participants have been involved in class-struggle anarchism and the Workers' Party as well as in feminist organisations and the Green Party; anti-racism and squatting rubbed shoulders with drug-taking and CND. It is likely that in areas with a stronger Left scene the counter culture and the traditional Left might be more sharply demarcated, as Vester et al.'s (1993) research on West German movement milieux in different towns showed. While the specific group I am researching here has its own local particularities, then, the local rationality it embodies is one which is developing across the spectrum of movements from below, and is by no means the exclusive property of newly-formed contexts, though their relationship to it is naturally different to that of contexts which predate it.

The term "counter culture"

Why have I used the phrase "counter culture" to delineate these developments? First, and most obviously, although it is widely used to describe movements in which the coincidence of political opposition with a coherent and alternative way of life has been particularly evident - as in contemporary "DIY" politics and culture in Britain, in the urban alternative scenes of 1970s and 1980s Germany and Italy, or in the mid to late 1960s across the Northern hemisphere (not excluding the "core" areas within the Soviet bloc such as Prague or East Berlin) - attempts to give it a precise conceptual content (Eco 1995, Roszak 1970, von Dirke 1997) have had little impact. Economy of language - and the flexibility of thought it can encourage - therefore speak in favour of the "conceptualising" of existing usage rather than the coining of a new technical vocabulary.

The most important reason for speaking of a counter culture - rather than for example an alternative movement, a new Left, a cultural revolution, a DIY scene or

whatever - is that it neatly connects the two elements which are most frequently separated, that of the political and the cultural. Despite the best efforts of Gramsci or Williams, these two moments regularly fall apart into a "social movements" literature within which the primacy of the political is normally taken for granted and "culture" is good for an occasional walk-on part or repackaging, and a "cultural studies" which has become more insistently depoliticised as it has become unable to situate the deployment of meaning within a *determinate* system of domination and exploitation where some have power over others and those others work for the benefit of the former.

The concept of counter culture, then, is designed to counteract a fragmentation which is in the first instance a fragmentation of academic institutions, intellectual training and directions of interest. This fragmentation, of course, is tied to the existence of partially differentiated fields of institutional action and different logics of rationalisation (Habermas 1987a) within the contemporary social order. While a historical sociology has to show that such divisions of the social world are actively produced by specific social orders rather than written into the natural order of things, it does not entail denying their effective existence and constraining power on people's actions. Nor, of course, does it reject existing research on the specific modes of operation of particular local social movements - though it does question the ahistorical assumption that the way social movements currently operate holds true for movements in general.

Social movements and the social order

Such a "field-specific" literature operates precisely within the "fields" created and transformed by historically specific social orders, which are in turn the products and objects of the struggles of social movements (Touraine 1981). Social movement projects, however, necessarily operate both "within" the relative closure and institutional stability of a given social order (without which they will have little practical purchase on the course of events and very limited organisational or institutional power) and "outside" it, in the "open systems" within which (and to partially control and draw on which) social orders are constructed (without this

"outside", movements are in no position to act strategically with respect to the social order itself, whether to change or defend it).

Because of this relationship of movement project to (temporarily) stabilised order, a research project which restricts itself to examining the tactical activity of social movements within the institutionalised social order, or to detailing how individuals and groups negotiate the workings of that order, renders itself incapable, if not of accounting for change, then certainly of reflecting on the nature of a change which is strategic (changing the social order) rather than tactical (reordering relationships within that order) and intentional (in the sense of tied to projects for an alternative social world) rather than simply a matter of unintended consequences. Neither of the two latter terms in these dichotomies are negligible, of course; but they are not the full story.

Social movements (using the Tourainean sense of this concept defended in chapter three) are involved in challenging, maintaining or creating *both* structures, in the sense of the institutionalised framework of a given social order, *and* routines, in the sense of the everyday ways in which individuals and groups relate to these (Lichterman 1996). The concept of counter culture attempts to tie together this sense of a double challenge: a "political" challenge to structures and a "cultural" challenge to routines. Phrasing the matter in this way, however, still adopts the local perspective of the taken-for-granted social order. From the perspective of the whole social movement, while these are certainly somewhat different fields of operation, there is only limited scope within the social reality of a movement to separate the two.

This is particularly so for movements from below; and it may be significant that Gramsci and Williams, the originators of the attempt to think the two together, were both personally and politically tied to the experience of poor and oppositional communities: Gramsci in a ruined ex-lower middle class family in a peasant village, several of whose members wound up in the industrial working class (Fiori 1990); Williams in a straightforwardly working-class family and community (Inglis 1998); both went through periods of involvement in the nationalist movements of peripheral and essentially powerless regions (Sardinia, Wales) as well as more systematic involvement with radical socialist movements. Seen "from below", at least, the "movement project" does not start from acceptance of given social fields but seeks

to reorder them within a "whole way of life" or a "whole way of struggle"; and this, along with an examination of how movement activities appear within a fragmented social order, needs to be placed centre-stage in any research project which is interested in how social movements change "the world", and not just how "the world" changes social movements.

Social movements as active realities

Another reason for speaking of a counter culture is to place an accent on the construction of social movements as social realities: as active, material creations with a life of their own - though not, of course, produced "under conditions of their own choosing, but under conditions which are directly discovered, given and handed down" (Marx n.d.: 269), and out of (not to mention against) these latter conditions. I am concerned, then, not to deny the continuing centrality to the existing social order of domination and exploitation and the everyday struggle against those, but to focus attention on *how* this struggle is carried out. An alternative way of putting this, and one entirely compatible with the basic framework of this thesis, would be to say that I am interested in class-for-itself rather than class-in-itself, that is in the ways in which human beings actively respond to the social relations in which they find themselves, and by so doing maintain or change them. In this sense the concept of a counter culture is directed against the caricature of a mechanical materialism in debates whose purpose is the substitution of the arbitrary and the imaginary for the determinate and the active (exemplified by Laclau and Mouffe 1985) - and towards the themes of a materialism which stresses creative agency, a sense of the historical, and a dialectic based on relationships and processes rather than static categories.

Lastly, the concept aims precisely to give material shape to this notion: to point to the idea of an actively produced social formation, with historical and social links between its component parts. This can form the object of empirical research in various ways: through the tracing of historical processes, the transformations of institutions, the deployment of traditions and the life-histories of participants; through the identification of formal linkages, informal networks and relationships of exchange, support and solidarity; in the exploration of institutional complexes, "partial public spaces", formal and informal alliances and mechanisms of mobilisation

and persistence; or, as in this thesis, in the examination of the logics that structure action, the ways participants experience themselves and the "techniques of the self" through which they produce, maintain and transform themselves.

My focus on this last set of concerns within the field opened up by the concept of counter culture is motivated by a concern to produce emancipatory knowledge that might be useful in the present period to the kind of movement participants I know and work with. I want to avoid, for example, a purely celebratory (or indeed valedictory) account based on a description of institutions which might tell us little about what we should *do* (the more so given the kinds of institutional fragility discussed in chapters five to seven). The focus I have chosen has the primary merit that it comes out of participants' own self-understandings and (hopefully) clarifies them and enables a more effective engagement with the tasks they have set themselves. Beyond this, as I argue in chapter seven, the current period is one in which movements from below are already engaged in a considerable amount of rethinking, so that too great a focus on already elaborated institutional forms is unlikely to tell participants much that they do not already know. By contrast, when the question is one of finding new alliances and developing new structures, to start from what might be unrecognised elements of commonality seems a potentially fruitful strategy. In other words, I am interested not simply in *saying* that movements are actively produced social formations but in working on tools that might help some participants to engage in that work more effectively.

Before proceeding to a summary of the thesis as a whole, it may be useful to the reader to give a concrete example of what I mean by the counter culture, in a context (West Germany 1968 - 1990) which offers both an exceptionally clear illustration of the thesis and one which has been studied in some detail.

Reading the West German counter culture

Rebuilding from scratch

In the latter half of the nineteenth and the first third of the twentieth century, movements from below in Germany had been among the strongest in Europe. A

large-scale movement of desertion and mutiny had been instrumental in forcing an end to war (Howard 1996); the Republic itself was a concessionary measure in the midst of revolutionary upheavals (Mitchell 1970: 45 - 49), and one whose sustainability depended on the continuing loyalty of the SPD (Neumann 1973: 28 - 31 etc.), who found themselves constantly under threat from the left: the Bavarian revolution of 1918 and the Munich soviet of 1919 (Mitchell 47 - 48, 112 - 117), the Spartakus revolts of 1918 and 1919 (Mitchell 49 - 56, 105 - 111, 167 - 171), the March Action of 1921 and the German October of 1923 (Jacoby 1981: 65 - 66, 94), as well as the working-class defeat of the Kapp Putsch in 1920, showed that movements from below, though not able to take power, retained a constant, and not simply conjunctural, strength. In 1924 (after the failures of 1921 and 1923) the KPD still received 3.7 million votes, while in 1927 it was publishing *36* dailies (Jacoby 1981: 63).

It took a massive movement from above to end this threat (Lash and Urry 1987: 28 - 29): the Nazi period saw not only the decimation of communist, socialist and trade unionist activists, but equally importantly the wiping out of the infrastructure of parties, unions, newspapers, coops, friendly societies, sports associations, youth and women's groups which had formed part and parcel of the left subculture (Tyrrell 1986). In the postwar period, reconstruction in the context of Cold War drew a sharp line between the social-democratic left, willing to be co-opted to the NATO project, and the "extreme" left, constitutionally defined as that which was unwilling to accept the given constitutional order. By 1966, when the first stirrings of student revolt began, the SPD was in coalition with the Christian Democrats and passing the emergency legislation which provoked the first major mobilisations of students and trade unionists; the KPD had been banned since 1953 (Markovits and Gorski 1993: 33 - 35).

As in the USA, then, but unlike the situations in France, Italy, Britain or Czechoslovakia, there was no dominant "Old Left" against which and by which the new one would be defined. The revolt which reached its peak in 1968 was then that of a new left in the sense of the attempt to form a left where no obvious resources other than theoretical ones were available - or, to put it another way, the new left *was* the left. In this the German case represents an extreme, and neither its coherent

radicalism (with less of a flip-over from libertarian to authoritarian at the very end of the 1960s than in most countries) nor its social isolation and relatively easy defeat should come as much of a surprise: to hijack Grass' (1980) title, the movement in West Germany was very much a "headbirth", the product of a predominantly male, largely educated and almost entirely German context (but see Baumann's (1979) biography for a working-class participant's account).

Given these weaknesses, the surprising thing is rather the relative longevity (von Dirke 1997) vis-à-vis, say, France, and the long-term impact (Baier et al. 1988) of the movement. The first is presumably due to the solidarity of an isolated social group (as with the highly organised Japanese students); the second, in part at least, to the "flecks and carriers" (Waite 1997) of earlier movement history, to some extent on a personal and local level but primarily through the voracious literacy of the student activists, somewhat older than their British or American counterparts and in a context where philosophy and sociology had greater prestige than literature.

Sustaining the challenge

The "war of movement", then, was fought by a small and isolated group, who were easily defeated. The "war of position", however, was long and hard-fought. The women's movement (Knafla and Kulke 1987) , the anti-nuclear / ecology movement (e.g. Michel and Wieser 1977), the peace movement (Markovits and Gorski 1993: 106 - 112), the squatting movement (Weinberger 1984: 65 - 76) and the Third-World solidarity movement (e.g. Maass 1983) were consistently well-organised and radical, and despite the failure to break through the effects of life-world privatisation between 1933 and 1945, social-democratic hegemony and Fordist regulation of lifestyles to the broad German working class, links were made both locally, where for example in Hamburg militant traditions had survived, and with some immigrant workers around solidarity issues.

Within the developing alternative "pillar", however, mobilisation was wide and determined, and in this otherwise deeply corporatist (Esping-Andersen 1990) and "private patriarchal" (Walby 1990) society saw very high levels of women's participation, not only in the women's movement (Kaplan 1992) but very visibly in the peace and ecology movements and in institutionalised forms in *die Grünen*. The

long-term product was then a strongly organised and articulated counter culture (at least compared to other minority world contexts) which by the mid-80s sustained a wide range of political organisations, notably *die Grünen* (Altvater et al. 1991), a very extensive alternative media, such as the daily *die tageszeitung* (Koch 1989: 86 - 107), a well-rooted complex of institutional projects (see e.g. Huber 1980, Stattführer Hamburg 1981, Weinberger 1984) covering everything from squats to *Mitfahrzentrale* (institutionalised hitch-hiking, with centres fitting passengers to lifts) to organic baking and alternative lifestyles organised around urban "alternative scenes" (Mosler 1986) and rural retreats.

The movement was the target of systematic attacks from above, from "anti-extremist legislation" and purges of radicals (von Dirke 1997: 71) to intensive and aggressive policing and defamation legitimated as anti-terrorist (*Die verlorene Ehre der Katharina Blum* (Böll 1974)). This primary reliance on policing suggests something of the isolation of the movement (the bulk of Seyfried's (1991) comic history of the movement is dedicated to issues of policing alone, unlike e.g. Fo and Parini's (1997) parallel text for the Italian movement). At the same time, however, as Lash and Urry (1987), Inglehart (1990) and others have shown, "new left" ideas did over time penetrate the SPD and trade unions: not only the more feminised unions, but the metal workers' 35-hour-week demands; not only Oskar Lafontaine, twice the unsuccessful representative of SPD hopes to incorporate the Green challenge, but also regional coalitions across the board.

Changes in the 1990s

Although the period in 1990 - 91 when I carried out fieldwork in the Hamburg counter culture (Cox 1992) was one of major crisis, with deep divisions over unification and the Second Gulf War, mirrored in no fewer than three splits in the Green Party (Radikale Linke, Ökologische Linke, Grünes Forum) at national and regional level, the collapse of the Green vote in the 1990 election and the failure of the anti-Gulf War movement, as well as the rise of far-right parties and neo-Nazi violence and the fragmentation of the alternative milieu (Vester 1993: 16), it still struck me as grounds for immense optimism by contrast with my experience of its Irish counterpart, not only in terms of its intensive institutionalisation and its

theoretical articulateness (see e.g. Kongreßvorbereitungsgruppe 1990 for an example of the debates in the movement at the time) but equally in terms of its ability to sustain clear and radical challenges to the social order, and of participants' ability to acknowledge and handle conflictual relationships, both internally and externally.

Within the "New World Order" defined by unification, rising racism and aggressive German foreign policy in the Balkans and Middle East, the German counter culture has been painfully reinventing itself. On the one hand, unification and the rightward lurch of the Greens have undermined the political orientation and pushed towards a more cultural emphasis (visible e.g. in Vester's research, the reissue of Schwendter's (1993, orig. 1973) *Subkultur*, etc.) On the other hand, ethnicity (from anti-racism through refugee solidarity to foreign policy) has become a central theme, something visible even in the difference between the preliminary reports of the Hannover group (Ritter 1990, Clemens 1990, Hermann 1990, Geiling 1990, Müller 1990) and the final publication (Vester et al. 1993), which stresses the openness of the alternative scene to difference and diversity. The strong institutional anchoring of the counter culture is also likely to imply its continued visibility, from defending squats from police and skinheads through maintaining alternative magazines and venues to defending the place of women's and anti-racist projects within the welfare state.

A closed counter culture?

The relative social homogeneity (best expressed as the combination between human services, the intelligentsia and a section of the urban marginalised - see Raschke 1988: 414 - 420; Weinberger 1984: 129 - 130; Bürklin 1987; Offe 1985: 832 - 838, Franklin and Rüdig 1991), physical concentration (in alternative *quartiers* in the major cities and "alternative scenes" in even small towns - see Geiling 1990; Statistisches Landesamt Hamburg 1991: 45; Raschke 1991: 56; Vester 1993: 123 - 182) and relatively tight interconnectedness (in the sense of correlations between Green vote, participation in "new social movements", holding of "postmaterialist values" and so on - see Watts 1987: 62; Inglehart 1990: 280 - 1; Franklin and Rüdig 1991; 16 - 17; Raschke 1991: 120; Weinberger 1984: 89) of the West German counter culture are well attested, and sometimes mistakenly generalised to aspects of the counter culture (Green Parties, new social movements) as a whole (e.g. Eder 1993).

A traditional way of approaching this problem is through survey data: on voting patterns, on participation in or support for unconventional political action, on lifestyles, or on attitudes. This data, gathered primarily in the 1980s, consistently shows that participation in the counter culture is correlated with high levels of educational attainment (*Gymnasium* or third level); being of the "60s generation" or later in terms of age; and relatively low social integration in terms of marriage, property ownership, employment, religion etc. (Bürklin 1987; Weinberger 1984). Gender is only weakly significant (with women marginally less likely to be "potential green voters", but no difference in actual voting - Franklin and Rüdig 1991: 9, 40, 42), except, perhaps, in relation to participation in actions which may be the target of violent police action, if Auckland's (1997) analysis can be generalised to Germany. Ethnicity, by contrast, is frequently taken for granted in that these are surveys of citizens in a state where naturalisation, even of third-generation immigrants, is notoriously difficult.

Given that in Germany ethnicity is unusually strictly class-related (due to homogenisation under the Nazis and post-war population movements, followed by labour migration and refugee movements), this essentially identifies the German counter culture as a class formation, one of the educated working class (skilled and non-manual employees) and the service class (essentially its public-sector component), along with a considerable proportion of welfare state dependents (Raschke 1988: 411 - 436). Following the arguments of Claus Offe (1984), it seems reasonable to think of this in terms of the effects of decommodification, or what might be called a "movement legacy" of education, welfare state employment and welfare benefits.

Movements are not given, they are made

This last point highlights one common failure of analysis: between the young male squatter from a traditional working-class background and the doctor's daughter working in the health service there is no necessary or obvious homogeneity. There is a *potential* for shared action, and solidarity is a precarious achievement (one squat in Hamburg had a circle of supporters from movement organisations or with political skills, but this difficult cooperation had to be mediated through the squat's lawyers.)

In other words, as in the title of Thompson's (1963) book, this is the *making* of a movement, or better its self-making.

Organisational data bear out this sense of sheer effort. On the one hand, as with nineteenth-century subcultures, there is a dramatic proliferation of autonomous institutions to cover virtually every area of social life: the newspaper, the radio station (no TV), the bank or more exactly credit union, the coop, the food box scheme, the squat, the shared flat, the political party, the free lawyers, the café, the bookshop, the prisoner's support group. Huber, working within a support organisation for alternative projects *(Netzwerk Selbsthilfe)* and from directories of these projects, estimates directly "political" activity at only 18% of the total number, including community activism; 70% of the projects were "services" such as bookshops, magazines, "socio-cultural centres", alternative cafés, educational and welfare projects and so on; the remaining 12% was agricultural and craft production (1980: 10, 28; see Weinberger 1984 for a similar cataloguing of the scene and Stattführer 1981 for a "directory" perspective.)

These institutions are loosely connected - listed in alternative directories and newspapers, advertising in alternative magazines, connected through sector-specific federations, supported by training, networking and funding organisations. They are also connected historically: thus many authors give a historical account of the pathways from "1968" through the development of youth culture and alternative ways of life, the alternative economy and the "new social movements" to the formation of *die Grünen* (Burns and van der Will 1988; Mez 1987; Baier et al. 1988; Markovits and Gorski 1993). This is naturally particularly true as between one political group and another, one magazine and another, one project and another, but also in individual and group biographies (Mosler 1988; Cohn-Bendit 1987; Horx 1985, 1989; Seyfried 1991).

There are active reasons for this networking and building on pre-existing networks and knowledge: the whole business is an immense effort. Sustaining a pillarised subculture without the institutional resources of the other subcultures (unions, employers' federations, churches etc.) means reliance on voluntary work, to the level described internally as self-exploitation; it means consistent disadvantage on the labour market due to missed opportunities and inability to put extra energy into

careers; it means that disputes over the direction of a project are very bitter, because of the implications for enormous quantities of shared work and personal identity investment.

The committed and the uncommitted

Consistent with this history of recent creation, massive demands and the context of disorganisation, there is (if not by comparison with e.g. the counter culture in the UK or the US, then certainly by comparison with other German subcultures) a very high proportion of the uncommitted to the committed, most visibly in the relationship between Green Party electorate and members, which makes even the neo-liberal FDP look like a mass membership party (Raschke 1993: 668). The most extreme example is in the gap between the symbolic significance of the RAF up to the end of the 1980s (von Dirke 1997: 70 - 103; Markovits and Gorski 1993: 59 - 78) and its actual membership; more participatory relationships certainly exist locally, for example in squats (one squat I helped defend from police in 1991 was able to mobilise 100+ supporters in the early hours of the morning by phone tree).

But in general it can be said that many of the difficulties of the participatory intention, oriented to situations of necessary participation such as workplace or state, arise from the realities of the low-membership situation. Thus e.g. anti-hierarchical rules in the Green Party produced a "rotating elite", moving from one position to another, but in the absence of an active "base" essentially remaining unchanged (Raschke 1993: 646). By contrast, though, when "the base" was or became active things changed fast: half the leadership of my local group were punks who'd occupied the offices some years previously; by the time I left the ex-punks were running the regional party and the constituency branch - the size of a parliamentary constituency - was run by an activist who'd just left the DKP, myself and a paid worker who'd previously been involved in a cycling campaign.

For these reasons the German tendency to survey the "base" of occasional participants, Green Party voters etc. is in many ways more useful than a focus on full-time activists alone could be. Its most effective form - in different versions in Vester (1993), in Hradil (1987), in Eder (1993) and in Kleining and Krotz (1986) - is to identify relationships between participants' given structural situation and their active

response in the form of life-world, life-style or habitus: a distinction ultimately derived from the SINUS surveys on which much of this research draws and on the other hand from Bourdieu and Thompson (Vester 1993: 104 - 107, 109 - 113, Eder 1993: 63 - 80).

According to this perspective, there is (at least for Vester, Hradil and Kleining and Krotz, not for the mechanistic Eder) a distinction in response between a relatively active and committed "alternative" lifeworld, in my terms thoroughly structured by the movement project, and a somewhat larger and less definitely alternative "hedonist" lifeworld, adopting certain political and cultural elements from the counter culture but not fully involved (Vester 1993: 21 - 26, 183 - 244; Hradil 1987: 127 - 132, 167 - 169; Kleining and Krotz 1986: 1 - 5). In effect this latter category - which has almost certainly expanded in the 1990s at the expense of the alternative (Vester 1993: 16, 22) - is the most active site of struggle between the rationality of the counter cultural project and those of market and state.

I think the substance of this kind of analysis is sound, but with two important qualifications. One is that the focus on individual membership may be a mystification, for reasons discussed in chapter three. The second is that even in its less mechanistic formulations this account tends to see agency in terms of rational individual responses to structure, and hence to be weak both on the specificity of the German legacy of movement conflict (so that it is not clear why an identical situation is not reproduced everywhere) and on the historical development of this movement, which is normally handled separately and chronologically, rather than the two being seen as going hand-in-hand in the active "making of the counter culture".

German *Sonderheit?*

In chapter three I attempt to sketch out a way of historicising movement context and development. For the time being, it is enough to note three specificities of the German situation:

1. The continuing "pillarisation" of German society. This is obviously to some extent a feature of core European societies generally (Allum 1995). However, in Italy for example the traditional "red" culture was eventually able (after much conflict struggle) to make space for the counter culture (Parker 1997: 15), so that

what exists is not a fully separate alternative scene, but rather a spectrum from "old communist" to "autonomia" *within* an expanded left subculture, which e.g. in the split between PDS and *Rifondazione Comunista* was bridged neatly, with divisions being along the lines of revolutionary vs. reformist rather than old vs. new Left. In the Anglo-American world, however, the relationship is not so much between dominant and subordinate "pillars" as between "mainstream" and "alternative" (McKay 1996), or between multiple "identities".

2. A major reason for this Anglo-American specificity (which is rarely recognised by Anglo-American writers) is the distinction between an essentially *political* internal hegemony within the counter culture in Germany and Italy (not that of *die Grünen* or the PDS, but certainly of broader "left" commitments) and an essentially *cultural* tendency in the counter culture in Britain and the States, which tends towards an identitarian fragmentation following a logic of status conflict and valorising cultural capital rather than one of political alliance-building.

   There are obviously pre-existing reasons for this - it captures the distinction between "corporatist" and "liberal" political opportunity structures and policy regimes (Esping-Andersen 1990), for example (implying incidentally that "Nordic state feminism" (Meyer 1993), for example, may be one example of a third type of relationship) and corresponds to the distinction between imperial and global societies and organised nation states. More immediately it appears in contrasts between e.g.

   forming new subcultures - forming new parties

   literary intellectuals - social science intellectuals

   Standortpolitik of financial investment - *Standortpolitik* of industrial investment

   "Culture" and "politics" are not opposites or mutually exclusive; they are different focal points around which counter cultures can be organised, but "cultural" challenges to everyday routines have "political" implications for social structure, and vice versa. If McKay's (1996) history of "cultures of resistance" in Britain passes through free festivals and punk music to arrive at roads protests, then, von Dirke's (1997) history of the counter culture in Germany passes through

barricades and terrorism to arrive at a democratisation of culture. These differences are real, sufficient to make comparison between the two problematic, but exist ultimately as tendencies rather than opposites. These tendencies have effects, though: the counter culture in Germany is more cohesive, because more "political"; that in Britain is more fragmented because more "cultural".

3 There is also a contrast between the situations of core and periphery. As Gramsci (1971) and Foweraker (1995) both argue, the "civil society" that movements can fight "wars of position" in - a space outside the state within which movements can act directly to change local conditions and develop powerful subcultures - is typically absent on the periphery (whether Russia in 1917, postwar Latin America or contemporary Ireland). Instead, movement projects must engage at an early point with the state, and find themselves either as clients and "partners" of the state or violently excluded ("subversives" in Ireland, guerrilla movements in Latin America).

This acts as a disaggregating force on movements in the periphery. Further, in a state which is the product of a successful movement from below, the counter culture in Ireland meets the same problems faced by earlier generations of socialists and feminists: the terrain of "community" and "grass-roots organisation" is already effectively occupied by the Civil War parties, the church and the GAA, the institutional frameworks of that earlier movement.

For this reason the normal shape of Irish counter culture is that of fragmented local campaigns (Peillon 1999a, 1999b) occasionally interrupted by massive mobilisations (Wood Quay, Carnsore, CND, the Reagan visit, the X case) which leave little in their wake. In subsequent chapters I will trace the kinds of network that are possible under such circumstances: here it is enough to note that this organisational disaggregation places a particular importance on the persistence of "latent networks" (Melucci 1989), such as the one discussed in this thesis.

Summarising the thesis

In this thesis, I develop the historical concept of counter culture in three stages. In the first of these, I attempt to rethink the "social movements" problematic through a

critique of the existing literature (chapter two), which leads to an alternative conceptualisation of what is entailed by "social movements" and of how the counter culture can be analysed in these terms (chapter three). Secondly, I consider what is involved in researching counter culture, through a discussion of the politics of knowledge involved and the context and nature of my fieldwork (chapter four). Thirdly, I explore the characteristics of the counter culture which come out through the analysis of the fieldwork: local rationalities grounded in a reflexive autonomy (chapter five) and developed in the direction of a radicalised reflexivity (chapter six), producing a specific and complex set of choices for the counter culture (chapter seven). Finally, I offer a summary and conclusion to the thesis (chapter eight).

A necessary starting point is an **intellectual history** (chapter two), in which I use the criteria outlined in this chapter to discuss two alternative approaches to understanding the areas explored in this thesis. I argue that the existing social movements literature does not manage to overcome a tendency to fragmentation, the assumption of a single model of rationality, and an unacknowledged tendency to adopt the positions of movement elites. Although "social movements" accounts tend to present them only as straw men, I suggest that Western Marxist and socialist feminist accounts of human agency have more to offer in terms of theoretical purchase on different kinds of activity; of analyses which connect cultural difference to social location; and of concepts "from and for" movements.

In my approach to **understanding social movements** (chapter three), I develop this approach in an alternative theory of social movement, which proceeds from an understanding of human action as a situated engagement with (natural and social) otherness located within a given social totality. In this understanding, social movement becomes an organising concept for a developmental (rather than institutionally static) theory of the *direction* of collective action, from the "local rationalities" which respond to given situations through campaigns as the organisation of these local responses to movement projects, which abstract and develop local rationalities around a challenge to the construction of the social totality. The struggle for hegemony, from above as much as from below, is then central to an understanding of social movement. This perspective is illustrated in an analysis of the counter culture as a historically specific movement project from below.

In discussing the **politics of knowledge** of movement research (chapter four), I argue for a shift in emphasis from the activities and ideologies of movement elites to the local rationalities of ordinary participants, understood as the starting-point of social movements. These can be researched as skills, but within an ethnographically sensitive strategy which is alive to the possible multiplicity of rationalities and which is reflexive about its own situatedness within the contested field of the construction of movements. In the context of this research, I discuss the specificities of the movement network studied and locate my own research activity as a participant within this particular milieu, able to draw on shared understandings but also tending to particular positions as a participant.

In chapter five I analyse one aspect of the rationality of this network as **reflexive autonomy**, a specific way of life which stresses self-development as a central theme within which participants locate their "political" activity. This self-development is arrived at through a process of distancing from taken-for-granted lifeworlds in which other movement milieux are routinely drawn on as resources. This distancing leads to a challenge to routinisation as such, which makes choice and commitment problematic and undermines the possibility of stable institutionalisation. As a result, the production of action becomes extremely challenging; while this rationality clears the ground for the creation of new projects it tends to undermine their sustainability.

In chapter six I suggest that participants attempt to resolve these contradictions through the practice of **radicalised reflexivity**, which entails not simply a "suspension of assent" but a determination to explore its practical implications. A key element in this strategy is the deployment of complex "techniques of the self" in periods of apparent inertia, which enable creative play with new possibilities; these techniques are embedded in collective institutions which offer practical support in the development of a reflexive lifeworld. Such lifeworlds are an important collective achievement in the contemporary movement context, but also represent some of its limits.

Chapter seven analyses the **choices available to the counter culture** in an attempt to discover ways beyond those limits. It suggests that it is possible to develop an immanent critique of the adequacy of different movement strategies to the counter cultural project as a whole; and that open concepts can form a useful language within

which participants can think and argue about their possible futures, exemplifying this with one possible analysis of the Irish counter culture using the perspective developed in this thesis. Moving beyond this, the chapter attempts to locate this current situation within a longer history of movements from below in the twentieth century, arguing for the need to refuse the divorce between the critique of structural inequality and challenges to everyday routines.

The **conclusion** (chapter eight), finally, summarises and reflects on what has gone before. In particular, it asks after the extent to which the thesis has redeemed its own knowledge claims, and how this question could be assessed; it looks at the relationship of the arguments brought forward in this thesis to existing writing, both academic and activist, on contemporary social movements, and identifies potential implications for future research in this area.

Chapter two: intellectual histories

Introduction

Chapter one outlines a research project attempting to connect particular social experiences, and notes the wide range of literatures related to these. In this chapter I explore some of this literature through the category of "social movements". This language is probably the most widely used within sociology and cognate disciplines for writing on this area: despite important limitations, it is also wider in intended scope than, for example, the literature on green parties or that on 1968. This makes it an appropriate starting point for theorising. Existing usages of "social movements", however, obscure another tradition of theorising what the nineteenth-century called "the social movement": agency-oriented versions of Marxism and feminism, which, if understood as theories *of social movement*, offer fuller and more theoretically adequate ways to think about the phenomena I am interested in. In chapter three I will attempt a systematic presentation of this latter approach as an explicit theory of social movements.

What is a social movement anyway, and would we know one if we saw one?

In this chapter, I engage with these two literatures with a particular focus on the question of what they understand a social movement to be. This is a relatively undertheorised question within the literature: while "resource mobilisation" approaches give considerable attention to the question of *how* social movements operate, and "identity" approaches engage with the question of *why* social movements exist (cf. Cohen 1985), *what* social movements are tends to be rather taken for granted (but see Diani 1992a).[2]

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[2] This does not mean that there is consensus on the subject: as we shall see, the phrase is used to cover everything from specific campaigns on single issues to the total life-activity of the subordinate classes in nineteenth-century Europe. Nor, to the best of my knowledge, has the question of how one distinguishes one movement from another ever been systematically theorised (see chapter three).

In other words, an important starting-point is to identify these largely unspoken assumptions which structure particular research programmes. As we shall see, the "social movements" literature operates with a conception of "social movement" as "unconventional political activity", which contrasts with the "social movement" conception of "collective agency", within which unconventional political activity, in the sense used in the "social movements" literature, plays a historically variable role: a recognition which is important for a thesis interested in exploring inter alia how collective agency may be *changing* in disorganised capitalism.

Criteria for an effective theory

In chapter one I identified criteria for an effective theorisation of the counter culture, which can now be defended as intellectual propositions and used to evaluate the two literatures discussed. Firstly, I required that such a theory have a reasonable explanatory power for the whole range of activities involved. In other words, a narrowly field-specific theory begs the question, both of how we understand *other* kinds of activities which may appear in the same life-world contexts (the alternative press as against new religious movements, for example) and of what kind of theory of society can give meaning to the field-specific theory (Thompson 1977a). An effective theory needs to answer precisely these kinds of questions, linking one kind of behaviour to another and setting them within a broader context - or, alternatively, showing why this is neither possible nor desirable. This is then an essentially *theoretical* criterion.

Secondly, such a theory should offer the possibility of a convincing engagement with participants' own experiences and understandings. Given the suspicion that the experience of participants in what I am provisionally calling the counter culture might contrast with that of people in other social contexts, and given the awareness that complex societies do in fact contain multiple and conflicting cultural formations, an approach which is to go beyond confirming our own worldview needs to enable a serious engagement - critical rather than dismissive, interpretive rather than celebratory - with the perspective of participants (Rosaldo 1993). This is then a *methodological* criterion.

Thirdly, an adequate answer, from the point of view of an activist sociology of knowledge, would be one whose construction is such as to offer some practical purchase on the everyday problems faced by participants in counter cultural contexts (Wainwright 1994). An alternative way of putting this is that knowledge is always knowledge from some particular vantage point and type of engagement; a theory which is not capable of reflexivity as to its own preconditions is a theory in bad faith. This is then a *political* criterion.

Categorising the literature

Affirmative categorisations

Of the two approaches to social movements I am examining here, only the first is routinely examined in any detail in academic writing on the subject. The *locus classicus* here is Diani's (1992a) article on the concept of social movement, which distinguishes four schools of theorising - collective behaviour, resource mobilisation theory (RMT), political process and new social movements (NSMs) - to propose a new synthetic definition as follows:

> "A social movement is a network of informal interactions between a plurality of individuals, groups and / or organisations, engaged in a political or cultural conflict, on the basis of a shared collective identity." (1992a: 13)

This definition is explicitly intended to enable the production of a field-specific theory of social movements which

> "helps to differentiate them from a) political and social organisations like parties, interest groups or religious sects[3]; b) other informal networks of collective action such as political mobilisation campaigns and political coalitions." (1992a: 13)

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[3] While this distinction is intended as one between analysis of a single organisation and that of networks between organisations, individuals, etc., there are important historical situations - such as those of continental "pillarised subcultures" (Lipset and Rokkan 1967, Allum 1995) - where at various periods in the past socialist or communist parties, Catholic or Protestant churches formed both the "backbone" (in other words, formal elements outweighed informal in the process of networking) and the "skin" (*extra ecclesia nulla salus*) of the subculture. The apparently universal relevance of the

Diani's classification, in other words, is designed to enable the development of a separate field of social movement research, by identifying a "canon" of important theoretical contributions. This is not objectionable in itself; what is important to note, though, is that this operates through an exclusion of the perspectives I discuss later in this chapter, and through a field-specific definition of the subject of "social movements" writing which identifies it as a particular "level" of informal activity.

An alternative, but equally affirmative, classification is that offered by Cohen (1985), who distinguishes between "strategy" (or "American") and "identity" (or "European") paradigms of social movements. The former, identified as the "resource-mobilization" approach, in fact also includes the "political process" school, but is presented as a definitive advance on the "collective behaviour" school (1985: 672, 674); the latter is identical with Diani's "new social movements" approach, and is presented as a definitive advance on classical Marxism (1985: 691). Again, these two approaches are intended to complement one another, in that the first fails

> "(a) to look into the processes by which collective actors create the identities and solidarities they defend, (b) to assess the relations between adversaries and the stakes of their conflicts, and (c) to analyze the structural and cultural developments that contribute to such heightened reflexivity [in contemporary movements]" (1985: 690).

The latter, by contrast, is criticised for "excluding strategic interaction from the concept of a social movement" and for possessing a "vague image of civil society" (1985: 705). The first problem is of course remedied by recourse to the "strategy" paradigm, the second by relocation within a macro-social theory derived from Habermas and characterised by

> "the distinction between processes involved in the differentiation of the economy and the state [...] and processes involved in the modernization, or "rationalization", of the sociocultural lifeworld" (1985: 711).

In other words, Cohen, like Diani, opts for a synthesis of different schools which excludes Marxist and feminist approaches and produces a theory of social movements

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distinction, in other words, depends on a very specific social situation – a point which is characteristically not mentioned.

dependent on their location within " 'society' in the sense of civil society" (1985: 716).

Critical categorisations

Variants of these two approaches dominate in the "social movements" literature, from the putatively iconoclastic Scott (1990) to the explicitly canonical textbook produced by della Porta and Diani (1999). These are not, however, the only readings of the subject. Jones (1993) locates the initial division within the actual differences between European and American movements:

> "RMT was more useful for the analysis of national (or international) organisations, with traditional hierarchical attitudes towards staff and towards an inactive membership, using advanced computer technology, marketing techniques and computerised mailing lists (an example here would be Greenpeace) while the European approach was more useful for the analysis of more amorphous, diffuse movements, which are not confined to their organisational expressions, and where the movement itself can be missed if analysis is aimed only at organisations (examples would be the squatter and autonomous movements)" (1993: 7).

Jones observes that the European attempt at synthesis between the two approaches derives from "a desire to increase the distance between researchers and NSMs" as well as a reliance on large-scale funding, producing a "Euroconsensus in the making" (1993: 8)[4]. For Jones, the analysis is essentially Eurocentric, privileges the experience of the core over the periphery within Europe, and brings about new kinds of power relations - on the one hand a "revolt of the subjects" against increasingly established researchers (see Kriesi 1992) and on the other hand the question "Why study NSMs? Who benefits from such research? If NATO is funding it, is it counterinsurgency research?" (Jones 1993: 8 - 9) Beyond a fleeting reference to Castells and a more extended call for theorising the specific experience of social movements on the periphery, however, Jones does not propose other directions in which to look.

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[4] Since Jones' paper, the collections by Morris and Mueller (1992) and Johnston and Klandermans (1995) have shown that American researchers are equally capable of joining in the process of consensus formation, without, however, undermining the substance of Jones' criticisms.

Equally critical of the project of transatlantic consensus, but equally short on alternatives, is Mayer's (1995) article. This consists of an in-depth critique of the underlying assumptions structuring American research:

> "The assumptions guiding collective behaviour and RM theories and the incompatibility between American and European research are primarily attributable to some particular features of American politics:
>
> 1. Its relatively open, fluid and decentralized political system that has typically prevented an antagonistic polarization between movements and the political establishment.
>
> 2. The reintegration, again and again, of insurgent, innovative reform movements in the course of American history into the dominant American ideology, utilitarian liberalism, emphasizing instrumental rationality and pragmatic problem solving that prevent the formation of groups who would be unalterably opposed to the system itself." (1995: 184)

By contrast, Mayer argues,

> "European theories, still influenced by more or less explicit assumptions of a class-structured society and logics of material (re)production, assume that each new reproductive stage produces and is challenged by social movements that articulate historically changing social cleavages, if not the older variety of class antagonisms. This European attitude contrasts sharply with the view of society as an unstructured ensemble of groups, of ruling classes as a relatively homogenous elite, of the state as structurally permeable or as institutionally biased against insurgency. These various elements of the American theoretical framework together produce the image of a static social arrangement that continually adapts, in the pluralist view, due to its permeability and openness or, in the social-democratic view, is only exceptionally perturbed." (1991: 189 - 190)

The European alternative is not the focus of Mayer's piece, but by implication includes "new social movements" writers such as Touraine (1981, 1985) and Melucci (1989, 1992), as well as critical theorists such as Offe (1984, 1985) and Habermas (1984, 1987a), and presumably the wider body of empirical research on social movements (see e.g. Brand 1982 for a systematic exposition or the contents of the *Forschungsjournal neue soziale Bewegungen* for characteristic productions). What differentiates this latter from positivist "American" research is its routine use of

general social theory, hence a continuing interest in structure and culture as historically produced, as opposed to the production of a field-specific model of utilitarian rationalism which, as we shall see, is an explicit founding assumption of the American literature.

The missing theory I: Marxism as economism

While criticising the transatlantic consensus, then, Jones and Mayer do not have an explicit alternative. What to me stands out from the affirmative categorisations, from the background of Irish and British sociology, is the lack of any serious reference to Marxist and feminist analyses, given their claim to be theories *from and for* movements and their importance in the development of new macro-structural perspectives (for overviews see e.g. Harvey 1990 or Arrighi 1994), the field of cultural studies (cf. Williams 1989a or McRobbie 1994) and history from below (MARHO 1983, Gordon 1986).

This exclusion works largely by caricature, at least for Marxist theories. (Feminist theories of social movements are rarely, if ever, mentioned within the "social movements" literature; see Wainwright 1994 and Auckland 1997 for useful exceptions.) Here is Cohen, for example, who as author of *Class and civil society: the limits of Marxian critical theory* (1982) can hardly be excused by ignorance:

> "[European] theorists are also aware of the inadequacies of Marxist analyses of social movements, despite their sympathy with those dimensions of neo-Marxism that stress the importance of consciousness, ideology, social struggle, and solidarity to collective action. These 'post-Marxist' thinkers argue that theories stressing the primacy of structural contradictions, economic classes, and crises in determining collective identity are inappropriate to contemporary collective actors." (1985: 691)

As it happens, this is not a very good description of one of her key examples of "post-Marxism", Touraine, who (as she observes a few pages later) offers precisely a theory of "an allegedly new societal type characterized by new locuses of power, forms of domination, modes of investment, and a 'reflexive' cultural model" (1985: 701). Cohen criticises Touraine for what is precisely (and more explicitly in the original: Touraine 1981) a theory of "structural contradictions and economic classes", just as she later criticises Habermas for offering a "*revival of the classical breakdown thesis*"

(1985: 710; italics hers), presumably an example of a theory of crisis. In other words, people *are* thinking along these lines (whether or not they are right to do so), but these theories are not allowed into the canon. Della Porta and Diani (1999) repeat much the same approach:

> "The response of European social sciences to the rise of the movements of the 1960s and the 1970s was a critique of the Marxist models of interpretation of social conflict. Such models have encountered a number of problems in explaining recent developments" (1999: 11).

These problems are identified as the uncertain centrality of the capital-labour conflict, the growing importance of gender, and determinism:

> "The deterministic element of the Marxist tradition - the conviction that the evolution of social and political conflicts was conditioned largely by the level of development of productive forces and by the dynamic of class relations - was rejected, as was the tendency, particularly strong among orthodox Marxists, to deny the multiplicity of concerns and conflicts within real movements, and to construct, in preference, outlandish images of movements as homogenous actors with a high level of strategic ability" (1999: 11).

Then comes the punchline:

> "Certainly, scholars of the new movements were not the only ones to be aware of these problems. The same difficulties had been raised by those who had studied class action from a non-economistic position, when considering an 'old' class actor such as the workers' movement (Thompson 1963)" (della Porta and Diani 1999: 11).

And of course Marxist authors such as Thompson (1963, 1977a, 1993), Hill (1961, 1975) or Brailsford (1976) had already defined a project of "history from below" (Davies and Flett 1999), which gave rise to a substantial body of research on collective agency (MARHO 1983) which is still very much alive and kicking (Sharpe et al. 1999) and anything other than mechanistic (cf. Wood 1990). Similarly, Williams (1965, 1979, 1980, 1981) developed an extensive research programme on the relationship between class and culture, which found fruition among other things in a tradition of materialist cultural studies (Hall and Jefferson 1991 (1975)) in which these issues are still hotly debated (Agger 1991; McRobbie 1994).

Nor was this development particularly new. As Agger (1992), Jacoby (1981) and Jay (1984) observe, critiques of mechanistic and economistic versions of Marxism are precisely what have characterised some of the most productive work in European Marxism, from Lukács (1971 (1923)) and Gramsci (1975 (1929 - 1935)) in the 1920s and 1930s through the Frankfurt School to authors like Lucien Goldmann (1969), before we get to Thompson and Williams. In fact, it is hard to think of major European Marxists since the 1920s who have *not* criticised such approaches - Althusser and, in a rather different key, contemporary "analytic Marxism" (Cohen 1978, Elster 1985) are among the few obvious examples. In the early 1930s, for example, Gramsci could write the following:

> "We can say that not only does the philosophy of praxis [Marxism] not exclude ethical and political history, but on the contrary its most recent phase of development consists precisely in the stress on the moment of hegemony as essential to its conception of the state and in its "valorisation" of the cultural fact, of cultural activity, and of a cultural front as necessary beside the purely economic and the purely political." (1975 [1932 - 35]: 1224)

The missing theory II: Marxism as culturalism

If these presentations of "identity"-oriented NSM theory suggest that economistic, mechanistic Marxism needs a bit of culture, presentations of "strategy"-oriented RMT, by contrast, point to the usefulness of a bit of culturalist Marxism to counteract their own utilitarian rationalism (which, in another language, might be rendered "economistic mechanism"). Thus the editors of one "state-of-the-art" book note:

> "For Morris and for Taylor and Whittier, conflict plays a more central role. Morris's treatment of the intersection of race, class, and gender in the formation of political consciousness is likened to the processes by which class struggle generates class consciousness identified in Thompson's *Making of the English Working Class* (1963) [....] [By contrast] those theorizing from a macrolevel constructionist perspective in the tradition of Gramsci and Habermas have argued that hegemonic processes are so successful that the meanings necessary for collective action are only infrequently available" (Mueller 1992: 13).

It seems, then, that Marxist theory may have something to offer in this direction, as well perhaps (though this is not stated) in dealing with some of the problems facing RMT:

> "Important directions for future research are suggested in these essays. First is that of distinguishing the level and type of likely resources available to prospective participants as a basic constraint on collective action. The failure to specify differential access to resources has been a major factor divorcing recent social movement theory from social structure and history. Second is the hypothesized link between constituency resources, mass mobilisation, and major social change. Third is that of connecting the mechanisms of constituency mobilization leading to periods of mass participation with the carrying structures and oppositional subcultures that develop during periods of relative quiescence." (Mueller 1992: 21)

It is just possible that Marxists and feminists have already done some thinking about subjects such as class and gender, revolution, and class / gender consciousness and culture. Following the analysis of the "social movements" literature and evaluation of its possible usefulness for my research, then, I proceed to an examination of agency-oriented Marxism and feminism in similar terms.

Affirmative approaches: "social movements"

The dominant "social movements" literature has been defined from its inception by its insistence on an instrumentally rational utilitarianism as the basic mode of explanation of social movement participation and its understanding of social movements as a particular (albeit informal) kind of social institution. The central claim made by defenders of resource mobilisation theory (RMT), the dominant contributor to what became the field of "social movements", is that it represented movement actors as rational rather than irrational; informal, but not illegitimate. As della Porta and Diani write:

> "[F]unctionalist theories of collective behaviour [...] came under fire for regarding collective movements as irrational actors, and collective action as the exclusive product of malfunctions of the social system or, more specifically, of its integrative apparatus [....] In deliberate contrast to this way of conceptualizing social movements, American sociologists initiated, in the 1970s, a current of research

> centred on the analysis of processes by which the resources necessary for collective action are mobilized. In their view, collective movements constitute an extension of the conventional forms of political action; the actors engage in this act in a rational way, following their interests; organizations and movement 'entrepreneurs' have an essential role in the mobilization of collective resources on which action is founded. Movements are therefore part of the normal political process." (1999: 7)

Movements as irrational

To understand the meaning of this claim, it needs to be set in its historical context, the early 1970s in the United States. The locally dominant image of social movements prior to this was as irrational expressions of the *mobile vulgus*, as forms of "collective behaviour" as it was delicately put. In part this reached back to the pathologising reactions of 19th century conservatives who presented movement behaviour as a sickness in the body politic, presumably in need of surgical or therapeutic intervention. More directly, though, it reflected the reactions of American and emigre German intellectuals, for whom the European 1920s and 1930s represented a sort of era of collective madness under the opposing banners of fascism and communism. Thus from a liberal perspective, writers like Heberle (1995 (1951)) had warned that:

> "Depending on how much a social movement comes to pursue its goals as if they represented ultimate values in themselves instead of means to higher ends, it will constitute a real and serious danger to the society [....] It is, as a rule, not difficult to reach agreement on means, but ultimate ends are usually beyond rational discussion.
>
> We may therefore say that social movements and political parties whose members do not claim to be in the possession of the absolute truth are no threat to the social order; they may be on the contrary a sign of vitality of a society. The intransigents, especially the totalitarian movements and their political orders, on the other hand, are bound to destroy the solidarity of a society because they are devoid of that sense of community that includes even the political opponent." (1995: 58)

Heberle explicitly instances as cases of the latter "[p]resent-day Communists, like the fascistic political groups" (1995: 52). Such views were those of liberals who saw themselves (while defending "the social order") as "above the struggle" - as indeed

they were, as members of the power-holding movements of the "Golden Age" that felt itself under threat from Left and Right equally.

In the 1950s, these views had a new resonance in the US and Germany, coinciding with the definition of both Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia as "totalitarian states", legitimating in particular US postwar hegemony, the "frontier state" of West Germany (the exclusion of "anti-constitutional" activity was anchored in the FRG's *Grundgesetz*), and the aggressive pursuit of an internal Cold War in both states, with the McCarthy / House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) period in the States (cf. Jacobs and Landau 1967: 101 - 102 on HUAC and the university) and the banning of the KPD in West Germany as a threat to the "basic order of freedom and democracy" (Markovits and Gorski 1993: 34; see Gitlin 1988: 61 - 66 on the importance of anti-communism for American liberalism in the 1950s and early 1960s).

Similarly, Blumer (1995 (1951)) had presented a picture of the development of social movements (incidentally with no reference to empirical research and very few references to concrete movements) which stressed above all the elements of emotion:

> "In the first of these four stages [of movement development] people are restless, uneasy, and act in a random fashion. They are susceptible to appeals and suggestions that tap their discontent, and hence, in this stage, the agitator is likely to play an important role. The random and erratic behavior is significant in sensitizing people to one another and so makes possible the focussing of their restlessness on certain objects." (1995: 64)

of manipulation:

> "One type of agitator is an excitable, restless and aggressive individual. His dynamic and energetic behavior attracts the attention of people to him; and the excitement and restlessness of his behavior tends to infect them. He is likely to act with dramatic gestures and to talk in terms of spectacular imagery. His appearance and behavior foster the contagion of unrest and excitement." (1995: 66)

and of unreason:

> "It is clear from this explanation that the development of morale in a movement is essentially a matter of developing a sectarian attitude and a religious faith." (1995: 71)

For Blumer - perhaps with an eye on the history of religious movements in America - such groups would ultimately become more rational, settled, organised and so on; the underlying schema of his argument is reminiscent of Weber's (1991) account of the shift from charismatic to bureaucratic organisation. But in Blumer as in Heberle, social movements continue to appear primarily as irrational, emotional, and dangerous challenges to convention and normality.

The declining plausibility of irrationality

In the context of the increasingly turbulent and rapidly leftwards-moving 1960s, this response - represented by a Clark Kerr in the US (see Jacobs and Landau 1967: 67 - 72 on the interaction between the Berkeley Free Speech Movement and Kerr's administration) or indeed a Habermas in West Germany (who spoke of the "left fascism" of the student movement: see his self-critique in Habermas 1989: 185 - 186) - lost significantly in credibility with younger academics and intellectuals who (without identifying with the totality of the new movements) sought a more credible way of understanding movements that they sympathised with or were party to - and of course a guide for action and source of legitimation for those who were also participants (cf. Freeman and Levine 1984 (1970)).

What enabled the unchallenged acceptance in the FRG and USA of the essentially anti-communist analysis of "totalitarianism" and thus of social movements as "irrational", was of course the defeat of their indigenous left movements. As competitor states during the decline of British hegemony (Arrighi 1994), both had severely suppressed socialist and union movements prior to World War I, used the war and its ending to attack the radical left (Mitchell 1970), deployed welfare measures in a logic of organisation and nationalism in the context of rivalry with the Soviet Union, culminating in World War II and the anti-communist aftermath (Hobsbawm 1995).

In Germany, the radical left had been decimated by the Freikorps, smashed by the Nazis, controlled or executed under Stalin, and banned in the postwar West. Unlike France or Italy, the only significant left intellectuals in the immediate postwar period were isolated literary (Böll, Gruppe 47) and academic (late Frankfurt School) thinkers with no links to organised working-class movements (Burns and van der Will 1988);

while the working class was organised under a Social Democratic party that had suppressed communists violently throughout Weimar and now identified wholeheartedly with nation, NATO and America (Markovits and Gorski 1993: 29 - 45):

> "However much the Germans were 'in movement', nevertheless they were afraid of it and desired stability, peace and order. At least 92 of the 196 years since 1789 were marked in Germany by deep state repression of social movements. The strong movements have the same cause as the heavy repression: many Germans' need for harmony and security in the search for a conflict-free society. The NS [Nationalsozialistische] movement as a movement for the ending of all social movements and for the creation of a 1000-year empire is the most striking symbol of this.
>
> After 1945 social movement remained a taboo, which could also not be overcome through the student movement and today's new social movements. Political culture was divided on the theme of movements. Most older people remained with their aversion, at best ambivalence towards social movement: 'no more movement' was once of their lessons from the Nazi period." (Raschke 1988: 13)

To analyse the movements of the 1960s, then, Marxism was, if not entirely unavailable in America and Germany, at least considerably less attractive than elsewhere, and for would-be academics in particular entailed greater risks in countries where HUAC persisted into the 1960s (USA) and radicals were excluded from state employment from 1972 onwards (FRG). It is in any case doubtful how much disciplinary weight it could have carried against the "irrationalist" orthodoxies of the day.

The usefulness of rationality

Resource mobilisation theory, as the developing new orthodoxy came to be known, was an altogether more attractive candidate. It challenged the assertion of irrationality with an assertion of a rationality of an unimpeachably mainstream kind:

> "the breakthrough was based on a set of simplifying assumptions that placed the study of social movements clearly within the instrumental, utilitarian natural science tradition" (Mueller 1992: 3).

While the later Frankfurt School had damned instrumental rationality as the source of all evil (Agger 1992), resource mobilisation theory celebrated it as an affirmation of how sensible, mainstream and *normal* movement politics were (no small concern, this, given the violence of popular reaction in both countries to "deviance" and "disloyalty", and the reading of "Communism" as a threat to the *national* community.) Della Porta and Diani's analysis, quoted earlier, thus identifies the central ideological point that RMT theorists needed to make:

> "Movements are therefore part of the normal political process." (1999: 7)

Thus the assertion of instrumental and individual rationality allowed RMT to argue that movements were a *legitimate* part of the policy process and represented nothing more than the highly justifiable attempt to pursue individual interests. In an interesting early piece, Perrow distinguished two varieties of RMT. RM I, in his analysis,

> "is Clausewitzian in character; protest is the continuation of orderly politics by other (disorderly) means. Because protest grows out of the ongoing political process and is a part of it, it need not be irrational nor discontinuous, as older theories might suggest. It is a commodious view of social movements - all kinds of things can become resources for movements, and there are all kinds of ways to mobilize them. Especially in Oberschall's quite catholic formulation, a large variety of social-psychological, sociological, political science, and economic theories find their place" (1979: 199 - 200).

This approach was highly flexible, allowing an author like Freeman to represent social movements as organisms capable of making strategic decisions governed by the eminently rational criteria of

> "mobilizable resources, constraints on these resources, SMO [social movement organisation] structure and internal environment" (1983b: 195).

Rejecting "spontaneous generation" and "outside agitator" theories of movements identified as "the implicit assumptions in the literature" (1983a: 8), Freeman could point to "a *preexisting communications network* [...] that is *cooptable* to the ideas of the incipient movement" and the presence of either a *crisis* or an *organizing cadre* to mobilise this network (1983a: 9 - 10).

Perrow's second version of RMT, which has become the dominant one, is more narrowly rationalistic and "finds its agreeable imagery in economic theory". Perrow argues that its canonical representatives, McCarthy and Zald, are essentially reviving the arguments of Moynihan's attack in 1965 on what would today be called the "poverty industry"[5]. This version of RMT analyses social movements within the language of economic rationality; as Perrow comments,

> "As an antidote to an unrestrained and romantic 'hearts and minds' approach, such talk is salutory. But the striking thing about the movements of the 1950s and 1960s (and social movements in general) is that they were not business organizations and industries. I suppose that the murder of civil rights activists, unarmed students, and sleeping Panthers could be treated as industrial accidents, and police and vigilantes are examples of hazardous working conditions, but do we not thereby lose a degree of distinctiveness? [...] McCarthy and Zald removed Freud but replaced him not with Marx or Lenin but with Milton Friedman." (1979: 201 - 202)

Such analyses focussed in particular on the role of organising elites in articulating grievances, mobilising members, and interacting strategically with state institutions. In this they corresponded neatly to the perspective of American movement elites in particular[6], who in the "war of position" that succeeded the 1967 - 1970 "war of movement" were busily converting movement action into professional lobbying. Such elites were of an age, a class, and a political perspective with the RMT researchers who celebrated their professionalisation; sometimes (Freeman) they coexisted within one person, at others (Raschke) they acted as advisors. The

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[5] "In the hands of Moynihan, it was an insightful bit of debunking, arguing that the white middle class, quite unbidden, took up the cause of the poor. In particular, professional reformers with social science backgrounds created new careers out of a mixture of surplus funds in the federal budget and a conviction that they could solve intractable social problems. Promise much and deliver little was the recipe for the disorder that followed. Good Catholic that he is, Moynihan is sceptical of promises for the here and now; and good politician that he is, he understands the necessity of delivering little to the poor and the danger of maximum feasible participation. This cynical tone pervades the elaboration of McCarthy and Zald." (Perrow 1979: 200)

[6] This "realo" trend had a harder fight in Germany, but has eventually made it to displace the FDP from its decades-old ownership of German foreign policy, albeit without notably changing that policy.

contemporary social movements literature still stresses the theoretical centrality of this approach, even as it is identifying its limits:

> "The building blocks of resource mobilization - resources, formal organization, tactics, and political opportunities - are not ignored, but rather reframed within a broader paradigm that is at once more sensitive to historical, cultural, and structural differences between groups seeking to mobilize on behalf of collective ends and more attuned to the micromobilization context in which social movement identities and grievances are forged out of specific experiences of constraint and opportunity" (Morris 1992: 22).

Quite how this particular balancing act – a core of individual economistic rationality, in a world of structured culture - is to be managed is not clear in Morris, but in what is to date the only collection on *Social movements and culture*, Johnston and Klandermans spell it out:

> "it is unlikely that the sociology of culture is able to incorporate the most enduring findings of the past two decades of social movement research [....] The fundamental question as we see it is what answers cultural variables can provide to the core issues of the field, that is, the rise and decline of social movements and the waxing and waning of movement participation, movement success or failure." (1995: 21)

In other words, here we are and here we stay.

Critiques of RMT

As might be expected, critiques of this view of social movements as centred around individual, utilitarian actors have not been absent. Piven and Cloward (1995), interested in particular in understanding movements of the poor in America, have observed that they do not typically possess the kind of economic and political resources stressed by RMT theorists, and that the "normalisation" of collective action excludes the "dissensus politics" (1995: 160) engaged in by these movements. Since this does not fit within RMT's image of highly organised and rational politics,

> "[l]ike many malintegration theorists before them, resource mobilization analysts have also reduced lower-stratum protest politics to irrational and apolitical eruptions" (1995: 162).

Touraine puts the same point more sharply: RMT is "a kind of spontaneous natural sociology of the elite groups who are rich or powerful enough to elaborate complex strategies in a highly competitive world":

> "The notion of resource mobilization has been used to transform the study of social movements into a study of strategies as if actors were defined by their goals and not by the social relationships - and especially power relationships - in which they are involved. Such a transformation is sometimes acceptable when apparently radical or ideological movements are actually instrumentally oriented interest groups. But in too many cases, this notion is used to eliminate enquiries about the meaning of collective action as if resource mobilization could be defined independently from the nature of the goals and the social relations of the actor, as if all actors were finally led by a logic of economic rationality." (1985: 769)

In other words, RMT's focus on movement elites neglects the perspective, situated needs and logic of action of ordinary participants; or rather these are taken as read, predefined elements of the logical games of methodological individualism (the *homo oeconomicus*, the ubiquitously present grievance, the follower in need of organisation). The problem, illustrated in Connolly's otherwise excellent (forthcoming) study of the Irish women's movement, is that a focus on elites can neither explain the success or failure of their attempts at mobilisation (which is, after all, the nominal focus of the literature) nor the existence of the movements in the first place: why *this* movement, and not that one, for example? The net result is that a focus on elites explains about as much about social movements as a whole as a focus on managers explains about production and consumption as a whole[7].

This perspective also suffers from the extent to which it takes movements from *above* for granted. Neither the American state nor the West German were the natural products of an organic growth: both were created by force of arms and put at the service of quite deliberate economic strategies; both, in the 20th century, were extensively remade - several times, in the case of the FRG. Yet in this perspective the "system" – political or social – is naturalised, leaving movements from below as

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[7] The comparison is not a caricature, but follows the economistic logic of the underlying theory. The two propositions, within the analytic rationalism of this style of thinking, stand or fall with one another.

something to be analysed in completely different terms from the "modernising" strategies of elites.

Although frequently described as a "strategic" approach (following Cohen 1985), a better description of this approach would be "tactical", in that it takes the purpose of the movement, the context of the conflict and the nature of the participants for granted, tending to reduce the study of social movements to a kind of description of the rules of the game[8].

State-centred approaches

Consequently, Tilly among others has stressed the need to move to an interactive analysis, in which movement is thought of in terms of process rather than in terms of individual actors. Tilly's goal, however, is not to overcome the assumption of individual rationality but rather to "convert such a model of rational action into a model of rational interaction":

> "we make the expected benefits and costs (and possibly some of the other variables listed above) for each actor depend on the actions of other actors, and institute

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[8] A good example is Gamson's (1995) analysis of the interaction of movement elites with the media, which (although drawing only on examples from the USA during the past two decades) is innocently presented as if all movements everywhere found themselves confronted with the same situation:

> "General-audience media are only one forum for public discourse, but they are the central one for social movements. Activists may read a variety of movement publications and attend meetings and conferences where the issues that concern them are discussed. But they cannot assume that their constituency shares these other forums or is aware of this discourse. Only general-audience media provide a potentially shared public discourse [....] Someone speaking on neglect of the cities and racial injustice in American society in the wake of the Rodney King verdict and the ensuing Los Angeles riot can reasonably assume media-based, shared images of these events." (1995: 85)

This may well be true for America; it is less clear that it is true for movements in pillarised societies, where media are segmented (in Italy, for example, this applies not only to newspapers but until very recently to state TV stations, more or less explicitly oriented to the Catholic, lay and Communist subcultures respectively) and the primary problem is one of internal mobilisation rather than general appeals to "public opinion". And this is before we look at situations of media censorship and societies (present or past) without mass media access.

> communication among the actors. Within this framework, specifying relevant actors, interests, decision rules, costs, benefits, and capacities - not to mention the relations among them - sets the theoretical challenge." (1985: 741)

Rather than reject the basic logic of RMT's rationalism, Tilly therefore draws on other

> "analytic traditions that permit dynamic modeling of strategic interaction: game theory and simultaneous-equation modeling of mutual-influence processes. To adopt either one, we must be prepared to use purposive models, at least to the extent of attributing decision rules to each actor, and must specify actors, interests, decision rules, costs, benefits, and capacities to act."

If classical RMT depended on the image of the business concern, such "political process" approaches, into which Perrow's RM I tradition has also flowed, wind up in practice seeing social movements as part of the state, "the continuation of orderly politics by other (disorderly) means" (Perrow 1979: 199). One of the most important authors in this tradition is Tarrow, whose (1998) exposition "offer[s] a broad theoretical framework for understanding the place of social movements, cycles of contention, and revolutions within the more general category of contentious politics" (1998: 3). Key concerns within this "political opportunity structure" (POS) approach are the identification of political opportunities and constraints within the polity:

> "contentious politics is produced when political opportunities broaden, when they demonstrate the potential for alliances, and when they reveal the opponents' vulnerability" (1998: 23).

This approach does not reject the "internalist" analysis of RMT, but locates it within this explanatory structural context and adds to it the historical concept of a "repertoire of contention", the forms of collective action available to groups within particular historical periods:

> "We can begin to study social movements as isolated confrontations between single social actors and their opponents, but - particularly when we examine their outcomes - we quickly arrive at the more complex and less tractable networks of politics. It is through the political opportunities seized and created by challengers, movements, and their allies and enemies that major cycles of contention begin. They, in turn, create opportunities for elites and counterelites, and actions that begin in the streets

> are resolved in the halls of government or by the bayonets of the army. Movements - and particularly the waves of movement that are the main catalysts of social change - are part of national struggles for power." (1998: 25)

One of the great strengths of this approach is this awareness of structure and history, as against the somewhat disembodied model-building imaginary of RMT. A good example is Foweraker (1995), who draws on the Latin American experience to stress the lack of an independent civil society and hence that:

> "social movements are inevitably political, and must develop a political project if they are to prosper. First, they are political in the sense of politicizing new issues [....] Secondly, they are political in the sense of entering the political and institutional arena, and of engaging in strategic interaction with the state." (1995: 62)

Foweraker's analysis thus stresses the role of interaction with political parties, of cooptation and clientelism within the political system, and of the effects of movements on the polity. Finally, in what can best be described as a "vulgar Weberian" mode, Scott (1990) has developed an analysis of social movements as a response to political closure in corporatist polities, instancing the importance of ecology movements in Sweden, West Germany and Austria (1990: 144). Unfortunately for Scott's argument, the development of Green parties outside the classically corporatist countries of Western Europe has somewhat undermined the argument (Bürklin 1987) that corporatism and movements go together (Franklin and Rüdig 1991, Richardson and Rootes 1995), as has the development of "deep ecology" and "DIY politics" in the USA and Britain (e.g. Doherty 1996, McKay 1996, Seel 1996).

Identitarian approaches

The standard critique of this model of social movements theorising is in Melucci (1989), who observes that it amounts to a political reductionism which in essence explains movements by their interaction with the polity, irrespective of how important this is in their actions, ideologies, motivations etc.; and that it still imputes a hard instrumental rationality to actors who in empirical experience are often anything but:

> "social conflicts are reduced to political protest and regarded as part of a political system. This emphasis exaggerates the function of politics. Participants in collective action are not simply motivated by 'economic' goals - calculating costs and benefits of their action - or by exchanging goods in a political market. They also seek goods which are not measurable and cannot be calculated." (1989: 23)

As a counterweight to this excessively political approach, a number of authors have developed what can be called "identitarian" approaches, in which social movements are effectively a form of display. If RMT-derived approaches stress instrumental rationality to the methodological exclusion of anything else, identitarian approaches often present a purely *expressive* analysis of movement activity as sufficient unto itself. Thus Maffesoli (1996) has developed a theory within which "identity politics" appears as one aspect of a generalised life force:

> "There is no point in going over the difficulty some intellectuals have in understanding this 'will to live' *(puissance)* which, despite or perhaps because of its many impositions, continues to nourish the social body [....] Or, we may base ourselves on the idea of *Kunstwollen*, which refers to the masses and to the collective force which drives them - in short, to this remarkable vitalism." (1996: 30)

In this perspective, social movements are seen as one form among others of a general drive to "go forth, increase and multiply" identities and forms of sociality:

> "Let me specify that although the human or social 'divine' [...] is a preoccupation of social thinking, we can nonetheless draw a parallel with a certain mystical tradition which has as its goal to lose oneself in the 'greater whole'. Such an attitude, on the one hand, functions as the basis for the formation of small groups (communion, erotic or sublimated identification, sects, congregations etc.) which are not unrelated to things we can observe today [....] [A] new (and evolving) trend can be found in the growth of small groups and existential networks. This represents a sort of tribalism which is based at the same time on the spirit of religion *(re-ligare)* and on localism (proxemics, nature)." (1996: 40)

In such an approach, not only the possible rationalities (instrumental or otherwise) of social movement participants, but also those of theorising seem to disappear in favour of a kind of uncritical theology of sociability-as-religion. A formal statement of this appears in Hetherington (1997), who argues for a "connotative rather than denotative approach to new social movement analysis" (1997: 1), meaning a *refusal* to situate

movements within a larger structure which they might tell us something about and instead arguing that

> "in order to study new social movements we should see them as situated explorations of issues associated with identity, non-identity and identification" (1997: 7).

Although Hetherington draws on Williams' notion of a structure of feeling, he is explicit about his intention to divorce this from any sense of determination:

> "While Williams does try to address the issue of the relationship between structure of feeling and class [...] he recognises that he does not do so adequately. For me this is not a failure of the term but one of its strengths, allowing us to make use of the concept without having to adopt a class analysis of culture nor indeed any notion of a social conjuncture." (1997: 10)

Within these analyses, then, social movements are in effect collapsed into lifestyles. As Szerszynski (1998) has observed of Hetherington and Maffesoli,

> "one problem with many anthropologically influenced approaches to social movements is the way that, while usefully highlighting the importance of non-instrumental goods in movement membership, the emphasis on the performance of identity within movements tends to blur crucial distinctions, such as between those groups which are oriented to changing wider society and those which are not." (1997: 2)

Such approaches, despite their focus on the deployment of language and sociality, are as mechanistic in their own (idealist) way as the more materialist RMT and POS. Both approaches share a taking for granted of what motivates ordinary people (for RMT / POS, grievances are ubiquitous and paramount; for identitarians, concerns with identity and sociality are universal fundamentals) and of the institutional context in which they pursue their goals (an eternalised political sphere for RMT and POS, an eternalised symbolic universe and field of cultural consumption for identitarians). (What gives both approaches their mechanistic character is thus an abstract and homogenous sense of what human beings are actually like, coupled with a fixed view of the universe in which neither felt needs nor the basic institutional structures are allowed to change, so that social movements (which may of course try to change people's sense of what is important as well as trying to change the way things are) are never allowed to make any significant difference to anything. In effect, then, a pre-

packaged analysis is brought to every movement, filling in only minor blanks. The mechanistic culturalism of the identitarian approach is thus as short on *movement* as the materialism of RMT and POS.)

In a sense, the identitarian analysis is a continuation of the British and French cultural studies projects, but in practice it keeps the cultural form and loses the material content. Whereas in Bourdieu (e.g. 1988) or *Resistance through Rituals* (Hall and Jefferson 1991) culture is the *language* spoken by economics and politics, in this approach, as Eco (1984: 502) puts it, "Nomina nuda tenemus" - we're left with the bare names, or rather these apparent reals have become themselves symbolic devices caught up in the language and style game.

Critique of nominalism

This nominalism comes out even more sharply in the other tendency of this approach, in which situation, movements and action are supposedly connected, but treated so generally that we know movements to be constructed, but neither by whom and with what resources - nor what difference it is intended to make to anything. Melucci, in his constructivist mode, often exemplifies these difficulties, but the definitive work is Laclau and Mouffe's (1985) *Hegemony and socialist strategy*, which collapses Gramsci's "directive" intellectual activity (i.e. organising: as by priests, doctors, engineers, managers, trade union officials and PCd'I activists) into his "theoretical" intellectual activity and the "articulation" of language games (for an extended critique, see Geras 1990). Without the counter-realm of the practical knowledge developed in material work and social interaction which Gramsci counterposes to the former (see chapter four) we are left with a world of symbols and language in which everything is possible, and nothing necessary: and a lingering doubt as to why, if that were the case, hegemony should exist at all or socialist strategy be either meaningful or desirable.

A dominant feature of this writing, and one that gives a clue as to its social location, is its "panoptical" style. In postmodernism's beloved image of a prison that was never built (Foucault 1979), prisoners were self-disciplined by the fact that their cells were always open to the scrutiny of a hidden observer. For Foucauldians, this "self-disciplining" characterises much of modernity. But if we look not at how ordinary

people are expected to behave under these conditions of extreme coercion, but rather at the conditions themselves - the structure of the cells, the hidden observer who sees all - we find an unsettling analogy to this brand of postmodernism.

Ordinary actors are in effect seen as (safely?) constrained in their action by their participation in symbolic structures - of language, of identity, of style etc. - through which (in theory) nothing ever breaks and to whose meta-structure nothing ever happens: we can exchange one identity for another (be moved to a different cell?), but remain dominated by identity – no (other) human needs, no tacit knowledge, no transformation of social relationships are allowed. In *this* respect, rather than in the much-touted difference between the dominant structure of structuralism and the multiple structures of post-structuralism, little has changed[9].

Perhaps the most remarkable feature of this writing is how *unreflexive* it is. The deployment of cultural capital in a sort of marketplace of style is a preoccupation of literary intellectuals for rather obvious (and unliterary) reasons. In the identitarian literatures, however, this particular local rationality is projected onto the rest of the planet in what can best be described as a form of ethnocentricity. The refusal of authors such as Maffesoli, Hetherington or Laclau and Mouffe to theorise their own specificity, the projection of their local cultural concerns onto others, the orientation by their own scholastically given set of texts and, crucially, the absence of any methodological strategy for noticing, handling or using differences in rationality – all this explains the essential solipsism of the postmodernist worldview at the same time as its lack of reflexivity: to ask why its authors are centrally concerned with the deployment of symbols and identities would be both to relativise themselves and to point to an "other" - in this case an institutional location and a set of social interests – for which there are no terms in this philosophy.

This can be illustrated by an author like McKay (1996), who, though equally unreflexive, is so from the point of view of a long-term *participant* in the movements he writes about rather than a long-term participant in cultural studies departments. Hence the unspoken assumptions that he projects onto movements - their essentially

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[9] So much so that this critique is largely drawn from Thompson's (1977a) and Geras' (1983) critiques of *structuralism*.

oppositional character, their coherence and continuity within a history of conflict over 3 decades, and so on - are so radically different from the bulk of this literature as to beg the question: why does the thematisation of cultural difference in postmodernism not reach beyond the deployment of different symbols to the basic sociological question of whether activists and academics may be doing different things with the symbols they deploy?

Constructivist approaches

A more impressive challenge is to be found in what can perhaps be identified as a "constructivist" school of social movements writers. Authors like Melucci (1985, 1989, 1992, 1995a), Lichterman (1996) and Szerszynski (1997a, b, c, 1998, forthcoming) have developed theoretically sophisticated and culturally literate accounts of movements which do not assume a single model of rationality. The central problematic in this literature could be phrased as "How do movement participants 'do' movements?"

In Lichterman's account, different models of community and commitment underlie participation in different kinds of movements. Contrasting middle-class white Green activists to "community" (working-class, black) anti-toxics campaigners, Lichterman found that

> "Activists defined the tension between private life and activism differently in anti-toxics and Green groups, and they defined 'politics' differently too. Greens wanted to change the meaning and practice of both 'everyday life' (work and personal lifestyle) and of 'politics'. Most anti-toxics activists, on the other hand, saw a tension between the two in terms of physical demands, but mostly assumed them to be separate spheres of activity. For the most part they did not try to innovate new definitions of 'political'. The anti-toxics activists were not for the most part concerned with innovating new kinds of political practice. They did not practice nonconventional lifestyles or nonconventional relations to work as part of a politicized way of life. The two kinds of activist participated in movement cultures that encouraged different life-ways of activism entwined with different socio-economic opportunities." (1996: 150)

Szerszynski, similarly, has been concerned with the motivation of participants, which he has tended to frame within an ethical (but not individual) perspective of

"communities of practice" (Szerszynski 1998). The major difficulty with reading Szerszynski is that despite a convincing engagement with the different cultures he is researching and a brilliant theoretical imagination, he remains thoroughly opportunist in his actual analyses, jumping from tongue-in-cheek analyses of environmental politics as different soteriological strategies (1997a) through Aristotelian theorisations of the nature of the good life (1997b) to the role of voluntary activity in sustainability (1997c) and a theory of protest as a way of performing the public sphere (forthcoming). For the moment, at least, a general *theory* of social movements is not on offer.

As Melucci is discussed in more detail in chapter three, I will indicate the major limits of this approach here. Firstly, while offering one of the few ethnographically sensitive approaches to social movements available, it is generally weak on showing culture as a response to determinate *experience* (Thompson 1977a), and where it does so tends to collapse into a technological determinism (e.g. Melucci 1989). Secondly, for all its cultural sensitivity, it retains (as I will show in chapter three) a definition of its *starting-point* in terms of politics, as indicated, for example, by Szerszynski's critique of Hetherington and Maffesoli, above. The point is not that there are "political" and "non-political" groups, to which different terms of analysis might be applicable, but rather that different groups do different kinds of politics - including conservative and reactionary politics - through their cultures; or, in Raschke's (1988: 110 - 116) perspective, that we can think of social movements as tendentially oriented more towards power (and hence the state) or more towards culture. While these approaches question the domination of politics, then, they do not really escape from its gravitational pull.

General critique of "social movements" writing

How do "social movements" theories fare in terms of the criteria identified at the start of this chapter? Firstly, the literature operates within field-specific theories of social movements: as unconventional political activity or as lifestyle. The RMT and POS literatures reify social movements as a particular form of organisation (neither the "flecks and carriers" of Waite's (1997) research on downtimes nor the "collective effervescence" of Barker's (1997) writing on uptimes) and thus comes to see them

(very explicitly in a good writer like Tarrow (1998), for example) as an institutional category of the political system, mediating in a more or less linear and mechanical way the instrumentally rational action of individuals (Scott 1990).

Essentially, then, this literature offers "the view from SMOs" in particular periods (wars of position) and societies (of the core) as universally valid, because rational in an absolute way. As against this, it has to be relocated *socially*, connecting lifeworlds, organisations and campaigns in a picture that does justice both to the structured nature of the former (Vester et al. 1993) and the transformative effects of the latter (Dix 1998); and temporally, in a way that connects it to moments of downtime and moments of uptime. Yet the definition of social movement as in effect a particular type of political institution makes it hard to think about periods when it isn't (downtimes) and periods when it's rewriting the rules (uptimes). *Mutatis mutandis*, similar problems face the identitarian literature, which does not resolve the problem of making *connections* between organisation and lifestyle by substituting the latter for the former[10].

Secondly, these problems arise because the literature is methodologically tied to the assumption of an essentially uniform rationality, whether the economic or political instrumentalism of RMT and POS or the identitarian logics of sociability and symbolism. There is then no real room within this monoculture for a research project thematising the potential *differences* in cultural orientation. This is not the case for the more sociological constructivist approaches, although they are more effective at identifying differences in orientation than at locating or explaining them.

Thirdly, the political use of these analyses is relatively limited. As Mayer's (1995) critique suggested, RMT and POS are most useful for the elites of social movement organisations in relatively established movement settings and pluralist polities. They offer little guidance to ordinary activists or indeed to activists in other contexts.

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[10] Nor does the identitarian literature escape from field-specific definitions of social movements:

> "The social space of movements has become a distinct area of the system and no longer coincides either with the traditional forms of organization of solidarity or with the conventional channels of political representation. The area of movements is now a 'sector' or 'subsystem' of the social arena." (Melucci 1995b: 52)

Identitarian and constructivist approaches could certainly be read as celebratory texts or, in the case of Szerszynski and Lichterman, for self-knowledge. But without a stronger sense of determination and conflict it is hard to see what else ordinary participants could actively *do* with them. Their anthropological mode is ultimately a conservative and unreflexive one (Rosaldo 1993), useful for romantic or ethical projection but equally for manipulation, colonisation and commercialisation.

A way out of the Panopticon?

The literature regularly calls for syntheses of "strategy" and "identity" approaches (so Cohen 1985, or Diani 1992a). At its extreme, this suggests a "synthesis" of the view that movement action is the mechanical pursuit of given interests and that which sees it as an act of pure self-expression. This seeming contradiction is possible if we take into account a deeper and shared *collusion* in the taking for granted of large-scale structures (political institutions) and everyday routines (a world of "identity conflicts") which, in a broader conception, social movements (from above and below) produce, challenge and transform[11].

The opposition between the two approaches is of course a well-known one in modernity, between the grey, mechanical "system" of economic and political interest and the colourful, free-floating world of "culture", which works itself out as a repetitive series of static contrasts:

> "This false dichotomy between 'counter-society' and 'political protest', between fight and battle, suggested a simplistic and mechanical conception of struggle, one which robbed every political movement of its cultural dimension and every cultural movement of its political significance." (Mamdani et al. 1993: 111)

Nor is this problem resolved by e.g. Johnston and Klandermans' dogmatic insistence on keeping different sets of accounts (which incidentally undermines the arguments made in the rest of their own piece for discussion among scholars, theoretical coherence, and so on):

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[11] This is not to deny, of course, that social movements *also* operate within institutional structures and deploy available symbols: it is to observe that they also challenge them, on occasion with some success.

> "Let us not [...] turn our backs on those areas where social psychology, structural analyses, and rational choice might prove to be more powerful in favour of a totalizing theory that – ultimately – can never be." (1995: 24)

The tradition of critical sociology, as that of materialist cultural studies, has sought precisely to go beyond this fragmentation in its understanding to see how both "politics" and "culture", and the split between them, are socially produced and maintained. In so doing it takes as an intellectual challenge what (in Thompson's (1977b) phrase) "revolutionaries" and "romantics" have taken as a practical challenge: to deconstruct in theory what others try to deconstruct in practice - and possibly to do so in cooperation and solidarity. For the purposes of my project, to do otherwise would also be to rule out of court the possibility of any wider understanding of the phenomena I am interested in.

This is not to deny any value whatsoever to the theories just discussed, but certainly to relativise them as "ideal-typical" descriptions of how a certain logic (of institutional politics, of identity deployment) might work if all other things were equal - notably, in situations where human beings were constrained to act *only* as maximising *homini oeconomici* or *only* as "identities". One of the tasks of a theory adequate to social movements and social change, however, is to dispense with the ahistorical and universalising theoretical base of these literatures which claims that the world actually and necessarily *is* just like this, in favour of a historical approach which asks when, why and how - notably, under which kinds of hegemony produced by which kinds of movement from above - might this bear some approximation to reality:

> "Viewed in terms of their effect on scientific thought, *different perspectives and ideologies do not exist on the same plane.* Some value-judgements permit a better understanding of reality than others. When it is a question of determining which of two conflicting sociologies has the greater scientific value, the first step is to ask which of them *permits the understanding of the other as a social and human phenomenon, reveals its infrastructure, and clarifies, by means of an immanent critical principle, its inconsistencies and its limitations.*" (Goldmann 1969: 50 – 52)

At that point, we can reinstate both approaches as partial elements of a more historically-minded and less closed approach, but without taking a given form of action nor a system of cultural expression for granted, and always allowing for the

possibility not only that movements may be primarily "political" or primarily "cultural" in orientation, but also that the nature of this choice itself may mean something different at different times.

Critical approaches: "the social movement"

There is one obvious justification for the exclusion of Marxist and feminist theories of social movements, which could polemically be phrased as the lack of such theories. It is not, of course, that Marxist or feminist writing on social movements does not exist; but rather that to the best of my knowledge no systematic attempt has been made to formulate Marxist or feminist *theories* of social movements.

The paradox is that Marxism has frequently identified itself as a theory *from and for* social movements: at once a theoretical reflection on the experience of the workers' movement and a source of analyses for the use of that movement; feminism claims to stand in a comparable relationship to the women's movement. How is it, then, that these "social movement theories" possess no "social movement theory" of their own, no separate and coherent body of theory which could define the nature of social movements, explain their existence, analyse their development and theorise their effects?

The answer I want to suggest here is that Marxism and feminism do not *have* theories of social movements because they *are* theories of social movements; and, perhaps, nothing else. This points to a broader understanding of "social movement" than that discussed to date, in which the referent is not a specific institutional shape (unconventional, informal, political) but rather "social movement" as collective agency.

Alternative usages

As Joachim Raschke observes of Germany, the phrase "social movement" was first used in the 18th and 19th century:

> "The concept of movement became 'a key concept of self-understanding in the "age of revolutions"'. Movement became used as a metaphor for societal change. The

> concept of movement also served for the deciphering of the inner connections of social development ('laws of movement') [....]
>
> Applied to a partial force within society and abstracting from its social-structural basis, early liberals from the 1830s spoke of themselves as movement in the sense of the only political direction which opposed the forces of inertia: of the 'party of movement' or the movement party [....]
>
> The 'social movement' is first discovered as the workers' movement; the concepts of social movement and workers' movement become accepted in the course of the 1840s. The concept is thus first applied to a movement with 'social' goals, i.e. to a collective with socialist answers to the 'social question'. The chronologically preceding liberal, democratic and national movement was not yet grasped with the concept of *social* movement; this only becomes possible with growing neutralisation of the content of the term social movement." (1988: 23)

An examination of its meanings in this context is worth undertaking as a way of freeing ourselves from the parochialism of contemporary usage and hence of contemporary conceptualisation. Above all, it was in the singular: "*the* social movement", a usage related to "the social question" and to the shifting meaning of the word "social" during this period (Williams 1983), from the courtly one preserved in "socialite" to the Enlightenment notion of "socialisation" to the class-sharpened meaning of "socialism". This movement, then, was thought of as having a coherent direction - "from below" in the sense of being directed against existing forms of domination and social control, exploitation and status.

This singularity was made possible by a usage which did not deploy a fragmenting (and idealist) focus on issues and ideologies, but focussed - logically enough - on the *direction* of the movement. In the imaginary of the day, what Marx and Engels described as the "spectre" of Communism (1967 (1848)) was identified with the proletariat of the new industrial towns - an unknown and threatening quantity, free from the tried and trusted structures of social control used in the countryside and in the world of urban "citizens" (property owners), and the most recognisably "new" element, appearing more or less contemporaneously with an age of strikes and revolutions.

In practice popular movements of this period (until the last quarter of the nineteenth century) were "demotic" in Thompson's (1963) sense, connecting peasants, artisans and skilled workers in an uneasy alliance with the unskilled and the urban and rural lumpenproletariat. But the crucial point is the perception on both sides - that of the intellectuals who sought to organise or lead this movement, and that of the established elites that sought to crush it - that while there were differences of interest (to be overcome, exploited or used to divide the movement) they existed within a common framework.

Secondly, this framework spanned multiple "fields" of activity. It was identified in the periodic uprisings which on occasion shook European cities and villages, notably provoking changes of regime in France - and which far more frequently provoked "preventative" deployments of force to avoid the perceived danger[12]; in the growth and transformation of workplace conflicts in industry and agrarian "unrest" in the countryside; in the development of a host of new ideologies: left republicanisms, socialisms, anarchisms, syndicalisms, and peasant nationalisms (Arrighi, Hopkins and Wallerstein 1989); and in the effort, constantly undertaken and constantly interrupted, to build the institutions that enabled communication, continuity, mobilisation and survival.

These included secret societies, radical newspapers, political clubs, friendly societies, educational circles, cooperatives, and (as the century wore to a close) a host of sporting, cultural, and social activities tied to class, ethnic or gender projects from below (Vester 1975), as well as the political parties and mass organisations that offered new models, for movements from above (notably dominant nationalisms) as well as for movements from below[13]. So against the narrow reference of "social movements" writing we have to set a much broader conception, connecting large-scale

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[12] Consider in Britain alone the emergency laws and anti-Jacobin hysteria of the 1790s, the militarisation of Ireland after 1798, and Peterloo, in a tradition of coercive panic reaching up to the deployment of troops during the 1926 General Strike and the extreme policing measures against miners and New Travellers in the 1980s.

[13] It is frequently forgotten that behind the "repertoire of contention" (Tarrow 1998) there is also an organisational repertoire, developed from below for obvious reasons but subsequently adopted from above (or brought into power by successful movements, as in Ireland).

revolutionary upheavals, what would now be termed social movements and what are now thought of as areas of cultural consumption and identity formation (Thompson 1993).

Thirdly, the force of the concept derived from the perception that such movements were potentially revolutionary and a threat to the established social and political order. "The social movement" was not a movement within a neatly known and mapped society; it was a movement of that broader and threateningly other "society" which lay beyond the narrow "society" of class and kin within which nineteenth-century elites could feel at home.

The likelihood of revolution may have been overestimated in the nineteenth century, but "the social movement" *did* routinely mobilise social groups whose non-participation in politics was fundamental to existing political systems (based on monarchy or restricted electorates); *did* raise demands that could not be satisfied within existing economic relations (from the "moral economy" of food prices via the recognition of unions to the socialisation of property (Flett 1995)); and *did* produce ideologies that challenged the nature of the state, the form of the economy and the shape of culture.

Not only this: governments were overthrown; "revolutionary moments" (Katsifiacas 1987) in the late 18th and mid-19th century brought about "Holy Alliances" in highly visible and militarised "movements from above"; and from America to Ireland to the Austrian empire the shape of the state-system itself was challenged, leading to the formation of new states where successful (USA, Italy) and the consolidation or transformation of old ones (Act of Union in Britain, Joint Monarchy in Austria, Swedish control of Norway). Contemporaries thus had good reason not to underestimate the potential for transformation contained within movements from below and the new kinds of movements from above.

The project of critical sociology

This perception, sharpened by personal experience and international and historical awareness, was very much present in the minds of the founders of critical sociology, Marx and Weber. For both, transformative social action was central to their understanding of the world; for both, it attained a new visibility and explicitness in

modernity. Classes, status groups and parties appear in both of their writings: Weber's economic classes and Marx' class-in-itself, Weber's status groups and Marx' class consciousness and ideology, Weber's parties (a less misleading translation for modern readers might be "factions") and Marx' parties or class-for-itself. (This parallel has been closely argued by Arrighi, Hopkins and Wallerstein 1989: 3 - 27.)

The relationship of development, growing self-awareness and increasingly organised articulation in these concepts suggests an embryonic theory of social *movement*, though in keeping with what has already been said about the concept of "the social movement" there was no space for a field-specific theory separated from the rest of society (and crucially separating action from structure):

> "Let us not say that the social movement excludes a political movement. There is no political movement which is not at the same time social." (Marx 1963 (1847): 244)

This enabled Marx and Engels (1967 (1848)), in the first section of the *Communist manifesto*, to make the dramatic claim that "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles". This is developed into an analysis of the revolutionary role of the bourgeoisie in the destruction of feudalism and the creation of a new world order, transforming economics and technology, national and international politics, communications and cognition; following this, by the analysis of the development of the workers' movement from the experience of misery to the struggle against oppression, aided by growing concentration and communication, into a complex learning process of increasing political self-confidence and clarity towards another and final revolution: precisely a theory of social movements as a theory of society.

As their earlier points of reference - the revolutions of 1789 and 1848 for Marx, the construction of the German state for Weber - receded and their attention turned more to grasping the deep structures of the *longue durée* (of European capitalism, of Asia, of the Middle Ages) from within an increasingly organised capitalism, this holism turned into something of a weakness, as the intellectual system-building came to stress structures as the way in which action worked (see Thompson 1977a; Arrighi, Hopkins and Wallerstein 1989), though neither was guilty of erecting the dualisms that have disfigured twentieth-century social theory.

Social movements and critical rationality

This experience, nevertheless, equipped Marx and Weber to stress the non-linear nature of social action, a key feature of their critical sociologies and a sharp contrast to the mechanical positivisms of the Enlightenment writers and the contemporary discipline of rationalist economics against which they asserted themselves. This non-linearity comes out in Weber's multiple rationalities, his stress on the unintened effects of action, and his lively awareness of how one thing turns into another in the *Protestant Ethic* (1958; echoed by Bloch's (1961) monumental analysis of the transformations of feudal relationships). It appears in Marx' stress on the dialectic, his ironic awareness of the ways in which ideology both connects actions and actor and renders the one opaque to the other, and his stress on the ways in which logics of action, world views and moral assessments are not absolute but socially and historically situated:

> " 'Scientific socialism' was only used in opposition to utopian socialism, which wants to attach the people to new delusions, instead of limiting its science to the knowledge of the social movement made by the people itself *[...Erkenntnis der vom Volk selbst gemachten sozialen Bewegung]*" (Marx 1974: 337)

This last stress, on a rationality which is always that of socially situated human actors rather than an absolute and "natural" rationality, as it had been for the eighteenth-century *philosophes* and economists, is what distinguishes critical sociology as an intellectual project. Furthermore, it is essential to Marx' and Weber's differing accounts of how and why scientific knowledge is possible - in the one case, by a connection to the social totality grounded in the actions of radical movements from below, in the other by the reconstruction of the logics of action of socially situated actors, thought of in terms (hypothetical averages; actually discoverable meanings) as much or more suited to movements in the sense of the socially grounded actions of large numbers of people as to individuals. Though there are differences between the two, notably in the methodological primacy of totality (as Lukács (1971 (1923)) argued for Marx) or "methodological individualism" (Weber 1984 (1922)), the styles of thought that constructed the "sociological imagination" were deeply informed by the experience of a world of social movement, which both saw as produced by actors

but mediated through structures in such a way as to produce non-linear relations between what we want and what we get.

Contra postmodernists, this critical rationality does not posit any kind of transparency, rather its opposite: it starts from the *failure* of linear and "transparent" accounts to build the "Crusoe ideal" in the 18th century or the phalenstère in the 19th, and discovers the social world of class society precisely in the *gap* between the ideal of transparent action and the reality of situated rationality and social conflict. In this rather more complex assessment, the idea of modernity as it shaped nineteenth-century thinkers is one marked by the partial victory of the liberal movement from below and its transformation into a "modernising" movement from above, the repeated insurgency of the popular and ultimately socialist movement from below, and the rise of the "organising" nationalist movements. In this world, situated rationality, non-linear action and conflict were the norm, as the late 19th-century socialist Morris saw it:

> "(M)en fight and lose the battle, and the thing that they fought for comes about in spite of their defeat, and when it comes turns out not to be what they meant, and other men have to fight for what they meant under another name" (1968 (1888): 53)

- a piece of the "theoretical imaginary" that neatly connects intention, movement and opacity in what Mills (1970) would surely have had no difficulty as recognising as an authentic expression of the "sociological imagination". In 19th-century Europe, movements oscillated between massive popular outbursts of revolution and celebration, and massive repression resulting in a life dominated by exile and conspiracy for leaders, by grass-roots conflicts and everyday survival for ordinary participants. To think "the social movement" was thus necessarily to think in terms coterminous with the social whole, in terms of strength and articulatedness of ideas and action as well as in terms of fields of action and of social groups.

Mechanistic Marxisms

Drawing on the tension between agency and structure in these accounts, but crucially under the influence of Stalinism, much later "Marxist" writing on social movements has taken the Marxist position to be that structure is everything and movement, if not nothing, then an effect of structure. If this mode of thought survives today, it is in

non-Marxist writers such as Eder (1985, 1993), who is capable of writing the following:

> "This type of collective protest is based on an objective structure which is charcteristic of the petite bourgeoisie [....] The *petit-bourgeois consciousness* corresponds to its objective position. It can be interpreted as a mixture of bourgeois universalism and plebeian particularism [....] The habitus of the new middle class is determined by its situation in between the upper and the lower classes. The habitus of the new petit bourgeois is objectively determined by the defence of individualization, which is imposed upon him [sic] by the status system [....] The dilemma of the petit-bourgeois habitus consists in his being unable to identify with either the objective position or the collective identity of the (upper) bourgeoisie; nor is he able to identify with the objective position or the collective identity of the proletariat." (1993: 145 - 149)

What for Eder is a "genuinely sociological" analysis is supposed to move "beyond social-structural objectivism and cultural subjectivism" towards a theory of *habitus* as on the one hand objectively determined and on the other hand a "medium for collective action" (1993: 144 - 5). Since, however, Eder never gets down to the level of analysis at which the constructionist element he seeks from the latter might be found, he remains in the situation, illustrated above, of ascribing politics to class in a way which was once orthodox[14].

Other and more formidable authors are caught by the same trap: the need to adopt the "eagle-eye view" on the last two centuries of social movements (for Arrighi, Hopkins and Wallerstein (1989)) or on an understanding of contemporary macro-economic and macro-political processes (Magnusson 1996) makes it difficult *not* to present movements as the more or less mechanical products of objective circumstances. It should be said that the problem with this view is not so much that it is wrong - it *is* of course the case that movements respond to determinate circumstances and experiences (Thompson 1977a) - as that it is partial and misleading if one seeks to move from this "structuralist" account alone to any internal analysis of movement processes - something frequently noted in the contrast between the grand

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[14] Rudé's (1980) analysis of the role of intellectuals in peasant movements is an example of what this mode of theorising was capable of at its best.

historical narrative of the *Communist Manifesto* and the detailed and flexible account of the *Eighteenth Brumaire* (Marx and Engels 1967, Marx 1978). What is missing, as Giddens (1993b: 112 - 126 etc.) and others have remarked, is a sense of the *interaction* of structure and agency.

Critical theory

It is this kind of "structuralist" writing on social movements which forms the butt of most critiques of Marxist writing on social movements, such as those of Pakulski (1995) or Scott (1990). The problem, however, is not a new one. As Agger points out, already in the 1930s the Frankfurt school were attempting to

> "give Marxism a firmer grounding on a libidinal substratum, thus explaining how capitalism can continue long past Marx's expectations of the date for its demise. Without this subjective turn, the Frankfurt thinkers believed, it would be impossible to explain early twentieth-century revolutionary failures in Europe and the rise of fascism and its metamorphosis into one-dimensional society." (1992: 19)

The most influential form of critical theory in social movement analysis is that of Habermas (1984, 1987a) who analyses structural contradictions in modernity between the instrumental rationalities of the "system" (capital and the state) and the communicative rationality immanent in the "lifeworld". As Cohen (1985) points out, this can be read both in a right-liberal perspective in which the lifeworld, as for earlier Frankfurt writers, has something of the "haven in a heartless world", and in a left-liberal perspective, comparable to that of Lash (1994a), in which the lifeworld is an achieved and not an ascribed one, redeeming some of the promise of modernity.

This distinction reappears in Offe (1985) as a theorisation of the stakes of modern political struggle:

> "Whereas the neoconservative project seeks to *restore* the nonpolitical, noncontingent, and uncontestable foundations of civil society (such as property, the market, the work ethic, the family, and scientific truth) in order to safeguard a more restricted - and *therefore* more solid - sphere of state authority and no longer 'overloaded' political institutions, the politics of new social movements, by contrast, seeks to politicise the institutions of civil society [...] its institutions of work, production, distribution, family relations, relations with nature, its very standards of

> rationality and progress - must be politicized through practices that belong to an intermediate sphere between 'private' pursuits and concerns, on the one side, and institutional, state-sanctioned modes of politics, on the other." (1985: 820)

Offe is by far the most historically specific and empirically-minded of these writers, not to say the most radical. But even in Offe, as *a fortiori* in Habermas or Cohen, the basic structure of the social order is accepted. Social movements engage in boundary conflicts around the colonisation of the lifeworld (Habermas) or the commodification of decommodified spheres (Offe), but they are not allowed to place this general order of society in question:

> "One dimension of the response is indeed the defensive fundamentalist refusal of reification in family, publics, mass culture, etc. The other dimension is the offensive and *structurally reformist, self-limiting identity articulated on the basis of genuinely modern (in a normative sense) potential of contemporary institutions.*" (Cohen 1985: 715; my emphasis)

As we shall see in chapter four, it is not that all movement participants necessarily agree that this is what they are up to; it is rather that Cohen (with Habermas and Offe) thinks that this is what is both rational and right for them to get up to. This kind of analysis reifies as necessary features of the world some of the power relations which movements not only challenge, but on occasion also change. This may do at times as an analysis of a particular historical situation in which movements are not capable of thinking or doing more; as an analysis of movements in general it returns us to a strong structuralism in which movements are *never* able to do more than operate within the essentially *given* structures of a particular social order.

Materialist cultural studies

If up to the last quarter of the nineteenth century agency was either everything or nothing, by the 1920s this had changed decisively (Arrighi, Hopkins and Wallerstein 1989). Movements from below had made important gains, resulting among other things in both the legal right and the capacity to maintain large-scale organisations and networks from the 1880s to the 1920s, and again from the 1960s on, with the exception of a period of savage repression and enforced demobilisation in the highpoint of organisation from above: fascism in continental Europe, anti-

communism in the United States, nationalist autarky in Ireland. For their part, movements from above had learned from their opponents - or were themselves, like many a liberal or nationalist order and the odd social-democratic government, movements from below which had achieved power. Notably, the twin tools of nationalist mobilisation and organisation from above had provided them with vast reserves of *popular* support which the monarchies of the 19th century had only rarely been able to deploy outside the local networks of the hegemony of landlords, priests and notables (Hobsbawm 1995).

The result was a relatively stable character to movement organisations, which together with the decisive domination of continental movements from below by the working-class and the Left made "the workers' movement" a more tightly defined animal in the thinking of engaged intellectuals of the period. This visibility and apparent specificity also led, however, to a crisis around the earlier problematic of rationality. Firstly, increasingly formal and centralised organisation – and new divisions – highlighted the distinction between the movement and the various organisations that were struggling to lead it: which meant among other things increasingly public debate of strategy and tactics (Thompson 1997). As well as this, the repeated failure of the movement, despite (or because of?) its organisational strength, to storm in the 20th century the bastions it had failed to conquer in the 19th, at least within the European core, underlined once again the non-linear nature of movement conflict - particularly since movements elsewhere, under apparently far less propitious conditions, were taking power.

Under these circumstances, what I will call "materialist cultural studies" was born, which, like the Frankfurt School, pointed to the failure of linear (politically reductionist and instrumental-rationalist) accounts of this movement, exemplified in institutional histories of parties and unions (and in positivist sociology, even of the Marxist kind, as witness Gramsci's critique of Bukharin (1975 (1932 - 33): 1401 -1403 etc.)) One way of thinking about this intellectual project is to see it as referring to "the movement" as a whole - that is, the total lifeworld of the working class and the subordinate peasantry - as against the narrowly defined "movement organisations" - that is, parties and unions. But it is also an appeal to the "dialectic" or non-linear, sought variously in Hegel (for Gramsci (1975 (1929 - 35))), Weber (for Lukács (1971

(1923))) or the Romantics (for Thompson (1977b) and Williams (1958)), as against positivist or mechanical readings of the "scientific" project; and (within the hardened institutional spheres of organised capitalism) to challenge the separation of "culture" and "politics".

The guiding thread which I think runs through these theories is a commitment to a view of history as nothing other than the product of human activity; and, more specifically, as the product of collective human action, articulated in conflicts which encompass the totality of society and in turn define that totality; conflicts which are not only grounded ultimately in the material activity of human beings but are at the same time conflicts over how that activity is to develop. In other words, this project is a theory of social movements which elevates movements to the central, perhaps the only, feature of the historical process and the social structure – bearing in mind that such movements come from above as well as from below.

This is the project of Gramsci and Lukács, notably in the struggle to understand the failure (in Italy, in Vienna, in Budapest, but above all in Germany (Mitchell 1970)) of the socialist and communist movement against the right-wing reaction which was starting to identify itself as "fascist", and to uphold some kind of claim to valid knowledge. It is also, in different ways, that of Thompson and Williams, trying to see the "long revolution" in the light of the disappointment of "actually-existing" Communism or Labour; of Touraine (1981) and the CCCS in its *Resistance through Rituals* phase (Hall and Jefferson 1991) in the aftermath of 1968; and to an extent of the French historians, both those of the *longue durée* (Bloch 1961, Braudel 1974) and those of *mentalités* (Rudé 1980, Ladurie 1984). The phrase Bloch (1946) used for the outcome of a different kind of struggle - *L'étrange défaite* - sums up the problematic: the linear account had been "falsified", the mechanical organisation defeated. How then to understand the movement? I will return to the answers this perspective offers in chapter three. For the moment, I want to highlight three features of this project, in this form as "materialist cultural studies".

Summarising the analysis

Firstly, it is concerned to connect everyday challenges to social *routines* and articulated opposition to the *structures* of the social totality (I take this useful

distinction from Lichterman 1996). Secondly, it is concerned with the operation both of movements from below (those struggling *against* domination and exploitation) and movements from above (those struggling to *impose* or *maintain* domination and exploitation), whether or not it uses this language. Hence it sees both counter-hegemony *and* hegemony as social products, which implies a refusal to naturalise or take for granted political institutions, economic positions or cultural stakes - as well as a sense of this conflict as present in all social activity, rather than of specialised fields. Thirdly, it holds to a non-linear account of the possibility of social transformation (as a different outcome of the processes and structures that produce social stability), in which "human beings make their own history, but not just as they please", in other words in which action is non-linear because *situated* socially, not taking place ex nihilo or in a vacuum. Unlike the "hermetically sealed" utilitarian world or the all-pervading phlogiston of identities, the imaginary world of materialist cultural studies is one of situated action, guided by metaphors of everyday work of a range of kinds, from that of the Romantic artist (Marx 1977a (1844)), via the hill-farmer (Williams 1989b) to the "hidden knowledge" of everyday networks of social solidarity (Wainwright 1994).

This approach has been developed along four lines. Firstly, for Lukács (1971 (1923)), followed in this by Touraine (1981) and to a large extent by Katsiaficas (1987), there is an analysis of movement as *self-expression*, in which an essentially structurally given "self" is developed to its highest possible articulation and towards a new social totality. As I will argue in chapter three, this lacks the sense of practical engagement with the otherness of the natural world and human relations, and hence the sense of movement as *self-education*, characteristic of the second line of development, that of Gramsci (1975 (1929 - 35)) and Williams (1965 etc.) Thirdly, Thompson (1963) and early Birmingham cultural studies (Hall and Jefferson 1991) stressed, against the early Williams' image of a "whole way of life", that of a "whole way of struggle" (cf. Hall 1989: 61), in other words of the crucial importance of conflict, power relations and interaction between movements from above and below in the formation of movements from below.

Finally, from McRobbie (1991 (1975)) on, feminists within this tradition have criticised the masculine partiality of this approach. In particular, "unified-systems"

socialist feminists such as Jaggar (1983) have stressed the importance of theorising the *total* global division of labour, and not simply that of public labour in understanding class-gender location, while Wainwright (1994) has argued for the importance of the "hidden knowledge" developed within women's unacknowledged work for the formation of social movements. A full theorisation of what this perspective might mean for an understanding of agency remains at the level of aspiration, though I hope in the next chapter to show what the building blocks of such a theory might be.

It may be useful at this point to note the major differences between this understanding and that developed within the "social movements" literature. Firstly, social movements are not seen as unusual phenomena in need of particular explanation, occasional blips on the otherwise passive or institutionalised social landscape. Rather, passivity and institutionalisation just as much as activity and creativity are part and parcel of a dynamic tension actively produced by opposing social forces. *Social movements, then, are the way in which human practices are socially articulated.*

Secondly, social movements include not only the actions of the dominated and epxloited, but also the actions of those who dominate and exploit – notably, the practices of domination and exploitation themselves. Changing relations of ownership and changing state forms, just as much as political and cultural organisation from below, are forms of collective practice geared to maintaining or transforming social relations. *Social movements, then, come not only "from below" but also "from above" – and the presence of the latter is rather more systematic than the former.*

Thirdly, social movements are not identified with any one kind of social phenomenon: they are neither specific features of a political subsystem, nor particular forms of unconventional organisation. Or rather, they may at times be expressed in these ways, but they can equally be found in the normal movements of capital, the everyday organisation of needs and desires, or the institutionalised relationships of corporatism. From the point of view of the movement, all of these are important

"moments" of a given history[15]. *Social movements, then, are not static forms, but change in both short and long historical movements in interaction with their opponents.*

Critique

How does this line of thinking stand up to the criteria used in this chapter? Firstly, its implicit identification of movement with social praxis through concepts of class-gender culture and agency certainly enables an engagement with a wide range of social phenomena and escapes the "field-specificity" of the "social movements" literature. Yet it does not, as it stands, offer a more concrete theorisation of how we can connect these different phenomena; or, more exactly, a wide range of versions exist. In chapter three I will use an essentially Gramscian theorisation to offer a more complex account.

Secondly, it is clear about the differences in experience, culture and aims between different situated locations, though as I will argue in chapter four more work needs to be done to move from this theoretical understanding to an effective methodology for the research of social movements.

Finally, while it is without doubt a theory from and for movements, its political implications are as various as its theorisations of movement organisation. In terms of my arguments about historical concepts, however, this is no bad thing: the *point* of an effective theory of movements is to enable activists firstly to express their existing perspectives and orientations, secondly to find some form of common language, and thirdly to do something with it. In chapter three I will attempt to show how some of

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[15] This perspective also historicises movement activity over the longer term, as against analyses of supposed "cycles" of movement activity (Brand 1982) or inherent "logics", for example of institutionalisation (Scott 1990), which attempt to insulate the categories of movement activity from longer processes of historical change.

the presuppositions of this theoretical perspective can be rendered explicit without becoming ahistorical.

Chapter three: understanding social movements

Introduction

Within affirmative theories such as those criticised in the previous chapter, the referent of "social movement" or its equivalents is taken as a more or less unusual form of action against the essentially passive background of a given social order: unconventional action within a more stable or more institutionalised political order, particular status claims made against the taken-for-granted background of the economic order; in short, agency in the foreground and structure in the background. Their defenders might argue that such partial theories fragment the world for the sake of analysis and presentation rather than because of a theoretical commitment to the dualistic belief that agency and structure are different kinds of things. Still, such theories are weakened by not making the effort to develop a single explanatory framework which could understand both social movement organisations and their state opponents - or a single conception capable of analysing both symbolic struggles and the class, gender and ethnic locations they proceed from. "Black boxes" have their place in statistical analysis, not in theoretical attempts to understand movements which may attempt to *change* some of these black boxes. Even where the need *is* felt, in this approach, to open some of these boxes, the intellectual resources for this project are found elsewhere, without connection to the analysis of movements. This strategy is not so much wrong as it is limited and limiting: from a scientific perspective, it curtails the project of understanding within a self-restrictive framework; from an interpretive perspective, it fails to make a full connection between the local meaning of action and the nature of that "local"; from a critical point of view, it renders actors permanently dependent on mystified structures in their attempts to change the world, in that the two are seen as belonging to different universes.

The alternative view, then, sees the social world as the product of conflict between social movements from above and below. "Social movement" then not only covers a wide range of action "from below", as we shall see, but also the other side of the coin

- the action "from above" of state and economic elites in particular, with its (usually more powerful and more successful) intervention into the social world:

> "Holders of economic or political power must be analyzed as a social movement instead of being identified with central cultural values and social norms. Referring to an industrial society, I would consider management a social movement exactly in the same way as labor, and Ford as a movement leader or an ideologist in the same way as Gompers or Reuther." (Touraine 1985: 774 - 775)

This is a thoroughly *historical* approach, in that it offers an explanation, within the terms of the theory, for the production and transformation of "social order" and "social structure" through this conflict, and (since these then provide the starting-point for further movement activity) the changing nature of movements themselves. In this chapter, I attempt to offer a defensible articulation of this perspective within the language of social movements; I argue that it fulfils the criteria advanced in chapter one for an adequate theory of counter culture; and I proceed to attempt to locate the counter culture within this theoretical perspective.

For my reading of this alternative tradition, I am indebted (beyond the original sources cited here) in particular to the American school of research on Western Marxism (Jacoby 1981, Jay 1984, Agger 1992) as well as to Williams' (esp. 1979, 1980, 1981) own rereading of earlier Western Marxists. My reading of Gramsci in particular draws on my own political experience and purposes (as Liguori's (1996) overview of Gramscian studies shows, this has been the norm rather than the exception; see also Hobsbawm 1982). The suggestion that socialist feminism can be considered a central contribution to this tradition is that of Gottlieb (1989).

Theorising from and for movements

Theorising agency

One of the most important early statements of the perspective I am advocating here is developed in Gramsci's analysis of the nature of "intellectual" activity, which I will draw on throughout this chapter:

> "There is no human activity from which every intellectual intervention can be excluded; homo faber can not be separated from homo sapiens. Every man [*sic: ogni uomo*], finally, outside his own profession, performs some intellectual activity; is, that is to say, a "philosopher", an artist, a man of taste, participates in a conception of the world, has a conscious line of moral conduct, thus contributes to maintain or to modify a conception of the world, that is to say to bring about new ways of thinking." (1975 (1932): 1550 - 51)

This usage is consistently applied, in these texts which date from Gramsci's last mature writings, in the context of "full-time intellectuals" (cf. Gramsci 1975 (1932): 1516: "All men [*sic*] are intellectuals, one could thus say; but not all men have the societal function of intellectuals....")

> "By intellectuals must be understood not only those strata commonly indicated with this title, but in general the whole social stratum which exercises organisational functions in the broad sense, both in the field of production, in the field of culture, and in the political - administrative..." (1975 (1934-5): 2041)

The concept of intellectual activity thus includes not only "theoretical", but also "directive" activity. These reflections combine two things: on the one hand, an analysis of the organisation and articulation of human activity which extends from everyday work and leisure to formal theoretical and political activity; on the other hand, a grounding of this analysis in a philosophical anthropology of human activity as reflective and organised. Williams' theorisation of the labour process adds to this a stress on the importance of learning and communication, restoring Marx' emphasis on the self-creation of human beings through this development:

> "The emphasis that matters is that there are, essentially, no 'ordinary' activities, if by 'ordinary' we mean the absence of creative interpretation and effort. Art is ratified, in the end, by the fact of creativity in all our living. Everything we see and do, the whole structure of our relationships and institutions, depends, finally, on an effort of learning, description and communication. We create our human world as we have thought of art being created." (1965: 53 - 54)

Wainwright, finally, historicises this process of self-discovery within a discussion of movement development, writing of the second-wave women's movement:

> [O]ut of the consciousness-raising process developed a recognition of knowledge which is implicit in previously unrecognized or under-valued skills. From this arose,

> for example, an extended analysis of housework and child rearing as skilled and socially valuable work which needs to be treated as part of the public sphere. A recognition of tacit knowledge was also the basis of a major criticism of the health and maternity services - and eventually the whole range of public services - for treating its patients as ignorant and passive. This generated initiatives for greater responsiveness to women's own knowledge, curiosity and desire to have some control over their bodies; that is, for a notion of expertise involving greater interaction between professionals and 'lay' patients, users and clients." (1994: 79)

This neatly links everyday skills, specific campaigns and general movements within a definition of work and skill which is not in theory or in practice limited to paid work: what movements from below do is to develop and articulate everyday activity in a challenge to existing power structures.

Agency and structure

What is shared in these perspectives is that humans are seen in active and relational terms: that is, what characterises our "species-being", in the young Marx's terms, is that we create the world we live in, together. This position is thus a rejection of the opposition between "the individual" as pre-existing essence and "society" as reified structures in favour of a view of the world as active rather than static, and interactive or dialogical rather than monadic or mechanical:

> "Above all we must avoid postulating 'society' again as an abstraction *vis-à-vis* the individual. The individual *is the social being*. Their manifestations of life - even if these may not appear in the direct form of *communal* manifestations of life carried out in association with others - *are* therefore an expression and confirmation of *social life*. Human individual and species-life are not *different*" (Marx 1977a (1844): 93[16]).

Left to itself, this position could degenerate into a straightforward voluntarism or expressivism, and of course this risk of "bending the stick too far in the opposite direction" is present in the "Prometheanism" of the Marx of 1844, Gramsci's admiration for Sorel, or Lukács' Hegelianism, though all of these authors are aware of the danger and overcome it even in their most "expressivist" formulations:

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[16] I have replaced the translators' gratuitous "his" and "Man's" with the original, neutral formulations *sein*, referring to *das Individuum*, and *des Menschen* (Marx n.d.: 75).

> "The way in which human beings produce their means of subsistence depends in the first place on the nature of the existing means which they have to reproduce. This mode of production should not be regarded simply as the reproduction of the physical existence of individuals. It is already a definite form of activity of those individuals, a definite way of expressing their life, a definite *mode of life*. As individuals express their life, so they are. What they are, therefore, coincides with their production, with *what* they produce and with *how* they produce it. What individuals are, therefore, depends on the material conditions of their production." (Marx 1963 (1845-6): 69 - 70[17])

A situated engagement with otherness

The risk that is avoided here - exemplified in Laclau and Mouffe (1985) - is that of taking the potentially liberatory realisation that the social world, which confronts us as alien, is ultimately the product of our own activity, and deducing from this that it is *entirely* social in character. If this were so, however, there would be no necessary reason why it should take any particular form at any particular time; those relations of power and exploitation which *alienate* our own activity from ourselves could have no firmer grounding than anything else, and come to appear as odd patterns in local cultures or as the effects of discourse[18].

However, the myth of a purely social totality - and the characteristic belief of literary intellectuals that this totality is thoroughly available, even "transparent" in that it consists of "visible" language - is at best a phenomenology (bracketing the "what else?" question as unanswerable), at worst a solipsism (insisting that the world is created only by processes that are immediately available to me in my own practice, if

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[17] Again I have amended "men" to "human beings" *(die Menschen)*: Marx n.d.: 122 - 123.

[18] One consistent conclusion to this analysis is to say that there is no valid "external" reason to object to this state of affairs; that (for example) the language game of the gulag is incommensurable with the language game of women's liberation, and that is all there is to it. Another, peculiarly Enlightenment-derived, conclusion is the apparent belief that by pointing out sufficiently frequently the constructed nature of the social world people will sooner or later come to recognise this fact (and why not, if there is nothing external to discourse blocking that recognition and no sharp barriers between worlds?) Postmodernism and situationism, then, are both forms of the myth of a "purely social" totality, with contemplative or activist responses appropriate to the social situations of their practitioners.

I am a writer and not - say - an activist or a farmer facing the unpredictable response of an apparently silent "other" society or nature). If this were true, of course, it would be hard to explain Durkheim's (1973: 4 - 5) observation that the social world confronts us as an objective, pre-existing, coercive "thing" except by a theory of mass delusion or as itself purely a language game: the otherness and unexpectedness of the social world, to say nothing of experiences of alienation, power, learning, failure to communicate or failure to feel we understand, are also "bracketed out"[19].

It is this very otherness which is stressed by our authors. We are producers of practical knowledge in that we generate (and learn and pass on) a practical understanding of how to work with the otherness of the world, whether natural or social - for example, learning effective ways of working with the material world, learning the practical realities of conflict and cooperation in the work process, learning how to organise effectively, learning through domestic labour:

> "The average mass human being acts practically, but does not have a clear theoretical consciousness of this activity, which is however a knowledge of the world, in that it transforms it. In fact, their theoretical consciousness can be historically in contrast with their practical activity. It can almost be said that they have two theoretical consciousnesses (or one contradictory consciousness): one implicit in all their activity and which truly unites them with all their collaborators in the practical transformation of reality; and one which is superficially explicit or verbal, which they have inherited from the past and have accepted without criticism." (Gramsci 1991 (1932 - 33): 13)

To this "tacit knowledge" (Wainwright 1994), then, is contrasted the official or hegemonic knowledge from above, derived from and linked to a different set of structural relations - drawing on the tacit knowledge of how to rule and how to

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[19] GA Cohen points out that this is the burden of Marx' critique of Feuerbach (1978: 126, 339 - 340) and more generally a feature of his theory of science: "Things do not *seem* different to a worker who knows Marxism. He [sic] knows they *are* different from what they continue to seem to be. A man who can explain mirages does not cease to see them." (1978: 331) Similarly, I can be fully aware that my taste, normative orientations and dialect are social products: this in itself does not guarantee that I can eat spiders without being sick, happily participate in torture or convince a native of Newcastle that I was born and bred in the area.

exploit, how to make concessions to opponents, build alliances with other elites, and subsume the work and meanings of ordinary people's lives into the accumulation of capital and power. As Habermas (1987a) rightly observes, this relationship is a product of the *colonisation* of communicative rationality by instrumental rationalities tied to the institutions of domination and exploitation. There is more going on beneath the surface than meets the eye, in other words; and of course a characteristic of much colonial writing is precisely the gap between what is said and what is done, whether by the Good Soldier Schweik (Hasek 1963) or the hero of the Third Policeman (O'Brien 1993) - communication and coercion do not fit well together.

What are power and exploitation, though? If they are neither language games nor innate "drives", it makes most sense to see them as forms of conflict over the intention, process and product of human action. In other words, we need a theory of social *divisions*, which in this tradition is grounded in the contention that certain ways of organising human activity, located within a history of changing engagement with the world, entail a global division of labour which rests on exploitation made possible by domination. "Modes of production", then, are not things but, literally, ways of doing things - forms of skilled human activity.

Theorising species-being

Why should this activity change and develop, and why should it do so in patterned ways? The answer proposed by the theorists I am discussing is essentially that human activity does not take place in a vacuum, as purely self-referential, but is rather an active, creative - and hence developing - engagement with a determinate otherness (human and non-human), in the course of which "practical dialogue" both "moments" are changed. To grasp the nature of this otherness, one needs to fill in a theory of human "species-being"[20].

For various reasons, elucidated by Geras (1983) and Jaggar (1983), western Marxist and socialist feminist writers have been wary of such a theory, though this has meant

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[20] Such a theory is incidentally involved in the assumption that human beings are entirely social - or linguistic - just as much as in any other attempt at understanding and explaining our experience which is taken beyond the methodological.

not so much a bypassing of the problem as a reliance on unspoken assumptions about (for example) the nature of industry, the concept of work, the sources of human motivation, the uniqueness of the human species, and so on. As Jay observes (e.g. 1984: 114 - 118), one of the greatest weaknesses in the western Marxist tradition - with the partial exception of Williams (e.g. 1980) and the anarchist Bookchin (e.g. 1994) - is in its theorisation of nature, which may explain some of its weakness in the face of postmodernism[21]. Some of the most important advances of recent decades have been in the socialist feminist theorisation of domestic labour, caring labour, emotional labour etc. as central areas of labour (cf. e.g. Lynch and McLaughlin 1995), and in the eco-socialist rethinking of the relationship of humans to nature (Red-Green Study Group 1995).

For my purposes, it is enough to sketch in the basic presuppositions of the theory I am outlining. One, drawing on Carrithers (1992), is that a consistent theory of human species-being as social and centred around interaction and learning accounts for the human capacity for creative activity in terms of an evolutionary specialisation in skill rather than instinct (developed, as Slocum (1975) and other feminist anthropologists have argued, at least as much through gathering and caring as through hunting) and the development of language and unequalled emotional repertoires as *part* of this development of a species dedicated to socially developed practical skill. This argument is closely related to that made by Williams (1965) and to Collier's (1994) reading of Bhaskar on emergent systems, which parallels Bookchin's (1986, 1994) analysis.

Secondly, this skilled activity is a practical engagement with otherness - with the natural world, with infants, with our own mind and body, with other adults. Only in terms of this not-yet-fully-known otherness does the concept of skill make sense. This "otherness" is not necessarily, as is sometimes thought, a category of what Williams (1985) called the "dominative mode" in which the "other" is alienated so that it can be dominated and thus become exploitable. This is so in contexts where the "self" is reified and seen as insulated from the "other" within the terms of an instrumental

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[21] For Jacoby (1981: 38 - 9), the central point was a (justified) rejection of Engels' "dialectic of nature"; but this does not resolve the problem of what to put in its place.

logic. In non-exploitative contexts, however, skill can be seen as a product of dialogue (as implicitly in Kleining 1982) where "self-realisation" is precisely the recognition that the highest potential of the self is to be found in an emancipatory relationship with the other.

Thirdly, and crucially, this skilled activity is *situated.* It is situated in a particular history of the material production of human life - food, children, language and all the rest of it - and hence also in a particular "division of labour", between class positions, but also between public and private labour and between different areas of the world-economy. In other words, where we pick up, change and develop our skilled work in particular locations those locations are themselves the product of a wider totality, the *total* "mode of production", or the global division of labour which embodies a particular "how-to-do-it" which is no one individual's property (the maintenance and reproduction of world financial markets, the different practices of child-rearing, the sedimentation of skill in microchips and programming languages, the distribution of fresh food) and is entirely capable of being a dead-end (global warming, currency crisis, "limits to growth" and the instability of the "new world order"); a related argument is developed in Young (n.d.)

Particular human action, then, is always situated in relation to the active totality of human action ("mode of production") but also in relation to other particular situations within that totality. This "double dialectic", in this perspective, is central to understanding social movements, and to distinguishing between movements "from above" and those "from below". Firstly, we engage through labour with otherness in a reciprocally transformative process; secondly, this engagement involves us in - and is itself usually a response to - a particular situation in relation to other people, themselves part of the "otherness" we have to engage with - as colleagues, bosses, subordinates, but also as partners, children, parents. Since this latter set of relationships - relationships of production, *in sensu lato* - are deeply exploitative in our kinds of society and bound up with power relations, conflict between the two impulses ("forces of production" and "relations of production") is normal, both within ourselves and within society.

Active theorisations of class

A brief discussion of one kind of theory of "class" may show why this understanding is relevant to social movements. A frequent objection to theories which attempt to place the active production of the social world at the centre of an explanation of that world is to represent Marxist analyses of social movements as claiming that this implies that social movement X is made up essentially, if not only, of class Y and nearly all of class Y at that (e.g. Scott 1990: 52 - 53). Since this is empirically rarely, if ever, the case (consider in particular the roles of intellectuals and organisers (Bagguley 1992), but also e.g. of stewards and rioters; and the existence of complex countermovements) it is held that the theory has been demolished.

But this argument assumes a non-Marxist theorisation of class as a property of individuals leading automatically to mechanical responses (cf. Pakulski 1995: 57 - 58). What Marxist writers in this tradition have stressed since the introduction to Thompson's *Making of the English working class* (1963: 9-14; cf. Sharpe et al. 1999) is that the central term is not "class", as an isolated, pre-existing property of individuals, but class *struggle*, the conflictual relationships involved in particular ways of organising the labour process[22]. Social movements, in other words, are to be found at the centre of social life, starting not from public mobilisations but from everyday situations of work, exploitation and resistance. What is being said, then, is not that social movements are made up only and entirely of individual "class positions", but that they are *classed*, in that movement activity develops out of conflictual class relations and is expressed in ways that operate through this.

Secondly, as Thompson also stressed, classes make themselves as active agents; they are not simply passive products of other classes or reified systems. "Class" thus necessarily involves class *consciousness*. This returns us to Marx's discussion in the *18th Brumaire* (1963: 196) of the extent to which French peasants do or do not form a class, which distinguishes between the given situation of "class in itself" and the active production of "class for itself". These are often contrasted synchronously, as

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[22] The word "struggle" also conveys something of the sense that these are difficult processes to live through, ones which we do not necessarily always see clearly while we are doing them, and ones which constantly impel us to change our ways of doing them - classically non-linear, in fact.

"objective and subjective", but a better way of illuminating them would be to juxtapose them to Marx's analysis of the development and *self-production* of the bourgeoisie and working class in the *Communist Manifesto*. Here the bourgeoisie, products of feudal class relations, create a new world at the same time as they create themselves. In doing so, they "create their own gravediggers" (Marx n.d.: 223), by placing people in the new situation of proletarians. The response of the latter is a developing and learning one, creating themselves as a class in the terms of the *Brumaire* while at the same time and through this process becoming aware of themselves as a class.

An important sense of the word "class" in Marxism, then, is precisely this active, learning, self-developing sense in which (to return to more familiar language) movements (classes for themselves) constitute themselves through situated conflict (class struggle). Since people can respond to situations differently, however, and since the process is one of learning and developing skill, different responses are possible (Thompson's Luddites, followers of Joanna Southcott, and Methodists; Marx's nostalgic guild workers, utopian socialists etc.) These remain classed in the sense that they remain active responses to determinate situations of class conflict - poverty, desperation, oppression, etc. - and (as Thompson showed in his discussion of Blake's religious milieu (1994) and Hill (1975) showed in his discussion of the English Revolution) the most surprising issues take on classed implications, as people "do" class conflict through discussion of appropriate models of church organisation, for example[23].

Movements, then, are not "explained by" classes, in a relationship of agency to structure; rather, in western Marxist formulations "class" expresses precisely the sense of a movement grounded in situated conflicts and subject to development – or decline.

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[23] This process of self-development, incidentally, is not teleological in any useful sense, though as I argue in chapter seven it is certainly possible to express situated practical needs and logics cognitively and ask after the adequacy of the skilled responses to them, just as we can observe (for example) that the Iron Age bog road at Corlea (Raftery 1994: 98 - 111) was a rather bad road in the straightforward sense that it sank beneath the surface within ten years of being built. But to observe that more and less skilled responses are possible is not to say that the most skilled response will prevail.

Rethinking the scope of class

An important modification to this position, developed in particular by socialist feminists, is to argue that class defined in terms of paid employment is not the only form of inequality. I share this point of view, with the qualification that not all forms of inequality are equally important *to the explanation of social change* (as opposed to, say, in moral terms). Some chains, in other words, are more radical than others, not only in terms of hoped-for future relevance but most centrally in understanding the roots of the existing totality.

The movement from above known as capitalism, which is almost certainly the most effective social movement in the present-day world, did not only create a relationship of exploitation between capitalist and worker, along with the necessary forms of domination to enable that. It also created a relationship of exploitation between the "core" (a social, not a physical concept) where these "pure" capitalist relations obtained and a "periphery" which provided raw materials and labour power as well as a market for this process (Wallerstein 1987); and it created an instrumental and exploitative relationship between paid work in the public sphere, governed by commodity relations, and domestic labour in the private sphere, governed by ideologies of love, caring and obligation (Jaggar 1983). The exploitative relationships peculiar to capitalism, then, are not restricted to those governed by the labour contract, and an effective theory of class needs to take this into account[24].

I would argue, then, that at the root of movements "from below" and "from above" are local rationalities, skilled and developing responses to the active, dialogical and conflictual production and transformation of the social world (whether making cars, bringing up children, changing dialects or producing music) which are classed, gendered and ethnic in the sense that these categories are dimensions of the global

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[24] Marx himself was ambiguous on these latter two areas, on the one hand recognising the new relations between "sexes" and "nations" created by the formation of capitalism but on the other hand expecting the commodity relation and wage-labour to become all-embracing. As Braudel (1974) and the world-systems school (Wallerstein 1996; Arrighi 1994) have emphasised, however, the relation between fully capitalist and partially capitalist relations has been a long-term feature of capitalism; and as Walby (1990) has observed, the entry of women into the public sphere has produced rather a "public patriarchy" than an end to gender difference.

division of labour. Other issues (class background, gendered socialisation, ethnic identities etc.) are part of these more or less skilled responses and as such feed back into the generation of new situations, but in more contingent ways.

Processual categories for social movement analysis

This view of movements as in effect the development of skilled activity through processes grounded in situated conflicts and practical responses to those conflicts suggests some rather different categories for understanding movements (cf. Banks 1972 on social movements as "social technologies", Eyerman and Jamison 1991 on the "cognitive praxis" of social movements). The skilled response to a situation can neither be usefully imagined as mechanical or as unconstrained. More adequate categories would highlight the extent to which this process is creative or stuck, is developing or being undermined[25].

Such categories can be found in Hall's (1996) analysis of popular reactions to official ideologies in TV news audiences; drawing on Gramsci's (1975 (1932): 1513 - 1514) contrast between hegemonic power relations, in which a wide range of social groups are "led", theoretically and practically, by "traditional intellectuals" (such as TV producers), and the needs and pressures from below partially expressed in "organic" intellectual strata, he observes that audience response can be affirmative - adopting the official version fully; negotiated - accepting it in general but discounting it in "special cases" close to home; or oppositional - rejecting it in general. Similarly, in relation to the existing social order, movements can embrace or reject it wholeheartedly, or accept it in general while rejecting specific aspects of it. These choices are obviously closely tied to the nature of the conflicts movements spring from and their location within or in relation to those conflicts (this is close to being a tautology). As Gramsci puts it,

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[25] Williams' reading of determination as "setting limits, exerting pressures" (1980: 31 - 32) is useful for distinguishing determinism from fatalism and mechanism, but what needs to be stressed is that what is determined is human beings' *skilled responses*. Without this emphasis, the "limits and pressures" argument simply becomes a half-way house between mechanism and indeterminacy.

> "This contrast between thought and action, that is the coexistence of two conceptions of the world, one which is verbally affirmed and the other which comes out in practical action, is not always due to bad faith. Bad faith can be a sufficient explanation for some individuals taken singly, and for more or less numerous groups; it is not satisfactory, however, when the contrast can be found in the manifestations of life of large masses. Then it cannot be other than the expression of deeper contrasts of a social-historical order. It means that a social group, which has its own conception of the world, even if only in embryo, which comes out in action and thus sporadically, occasionally - that is, when this group moves as an organic whole - has, for reasons of submission and intellectual subordination, borrowed a conception which is not its own from another group and affirms this verbally; and also believes that it follows this, because it does follow it in "normal times" (in other words when its conduct is not independent and autonomous, but precisely one of submission and subordination)." (1975 [1932-33]: 1379)

Along with processual categories, then, power relations remain central to the understanding of social movements, particularly those ("economic") forms of power involved in creating given situations and those ("cultural") forms of power involved in influencing responses to those situations, along with those ("political") forms of power that shape the fields within which movements are permitted to organise. A complete theory of movements, then, will place considerable stress on the role of movements from above in that they are normally by definition the more powerful in organising the overall shape of these relations, even through the maintenance of effective hegemonic power requires an active response to the various pressures of movements from below, as Singh (1999) has emphasised.

Social structure, on this reading, is in a sense the sediment of movement struggles, or perhaps a better metaphor would be that it is something akin to a truce line, to be continually probed for weaknesses by both sides and repudiated as soon as this seems worth while. Movement struggles, then, are key to understanding social totalities, if we adopt this usage of movement as collective situated skilled activity: workplace relations, family structure, democratic rights, ethnic interaction, the shape of popular culture - synchronic descriptions of this archaeology of movements record the results of such conflicts but often miss the processual and conflictual "why", in effect naturalising power relations and preferring to substitute one synchronic theory for

another rather than develop theorisations of social change. In place of this, Touraine's (1981) suggestion that social order at any given point reflects in particular the *stakes* of movement conflict, the way in which the historicity (capacity for self-production) of a given society is organised and conceptualised, comes closer to the mark in its insistence on the radical sociality and peculiar combination of co-operation and conflict (what is produced and valued, and what it means to whom) that characterises social movements through and through.

What is a social movement anyway?

In the foregoing discussion of agency, I tried to highlight the "micro-level" of skilled responses to situations that are created at the "macro-level" of the social totality (though these are not so much separately existing entities as different perspectives on the same thing, corresponding roughly to Habermas' (1984, 1987a) "life-world" and "system" perspectives). If the theory is to avoid reifying the latter as something other than the existing synthesis of skilled human activity, social movement becomes the term to grasp the ways in which - from above and below - people grapple with and try to respond to the situations they find themselves in. Such responses cover an enormous range, and within this range "social movement" becomes an organising concept (practically, as done by activists; intellectually, as done by theorists) standing for the hegemonic (from above) or proto-hegemonic (from below) organisation of the skilled activities of daily life towards a coherent "movement project" for the social totality:

> *A social movement is the organisation of multiple forms of materially grounded and locally generated skilled activity around a rationality expressed and organised by (would-be) hegemonic actors, and against the hegemonic projects articulated by other such actors.*

Social movement, then, is precisely a concept of *direction*, of *change*, of *potentiality*, not an ahistorical and static definition of a particular kind of institution. This is the sense, I think, of "class" for Thompson (1963, 1977a) and Williams (1980), of "praxis" and "intellectual activity" for Gramsci (1975 (1929 - 35)) and of "feminism" for Jaggar (1983) and Wainwright (1994) - something including the everyday struggle, the dotty enthusiasm, the heavy political project, the "moment of effervescence" and the years of isolation. It is also a good example of the kind of historical concept I defended in

chapter one, along with "skill", "labour" and "totality" - concepts whose referents and workings we can confidently expect to *change* over time as 6 billion other people put time, energy and thought into producing the social realities they indicate. Historical theorising is not about trying to define once and for all the way the world is, about elevating local patterns to universal truths or about abandoning theorising when our first efforts fail: it is about thinking in ways that leave some scope for other people to surprise us. The appearance of a new kind of campaign or the disappearance of an old one should encourage us to historicise our concepts rather than jettison them: the underlying question is "how are people doing movements in this context and why?" rather than "what do movements like this mean?" in abstraction from time and place.

Multiplying movements unnecessarily

This argument for "social movement" as an organising concept is meant not so much to reject as to relativise field-specific social movement theories, by encouraging a greater reflexivity about the locations within which those theories are produced. It is also intended to undermine the inflation of the movement concept and aid academic and political thought by distinguishing what a movement is, or is not. Much of the writing in this area has been fatally flawed by an uncritical acceptance of claims to movement status: by specific and often short-term campaigns; on behalf of lifestyle and opinion shifts; by single organisations - and most damagingly by a definition of "movement" by "issue" (peace, ecology, feminist etc.) or "actor" (women's, workers', black, etc.)

What this usage fails to do is to offer an effective means of identifying boundaries between movements (where does the ecology movement end and the peace movement begin?), of distinguishing between the existence of divergent tendencies within a single movement and the existence of multiple movements (for example are there two separate Irish women's movements - middle-class feminism and community women's groups (Coulter 1993) - or two tendencies within a single movement?), or of dealing with "cross-cutting" movements (was Greenham Common "part of" the peace movement [issue] or the women's movement [actor]?). Given that "networks of informal interactions" rarely have neat boundaries and "shared collective identities" are routinely objects of struggle, it is unsurprising that despite the "terminological

ambiguity" to which Diani objects (1992a: 2) the term "movement" continues to be deployed more or less at random, not to say incoherently:

> "Part of, but also separate from, the student movement [actor] was the reemerging feminist [ideology] movement...." (Fink, Gassert and Junker 1998:16; my glosses)

One might object that these are scholastic questions, which miss the liveliness of actual movements - but this is precisely the problem with tying oneself to positivist understandings of social movement as institutional form, which makes neither empirical nor theoretical sense as a general way to understand movements (consider for example the enormous diversity of "the social movement", the range of "feminist movements" since their organisational fragmentation in the 1970s, the self-description of the movements leading up to 1968 as "the Movement" or the enormous variety of issues tackled by contemporary "DIY" movements). Since, as della Porta and Diani observe,

> "[M]embers' first loyalty continues to be to the movement and the organization is simply seen as a temporary instrument for intervention. Indeed, recent research has revealed a pattern of multiple adherence, with simultaneous participation in a range of organizations belonging to different social movement. This has led to the idea that there are social movements 'families'; clusters of movements which have different specific objectives but share a similar world view, overlap in membership and frequently work together in protest campaigns" (1999: 148)

perhaps the problem is the artificial multiplication of "movements"? The analysis developed in this chapter makes it possible to start from the actors rather than from the issues (no small gain this, given the non-linear nature of symbolism and ideology in e.g. politics and religion), but this is not enough; we must also ask what *direction* their response to their situation is taking them in. As Eyerman and Jamison write,

> "A social movement is not one organisation or one special interest group. It is more like a cognitive territory, a new conceptual space that is filled by a dynamic interaction between different groups and organisations [....]
>
> This does not mean that social movements are only learning processes, but it rather means that the particular character of a movement, what distinguishes it from other movements and what sets it off in time, is its cognitive praxis. Having said this, it is evident that cognitive praxis does not come readymade to a social movement. It is

> precisely in the creation, articulation, formulation of new thoughts and ideas – new knowledge – that a social movement defines itself in society." (1991: 55)

Movement projects

I would argue on this basis that the number of coherent "movement projects" that can be distinguished at any point in time is relatively small. Such "projects" - drawing on Peillon's (1982) idea of a "class project" - are (a) challenges to the social totality which (b) aim to control the self-production of society and (c) have or are developing the potential for the kind of hegemony - leading the skilled activity of different social groups - that would make (b) and hence (a) possible. The number of campaigns (attempts at organising skilled activity which haven't, can't or no longer have this potential) is certainly rather larger, and covers everything from isolated eccentrics writing lengthy tomes to large, well-disciplined but thoroughly particularist and corporatist institutions with no real intention of leading anyone but themselves. Touraine makes a similar point, arguing that

> "Competitive parties do not represent a permanent opposition like the couple management - workers does. That can be symbolized by writing that a social movement is *i-o-t* [see below] and a political struggle *i-t*, *o-t*, or *i-o*. The collective pursuit of *interests* corresponds to an even lower level of integration of these elements: the actors are self-centered and the field of their competition or conflict can even be defined as a market, which is defined independently from actors. That corresponds to *i*, *o*, *t*, where each element is separated from the others. So political pressure and defense of interest must be defined not only by their specific nature but as nonintegrated and lower-level social movements." (1985: 761)

Translating this into the language I am suggesting, a movement *project* stands out among other forms of expression of social movement in that it is capable of *identifying (i)* its actors socially; naming its central *opponent (o)*, and recognising that the social *totality (t)* is the product of such struggles. In the modern world some of the most successful such projects are those of global capitalism and nation-states, despite changes to the benefit of the former and against the latter. These movements are relatively easy to characterise because their projects are relatively stable and well-institutionalised in most areas of social life.

This kind of historical conceptualisation, while being "essentially contested", is appropriate to a historical sociology in that it is developmental rather than static in shape, and so can handle equally well moments where movement from below is fragmented and retained within narrow limits by successful movement projects from above as well as moments where movements from below may be on the verge of success. It is also, I think, geared to the requirements of an open and critical sociology in that at this point activists and participants can begin to ask themselves realistic and practical questions about the nature and chances of particular movement projects within what remains an open - but not blank - field of action.

Counter culture as counter hegemony

The counter culture, in this perspective, is one of the more visible movement projects from *below*, a very loose umbrella within which a whole network of "movements", of "lefts", of "scenes" and of "lifestyles" interacts and shares a common - albeit contested - history across the planet. This means that it is a project from below which has the potential for hegemony, within which attempts to realise this potential are made, and where at times such attempts even meet with some success. What produces the movement, I shall argue, is skilled responses to shared situations; what produces the movement *project* is the continuity from shared ways of struggle at the roots all the way to the differing bids for hegemony by the post-68 lefts, by Green parties, alternative scenes and some kinds of cultural studies; and the differing attempts at co-theorising by socialist feminists, eco-socialists, eco-feminists, etc.

Understanding hegemony

To make sense of this apparently counter-intuitive claim, a brief excursion into the meaning of hegemony in Gramsci's thought is necessary. The primary meaning of hegemony for Gramsci can be defined as leadership by consent:

> "For the moment, one can identify two great superstructural 'levels', that which can be called the level of 'civil society', in other words of the totality of organisms vulgarly called 'private', and that of the "political society or state". These correspond to the function of 'hegemony' which the dominant group exercises in the whole

> society and to that of 'direct rule' or command which is expressed in the state and in 'juridical' government." (1975 (1932): 1518 - 1519)

Gramsci goes on to identify "social hegemony" with

> "the 'spontaneous' consent given by the great masses of the population to the direction imprinted on social life by the fundamental dominant group, a consensus which grows 'historically' from the prestige (and thus from the trust) which the dominant group derives from its position and from its function in the world of production" (1975 (1932): 1519).

A hegemonic situation obtains where "intellectuals" give "directive" leadership (organise the activities of a wide range of different social groups) and "theoretical" leadership (articulate their thinking) across a whole society. A primary example employed by Gramsci of such a hegemony would be the role of landlord, priest and doctor in the social order of rural Italy post-independence - organising people's work, interaction and body-management in very Foucauldian ways at the same time as organising their political, religious and scientific thinking - to be replaced in urban modernity by the manager, the engineer and the schoolteacher's organisation of the social and technical aspects of the work process and participation in the public life of the modern nation-state[26].

On this showing, and given the example of capitalism, it is clear that hegemony is neither about uniformity nor about coercion. A social group is hegemonic to the extent that it can manage the task of providing effective directions and orientations to the life-activity of *different* social groups, meet some at least of their *diverse* needs and provide a language with which they can express their thoughts (cf. Marx 1979: 115 -

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[26] Incidentally, and consistent with Marx' more "pessimistic" and "structural" analyses for the possibility of socialist revolution and with contemporary writing on the service class (Lash and Urry 1987, Sklair 1995), this seems to imply that from an early point capitalists as such are doing relatively little of the "ruling" and are rather a rentier class parasitical on *capital* as a social formation and set of relationships. This also suggests a fairly humble view of the role of intellectuals in movements from below, as a sort of "service class of the revolution", with the same tendencies to develop caste interests (Konrad and Szelényi 1979) but also the same risk of becoming redundant to the needs of the movement - a process which has regularly occurred (a classic case is the self-dissolution of *Gauche prolétarienne* in 1973 (Hamon and Rotman 1988: 493 - 530)).

118 for a suggestive sketch). In other words, it is about power through co-ordination, consent and communication, not blockage, coercion and exclusion; though the latter are also part of power relations, they are not part of hegemony. Schematically we could say that the sphere of coercion forms the context for consent, but the consent of some people is also necessary for the successful exercise of coercion against others.

The strength of capitalism, then, is precisely that it *does* meet some felt needs, offer a usable language and "work" at the most practical and material level - at least to a certain extent. This is why a populist rejection of "the system" in favour of "ordinary people" *as they are* is bound to fail under normal conditions, and why Gramsci's concept of politics is so pre-eminently an educative one (in the sense used in community development): it is about an *alternative* way of organising that work, alternative ways of satisfying needs, and alternative ways to express what we think (cf. 1975 (1932 - 5): 1331: "Every relationship of 'hegemony' is necessarily a pedagogical relationship...."). For Gramsci, these alternatives *can* be "better" in the sense (argued in more detail in chapter seven) that they are more *adequate* to the responses they are attempting to articulate; those responses do not run into limits as soon or as much as within the existing hegemony.

Hence the importance of the contrast between "traditional" intellectuals, whose learned ways of doing things, of identifying problems and of articulating ideas derive from the existing order, even when they are put at the service of movements from below, and "organic" intellectuals, whose ways of doing things, intentions and language represent instead a further development of that response at the base[27]. For this reason, I prefer to destress Gramsci's emphasis on intellectuals as specialised life-positions and focus rather on the more general "intellectual activity" in relation to which these specialists gain or lose relevance. The role of professional full-time organisers is not a fixed and static thing, whether in movements or in states. At certain times (movements in organised capitalism, states in dependent societies) it may be absolutely central; at others (much "DIY" politics, hunter-gatherer societies) it may

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[27] This is, incidentally, a deeply democratic notion, in the sense used in classical democratic theory of democracy not as a choice of commodities but as common deliberation about common problems (Bachrach 1969).

be negligible (cf. Atton (1997a, 1999) on the relative unimportance of specialised intellectuals in the alternative press, Taylor 1982 on states and hunter-gatherers). What is general is human beings' organisation of their life-activity, practically and mentally: the relevance of "professionals" is given by this, within specific modes of production, and not vice-versa.

Understanding counter hegemony

So much for effective hegemony, which is only ever fully developed through a movement from above (Thompson 1977a) - or perhaps on the part of a movement from below which is on the point of taking power or has in fact done so. What is the corresponding term - and more importantly the corresponding situation - for movements from below? With some hesitation I would like to suggest the term counter hegemony. This is not a term used by Gramsci, as far as I am aware, but is consistent with his usage, which allows for the copresence of (conflicting) claims to hegemony:

> "The critical understanding of oneself thus comes about through a struggle of political 'hegemonies', of contrasting directions, first in the field of ethics, then in that of politics, to arrive at a higher elaboration of one's own conception of the real." (1975 (1932 - 33): 1385)

The term counter hegemony is useful to set off the differences between movements from below and above, which of course find their sharpest expression precisely here, in the power relations between the two. One of the difficulties with counter hegemony is that what sounds like a thing is at best a precarious achievement - given that it represents a massive upheaval in the hegemony maintained by a movement from above, the latter must either respond or collapse; and it is in the nature of a movement from above that it normally has far greater resources - such as the state - at its disposal than its challengers do. In more routine situations, then, counter hegemony is a process of building this achievement - a movement project, in other words - something which may at some future point come to structure the movement as a whole, but which is more frequently present as potential, aspiration, intention, effort. These are real, both in that actors think and act in these terms but also in that

we know that movements (such as Irish nationalism in the 19th century) can move from symbolic rhetoric to full-scale challenge, and indeed back again.

So counter-hegemony is precisely a movement *project* from below, and this is a more useful language: we can assess the workability of a project, who is committed to it and in what shape, and what would be required to make it work *without* the (literally) manic claim to know what the outcome of the project will be. That some projects collapse and others succeed beyond the wildest dreams of their protagonists is a necessary feature of thinking in terms of processes rather than of things.

Counter-hegemony and resistance to hegemony

There is a more restrictive use of counter-hegemony that I need to distance myself from, which is that of seeing it as simply the refusal or "resistance" to hegemony. A good illustration of why this approach is insufficient to the study of *movements* (beyond the obvious point that "movement" entails convincing others and constructing alternatives, even when we can draw on existing movements for this network solidarity and utopian rhetoric) is given in Thompson's (1994) work on Blake. Here he represents the tradition of antinomian Christianity, on which he argues Blake drew, as being in the late 18th and early 19th centuries a counter hegemonic one, meaning in the first place "in opposition to the existing hegemony" of utilitarian philosophy and laissez-faire capitalism. This tendency in Thompson's usage is underlined by the fact that by this stage Blake's antinomians, under the pressure of political and religious repression since their more radical outbreaks in the English Revolution (chronicled by Hill 1975) had become deeply quietist and retreated inside the safety of their own kinship-based meetings and their esoteric symbology. What would be missed by a purely "resistance"-oriented reading, though, is that Thompson's point is precisely that *Blake's* resistance to "the Kingdom of the Beast" is made possible by his standing - even as a relatively isolated eccentric in his later years, leaving his earlier involvement with political radicalism and organised Swedenborgianism[28] aside - within this *collective* radical tradition and its *alternative*

[28] The writings of the eighteenth-century Swedish visionary Emmanuel Swedenborg inspired the creation of a mystical church similar to nineteenth-century theosophical lodges in the variety of its participants. Blake, on Thompson's showing, was a sympathiser of this "Church of the New

totality, its shared "utopian" vision of how the world ought to be and how one might get there.

In other words, resistance on its own is local rationality, not counter hegemonic; given the presence of effective *hegemony* from above - the ongoing attempt to incorporate pressure from below - it is far more likely to resolve itself into a corporatist or particularist stance which offers no wider challenge to hegemony as such. What enables it to go beyond this is a refusal to drop the links with *other* resistances, or a connection to some wider form of understanding which turns a local problem "within the system" - a "negotiated" response that accepts the general situation but refuses the particular application - to a more significant challenge *to* the system - an "oppositional" response. These links and this understanding are of the essence of "movement projects", whether or not they are of such a nature as to be able to survive and be generalised.

The counter culture, then, is a particular movement project from below, specific to the period of capitalist disorganisation; subsequent sections discuss its particularity (*what* it consists of) and this historical specificity (*how* it relates to this period). In terms of the view of historical sociology set out in chapter one, this "historical concept" of counter culture as *a*, if not *the*, major movement project from below within disorganised capitalism is the major substantive contribution of the thesis, whose organisation serves to locate (chapters one to four) and subsequently explore (chapters five to eight) this concept. Insofar as the thesis claims to make an "original and substantive contribution to knowledge", this is it.

What do movement projects do?

The "counter hegemonic" activity of a "movement project" such as the counter culture consists, in essence, of the practical and theoretical abstraction, organisation and development of local rationalities. In a sense, this is true not only of full-blown movement projects, but of any attempt at developing a movement, as well as being a

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Jerusalem", but also a critic of Swedenborg's ethereal system-building. He was possibly involved in the antinomian opposition to "High Church" tendencies in the group (Thompson 1994: 129 - 145). His *Heaven and Hell* contains several explicit critiques of Swedenborg (e.g. 1975 (1790): plates 21 - 22).

way of conceptualising our everyday activity in the sense of the situations we find ourselves in. Given that a major stress of this thesis is the necessary connection between movement activity and everyday life, this is a logical and necessary similarity. For analytic purposes, however - specifically, to indicate the qualitative breaks between different levels of complexity and practical challenges - it is I think useful to distinguish between "local rationalities", as the skilled response to a given situation as developed within the terms of that situation, "campaigns", as the organisation of such local responses in ways that connect people across multiple such situations and challenge the construction of those situations, and "movement projects", which connect a range of such campaigns, with starting points that are seen as diverse from a local perspective, around a challenge to the way that situations are constructed in general.

Movement *projects*, then, involve making the connection between local situations as seen from below and the common features of their relationship to the social totality - which is the point at which agreement and cooperation can be constructed, or not. While this does imply that there are workable and unworkable movement projects, this is a judgement which has in part at least to be that of "history". This analysis implies a research programme which relates movement projects to movement milieux, starting not from the most articulated and visible mobilisations of movement projects, but from the local rationalities to be found within movement milieux, understood as the source of mobilisations, of the internal culture of movement organisations, and of the transformations attempted or effected within the wider society[29]. Two major attempts at systematically relating milieux and movements are already available.

Theorising movements and milieux

Firstly, a number of authors in the critical theory tradition have offered an analysis of contemporary movements as forms of the defence of the life-world against

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[29] I leave aside here the analysis of campaigns, as being the most historically contingent of these categories but also that which (in an apparently universal form) is most adequately covered by existing "social movements" literature.

colonisation by the logics of capitalism and the state. In other words, movements are identified with communicative rationality in its opposition to instrumental rationalisation and the systems of power and money (Habermas 1987a, Offe 1985, Cohen 1982). This is an attractive analysis, among other reasons because it offers a systematic theorisation of the relationships between social movements and a defensible concept of modernity. At the same time, it suffers from a severe lack of specificity in its analysis of culture.

While some attempt is made to specify which *particular* life-worlds (in Offe's (1985) formulation, those of the intelligentsia and the "decommodified" areas of society) should be particular sources of movement activity, they are treated as carriers of a universal communicative rationality, which apparently operates similarly in all life-worlds except to the extent that it is deformed by capital or the state. Without wanting to enter the question of whether a single logic of communicative rationality can be found, as Habermas (1984) claims, within the structure of communication itself, it seems too far a leap from this philosophical anthropology to the specific cultural logics of contemporary life-worlds. Just as the development of instrumental rationa*lization* had highly specific sources in Calvinist soteriology (Weber 1958), despite its capacity for abstraction and generalisation, so one would expect communicative rationa*lisation*, whatever its generalisability, to have specific starting points. In other words, there is something of a silence as to the *specific* culture of movement milieux and thus of social movements themselves.

A partial remedy is offered by Eder (1985, 1993), who sees contemporary social movements as expressing the *habitus* of a specific social class, the petite bourgeoisie, and its struggle to impose its cultural definitions on the social totality. The difficulty with Eder's position (quite apart from the question of whether contemporary movements *are* movements of the petite bourgeoisie (Bagguley 1992)) is that the *habitus* he ascribes to these classes is simply read off from their structural location as being neither on top nor on the bottom of society. There is little sense of the role of experience (Thompson 1977a) in mediating between class relations and class culture, or of culture as a creative response. As a result, *habitus*, in Eder's approach, is effectively ascribed by the theorist, rather than an open question for research (see chapter two).

This is made clear by Eder's own use of the concept, which (as with many outside readings of movement milieux from Berger et al. 1974 to Scott 1990) interprets movement discourse in terms of the categories of the analyst's own milieu, by imputing a romantic view of self and nature in terms of "purity" which is simply the mirror image of rationalism (Thompson 1994). By contrast, the Hannover research project (Müller 1990, Vester et al. 1993), based on extensive interviews in movement milieux, identifies both an element of continuity with the traditional class *habitus* of their participants' background, but also an important rupture, most notably in the development of new, reflexive, elements of *habitus*, rather than any given natural self. Similarly, Melucci (1992) has emphasised the *complexities* of the category of "nature" in movement discourses.

In other words, while both critical theory and Eder suggest that we *can* find ways of theorising a systematic link between the culture of a movement milieu and the activities of a movement, both suffer from something of an empirical deficit, or (more importantly) from the lack of a recognition of the cultural *specificity* of movement milieux. Although movements are seen as cultural phenomena, the implications are not fully taken into account, giving rise to the normal difficulty in cultural analysis of failing to be sufficiently aware of one's own taken-for-granted assumptions and simply reading other ways of life in terms of one's own cultural perspective. The question then arises as to how we can theorise the specificities of movement milieux in a way that avoids such unsustainable a prioris.

The concept of local rationalities

What is needed is a provisional concept that identifies the *kind* of object that is being sought for: a heuristic concept that does not already impute a specific cultural form to its subject. Such a concept would have to make it possible to link the culture of movement milieux with the cultural forms and symbolic challenges raised by social movements; should avoid either relegating the political to some other realm of understanding or elevating it to the sole explanatory factor; and enable an empirical engagement with the cultural specificities of actual movement milieux. I want to suggest the concept of "local rationalities" as a means of doing this.

Rationalities are local insofar as they are situated responses to given situations. In this context "rationality" is not a single monolithic "thing" (that usage comes in particular from the Frankfurt School's identification of rationality with instrumental rationality and from the irrationalisms of anti-modernist critiques around the turn of the century (e.g. Nietzsche, Sorel)) but rather the way that actors practically engage with their world and make sense of their actions. Weber identifies four such possibilities: instrumental, value-rational, traditional and emotive, qualifying the last two as "on the border and often beyond that which is 'meaningfully' oriented" (1984: 44). The arguments here are primarily methodological, leading Weber earlier in the same discussion to write

> "For typologising scientific analysis all irrational, emotionally conditioned, meaning contexts of attitudes that influence action, are as far as possible researched and presented as "deviations" from a hypothetical, purely goal-rational process." (1984: 21)

The tension in this section seems to lie between that which can be understood and that which can be communicated; later on Weber takes the view that

> "If [sociology] speaks of *'typical'* cases, it means in case of doubt always the *ideal* type, which for its part *can* be rational or irrational, is usually rational (e.g. in theories of national economy this is always the case), but is always constructed in a form adequate to its *meaning* [*sinn*adäquat]" (1984: 39)[30]

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[30] GA Cohen rejects Weber's reading of the traditional as non-rational, arguing that Weber's example of Silesian peasants responding to a rise in wages by lowering the time worked (Weber: "This general incapacity and indisposition to depart from the beaten path is the motive for the maintenance of tradition") rests on a mistaken *assumption* of the contrast between "traditional" and "rational" action:

> "Suppose we allow that contrast. Then Weber still fails to show that the peasant reacted traditionally and hence, on his view, non-rationally. For he did *not* continue to do what he had always done. He began to work a lot less than before [....] Indeed, the labourer's choice was probably rational. He could not be certain what increase in consumption welfare would attend the rise in money income [....] Reasonable conjectures regarding the marginal utility of goods and the marginal disutility of labour - in his particular situation - suggest that in opting for labour-reduction he won a more substantial benefit." (1978: 321)

Thus Weber's instrumental rationality in this case is so only within *capitalist* assumptions, not necessarily within the *peasant's* preferences and assumptions. There are, in other words, different forms even of instrumental rationality (as Habermas' (1984) distinction between those tied to power

Habermas' (1984, 1987a) critique and reformulation of the issues involved contrasts the instrumental rationalities of capital and the state to the communicative rationality of the lifeworld from which the former render themselves independent and which in turn they colonise and deform. The point of the concept of rationality in Weber, and to a certain extent in Habermas, however, is primarily methodological rather than substantive: for Weber, these are heuristic tools against which the sociologist can set actual or average actions, processes, and outcomes (Sadri 1992: 11 - 22); for Habermas, they correspond to the point of view of "system" (instrumental rationality) and "lifeworld" (communicative rationality) respectively.

Present in both Habermas and Weber, however, is a keen interest in the process of rational*isation*, classically in the development of instrumental rationality *out of something else* (this is after all the point of the *Protestant Ethic* (Weber 1958)). So even at this relatively abstract and universal level where a "rationality" can be a useful meeting-point between how researchers understand the world and how the people they research think, it is still an *achievement* of a certain kind. For Habermas, instrumental rationality represents the crystallisation of new forms of expert-system (bureaucratic states, capitalist accounting) from the logics of the life-world. For Weber, modern rationality finds its origins in the development of the institution and ideology of self-improvement from Calvinist soteriology. In both cases, then, the development of such rationalities starts from more specific and local contexts, and a substantive analysis can take these as its starting-point.

For my purposes, then, a local rationality is *a formal characteristic* about *the way people make sense of and engage with the world* which is *capable of being generalised* and *taking on a life of its own*. Thus for Weber and Habermas the formal principle of a rational calculation of which means are best suited to achieving given ends enables that particular rethinking of the world we call modernity. Starting from a specific problem in a specific cultural milieu, it could be generalised to encompass all aspects of action and could be effectively used to restructure any other milieu. Thus I am looking for formal elements in the way people act, talk and make sense of the world

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and those tied to money implies). More generally, following in Thompson's (1993) footsteps, the rationality of apparently irrational behaviour has become more widely recognised.

within specific movement milieux which can be generalised, at least in the sense of applying to many areas of activity, notably linking everyday life with movement mobilisation, and which enable people to make sense of power and the political on their own terms. If the potential for a movement project is present within the local rationality, this is because what can be distilled as a rationality is precisely what can be generalised.

It is this sense of rationality as situated that Lukács (1971) appeals to (drawing on Weber's concept of the ideal type) to justify his understanding of class consciousness: the standpoint of the proletariat (to paraphrase Weber) is that viewpoint which the proletariat would logically have if all accidents and contingencies were cleared out of the way. What this misses, however, is the sense of how people actively engage with their world and learn by doing so, just as much as an idealist sense of rationality as "speaking people's actions" does. Rationality comes with a past history of skills and ideas; it is created in response to given situations; and it is developed and changed through the continued engagement with those situations. Even more crucially, it is about how we do things, not only what we think: in this sense it is directly related to Gramsci's intellectual activity. We can certainly think of it in terms of lesser or greater adequacy to a situation, as actors implicitly do when they change how they do things. It is less easy to think that it is possible to stand outside the lifeworlds of six billion people and know in the abstract what the most adequate response is: that derives from a rationalist one-sidedness which has no place in a materialist analysis. What "theory" can do, perhaps, is identify the conditions under which people seem able to develop their response more fully, and say something about the nature of such improved responses in other places or at other points in time.

Movements as the development of local rationalities

One such answer is that the kind of move I have pointed to, from local rationality to campaign, and from campaign to movement project, consists of a process in which local rationalities are abstracted, organised and developed. They are abstracted insofar as they are taken out of their immediate, taken-for-granted lifeworld context and "put to work" in building practical and communicative bridges to *other* lifeworlds. They are organised insofar as they acquire an institutional and theoretical expression whose

explicitness and (relative) autonomy leaves space for their independent operation. And they are developed insofar as this inevitably involves transformation to meet the exigencies of this greater diversity and more challenging ontological situation. This shift, however, is at the same time one of *hegemonising activity*: of connecting different local situations practically and theoretically into movements; of coordination and communication between different movements towards a shared movement project.

It is well known - but rarely theorised - that this process is often experienced by participants as exhilarating and transforming; this is the record (for example) from the Civil Rights Movement in the USA (Jacobs and Landau 1967), from participants in "1968" (Fraser 1988), from consciousness-raising in the women's movement (Sebestyen 1988) and on a smaller scale from people's first experience of "politicisation", as with the student occupation mentioned in chapters five and six. A likely explanation is that participants are experiencing their local rationalities expanding, becoming clarified in their own minds and ratified in others' recognition as they co-construct a shared development of those rationalities. We might add that this process works so well that many of its techniques - labour organising, community development, consciousness-raising, magazine editing, cadre parties etc. - have come to take on a rule-bound "how to do it" character which is at least semi-independent of any specific local situation. (In Berger and Luckmann's (1967) terms, it is a "package" of knowledge with its own "how" and "why" that can be transmitted across social spaces.)

This model of hegemonising activity connects to Berger and Luckmann's sociology of knowledge in another and more substantive way, through Buckner's (1971) unusual analysis of the relevance of their argument to the development of counter culture in America at the end of the 1960s. Buckner argues in essence that the development of ideas and practices, their institutionalisation and location within a hegemonic "symbolic universe" dissected by Berger and Luckmann is not a consensual process but a conflictual one at each step of the way. As corresponding features to the generation of dominant practices and ideas, falsely universalised by Berger and Luckmann, he places primary and secondary deviance (the latter being the result of the interactional identification, naming and sanctioning of the former); corresponding

to institutionalisation (in Berger and Luckmann marked as a qualitative shift by the development of systematised transmission, and so the separation out of the "how" and "why" knowledge involved) are in essence subcultures, whether those of cults, gangs, or what we might now call single-issue social movement organisations; corresponding to the symbolic universe of the dominant ideology he identifies fully-articulated alternative world views, for example in the New Left, the hippy subculture or black nationalism. With the strong qualification that these last are not just ideologies but that their scope - the ability to connect with a range of local rationalities - derives from movement *projects* which attempt to engage with those rationalities *practically*[31], this emphasis seems right. Although I have not followed Buckner's progression in detail, his orientation, in particular the stress on development from local situation to social totality and the emphasis on the corresponding but contrasting shapes of organisation from above and below, parallels the more Gramscian model I have used here.

Local rationalities in conflict

Hegemonising activity, or to use a less ugly phrase the collective development of local rationalities, does not take place in isolation, as a purely "expressive" model would have it. Rather, it takes place in a context of struggle where the social territory into which movements expand is already occupied: activists encounter their opponents not only within "the state", but also within "civil society", which Gramsci describes in precisely these military terms as the outlying fortifications which (in core societies) must be tackled before a successful challenge to the state itself is possible (see Armstrong 1998 on the use of Clausewitzian metaphors for social movement analysis), within their own organisations, and of course within their own life-activity, socialisation, and friendship networks[32].

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[31] Cf. Katsiaficas' account (1987: 117 - 150, 265 - 279) of the extraordinary history of the Black Panther-sponsored alternative constitution in 1970.

[32] Hence the usefulness of a term like struggle to convey the messiness and effort of this activity, as opposed to the metaphors of "surgical warfare" in which the other is at a safe distance and bearing distinctive uniforms. Movement struggles - to borrow the title of Marx's (1977b) discussion of the

What, then, does this conflict consist of? I want to suggest that it can be analysed as the attempt to extend the reach of different local rationalities, as movement projects, into different areas of social life - the self (see Lent 1999 on the local-personal dimension of movement orientations), civil society and the "soft fringes" of the welfare state, ultimately the coercive core of the state - and to restructure these fields in line with the new local rationality or movement project.

If we think in these active terms, we are unlikely to fall into the trap of taking these rationalities in too reified a sense, in an idealist vision of different Ideas colonising the world. To return to the Gramscian model of intellectual activity, a rationality is a way of organising-and-thinking-about our activity (the two elements are not really separable in a learning species, as Marx (1967: 178) observed in his comments on "the worst architect and the best of bees"), actively produced by people working together in given situations and so shaped by their shared learning processes, their needs, the interaction between them and the situation. The production of a movement project, as the "highest level" of abstraction, organisation and development of a local rationality, is a major achievement in finding stable and transferrable ways of doing and thinking about things that have at least some autonomy from this context of production (Alinsky's or Freire's methodologies of community development and popular education are good cases in point), but like any other practices and ideas they must be produced and reproduced, whether by separate strata of "intellectuals" or in people's "intellectual activity", and that their "workability" in different contexts and different languages is not a universal given: they may meet social or historical limits, "stop making sense"[33].

Movement projects, then, start from particular local rationalities. To move through development into "campaigns" and then "movement projects", these local rationalities obviously have to bear some potential relevance to a wide range of other social

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Paris Commune and the Versaillais reaction - are more like civil wars than they are like tank battles; see also Gramsci (1975: 122) for an extended parallel with wars of colonisation.

[33] This has arguably been the fate of the dominant forms of Marxist and labour organising codified in the period of organised capitalism: despite their immense reproducibility through the decades and across the planet during that period, there is now a clear loss of purchase and at a minimum a need for drastic reformulation to make them "work" in ordinary people's lives on anything like the same scale.

groups: if they are overly particularistic they can offer nothing to anyone else. This potential, however, must be actively and creatively developed through intellectual activity, whether proceeding from the group as a whole or from a specialised intellectual stratum (see Rudé 1980 on the relationship between peasant protest and urban intellectuals) or a mixture of the two (as in Gramsci, where the early contribution of the "traditional intelligentsia", typically particularly strong in dependent and peripheral societies where "the state is everything and civil society nothing", makes way over time for the "organic intelligentsia" that has come up through the movement). These are the two important questions to ask of any movement project: where is its starting point, and where is its organising point? I will discuss these questions further in this chapter in relation to the counter culture; in chapter seven I will look briefly at a third kind of question: how broad is the potential relevance of this movement project for other social contexts?

The theory I have sketched is not new, although it is new to put it in precisely these terms. The analysis I have identified in chapter two and attempted to articulate here, of a critical approach to social movements grounded in western Marxism and socialist feminism, is, however, useful for the research project I have set myself here. To return to the criteria for an adequate theory of the counter culture that I identified in chapter one, this theory does not restrict itself *a priori* to a single level of struggle, but is explicitly geared to handling the existence of a wide range of forms of conflict. Secondly, far from assuming a single form of rationality, it directs us to look at different forms of situated rationality as the building blocks of the theory. Thirdly, rather than an ahistorical formulation it seeks to encourage the production of "historical concepts" to enable open forms of theorising by participants. The counter culture is such a historical concept.

Historicising the counter culture

I have already discussed and exemplified (chapter one) the general referents of the counter culture and discussed some national variations within it. In this section I aim first of all to locate the local rationalities of the counter culture in terms of the kinds of experience (Thompson 1963, 1977a) to which they are responses; secondly, to examine the nature of the initial challenge posed by the counter culture to the given

order in the late 1960s and early 1970s; and thirdly, to discuss the subsequent development of this conflict.

If the idea of a general, "top-down" and quantitative analysis of which status groups do what is fatally flawed, what is possible is a qualitative analysis of the kinds of situation to which the counter cultural project responds. In chapters five and six I will examine the formation and development of one such "local rationality" in detail; barring a massive research project, some general themes can be drawn out from this and from the literatures already discussed. In particular, I want to demonstrate the possibility of using the theory developed in this chapter to theorise the counter culture as a whole.

The results of earlier struggles

The most important preconditions for the development of the counter culture, *pace* Inglehart (1990), are (a) a certain amount of "free space" (Bey 1991), of a relative loosening of traditional "authoritarian" power structures of social control (Berger, Berger and Kellner 1974), particularly through what Offe (1984) has called the "decommodification" of certain aspects of working people's lives - that is, the fact of not being continually forced to exchange labour for money under tight power relations; an equivalent concept would certainly be needed for the relative loosening of some aspects of "private" patriarchal control (Walby 1990). The key features include the development and extension of free or affordable education to significant sections of the working class; the development of survivable unemployment assistance and other welfare benefits in some countries; the temporary existence of near-full employment with its corresponding improvements in workers' situations; the development of greater spaces of civic and political freedoms in many states; the weakening of authoritarian child-rearing strategies geared purely towards preparation for work or marriage - in other words, the "movement legacy" of the workers' movement, first-wave feminism and radical-democratic liberalism.

(b) Lash and Urry (1987) and Arrighi (1994) enable us to think of this decommodification and free space as the results of a compromise reached during the period of organised capitalism (Lash and Urry) or the period of productive rather than financial investment (Arrighi) in the "long twentieth century". During this

period, a "closed" mode of social regulation (Wagner 1994) came into being in and around this mode of economic accumulation. This appears, in terms of the dialectic of movements from above and below, not only as a concession aimed at securing capitalist hegemony in core countries through compromises with the demands of the movements from below mentioned above (Moore 1999). It also appears as a "win-win" arrangement capitalising on the beneficial effects of some of these demands for capitalism (Keynesian demand-side economics, the dismantling of older social and cultural forms, the domestic mobilisation of women's "caring labour" (Lynch and McLaughlin 1995) to lower the costs of reproduction, etc.)

The experience of a closed "core" of corporatist decision-making in Western Europe, closed political systems, monolithic corporation and state structures and a top-down welfare state bureaucracy was thus the reverse of this same experience of free space "outside the system" - a rather different situation to that of agrarian conflict or the battles which led to the development of organised capitalism, and one reflected both in an extreme tension between these two experiences and a preferred resolution oscillating between hyper-libertarian revolution and privatist withdrawal, with commitment even to *movement* organisations a major and precarious achievement.

The local rationalities at the root of the counter culture, then, are responses to situations structured by previous movements from above (the "Fordist mode of production" (Harvey 1990)) and below (the state-centred movement forms of social democracy, Stalinism and mainstream trade unionism along with hierarchically oriented nationalist movements and the state-oriented first-wave women's movements). The resulting "high modern" social order (Giddens 1990) - characterised by the dominance of productive capital, nation-states, and "organised" modes of representation and consumption - is a good illustration of Touraine's (1981) point that the stakes of movement struggles are the "historicity" or capacity for self-direction of "a society" and in a sense constitute that society through the institutions set up on both sides to manage this conflict (Lash and Urry 1987) - the interventionist state, the welfare state, organised capital and labour, the service class, mass political parties, technocratic national planning, frequently "pillarised" societies, and so on.

The first counter cultural challenge

It is this order - hence also this definition of what is at stake - that is challenged, both from above and from below, in the late 60s and early 70s. A useful metaphor for this is MacIntyre's: "the problem about real life is that moving one's knight to QB3 may always be replied to with a lob across the net" (cited in Barker 1997: 9). In other words, a routine move within the struggles of one particular order (Kt-QB3) can be met at any time with a move that opens "a whole new ball game".

The challenge from below appears to come first. It consists not only of the "political" challenge symbolised as "1968" - the libertarian rejection of organised state solutions, whether of the left or of the right; the populist rejection of the Cold War and in particular the proxy battle in Vietnam (Herring 1998; where the "stakes of struggle" between the two proxy states also clearly constituted a key range of social relations between first and third world), the wildcat and rank-and-file challenge to the institutions of corporatist mediation, the feminist challenge to the barriers excluding women from and segregating them within the public sphere, the black challenge to the imposition of an ethnic division of labour[34].

The challenge is also the "cultural" rejection of existing social relations symbolised by "1967" - the rejection of the nuclear family as site of power and consumption by sexual liberationists, gay and lesbian activists, radical feminists and alternative parenting; the rejection of Fordist labour discipline and organised consumption by youth movements from Mods and Rockers to hippies and through communal, alternative and religious withdrawals from that world (Partridge 1973); the rejection of existing cultural forms through new music, drug subcultures and alternative media; the rejection of dominant ideologies and discourses and the creation or revival of Marxist, feminist, pseudo-Indian, pseudo-Chinese, ecological etc. systems of knowledge (Eyerman and Jamison 1991).

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[34] In terms of Giddens' (1990) dimensions of high modernity, all four are directly tackled in the movements of this period, emphasising the depth of the rejection of the existing stakes of existing movement conflicts - for example, antifascism in West Germany challenging the nation-state; anti-militarist action around the globe, challenges in the anti-nuclear movement to capitalist industrialism, and widespread critiques of police and intelligence surveillance, etc.

The point here is not to draw neat boundaries between the two; as in any "moment of collective effervescence" political commitment brings new cultural choices, and cultural issues bump up against political relations of force. Nor is the point to argue that these movements were consistent, successful, immune to incorporation or whatever. It is to observe that they mark a widespread (in the sense of mass participation) and dramatic (in the perception of participants, opponents and contemporaries) breach with the existing forms of social relations - in other words, a rejection of the stakes, formations and strategies of the existing "war of position" between organised capital and organised labour within nation-state contexts (Leggewie 1998).

Although many of these movements did indeed fail or were incorporated, it would be a mistake to hold that they failed to challenge the existing hegemony successfully. This is clear from the widespread resort to unusual forms of coercion on the part of state authorities from the USA to Mexico and from Prague to Paris (Katsiaficas 1987, Caute 1988) - as we recall, for Gramsci coercion marks the limits of consent; in particular (we might note from a Weberian point of view) what is widely seen as *illegitimate* violence: Chicago 1968, the WTO invasion of Czechoslovakia, the role of the RUC and B Specials in northern Ireland (McCann 1993), or de Gaulle's implicit threat to "do a Thiers" in France. To the extent that this challenge was contained (cf Storey 1994), it was contained by a *new* form of movement project from above (cf Brinkley 1998 on the Right as the main beneficiary of 1968 in America).

The response from above

This latter can be identified as the "disorganising" or "globalising" (depending on whether we view it from the point of view of the nation-state or that of the world-system) strategy of the global service class in particular since the oil crashes of 1973 - 75. This regime change (in Arrighi's (1994) terms, the shift to investment in finance capital or C - M_1) and the service class actor that brought it about (Sklair 1995) have been extensively studied (Lash and Urry 1987) as have the "internal" reasons (internal to the logic of capital, that is) driving this changeover (Harvey 1990, Jameson 1990). What needs to be stressed, however, is that the idea underlying these analyses, of a self-sufficient logic of capital, is deeply flawed (Thompson 1977a). Arrighi, following

Braudel (1974), even recognises that "capitalism" as such, in the sense of the flows of capital, is only one element even of "productive" economic activity; but this insight is not followed by any significant changes to his largely "internalist" model.

Following Singh (1999), I would argue that hegemony always entails an active taking account of and responding to pressure from below, *pace* Foucault (1979), it is not a matter of the top-down imposition of an internally coherent system, discourse or discipline, against which resistance is individual and negligible in terms of its effects. The insulation of "pure" capitalism from the social world it depends on is itself a complex achievement which is regularly threatened. In "1968" the existing institutions for managing and channelling pressure from below failed - most symbolically in the first Matignon round, where the CGT's negotiators were booed out of Boulogne-Billancourt by a workforce whose demands had suddenly far outreached what "the system" could deliver (Joffrin 1988). Similarly, the "managed consumer" was no longer given - whether the demise of the 1950s consumption idyll, the breakup of the existing music market and particularly the elite-popular distinction (signalled practically by the success of 1960s musicians in gaining the creative control their 1950s predecessors had not had), the rise of drug subcultures or the refusal of the work ethic (Berger, Berger and Kellner 1974). Finally, the general shift in favour of movements from below (underpinned by near-full employment) threatened profit margins through rising wage claims but also the growing pressure to turn "externalities" into "internal costs" (rises in welfare, pressure for more rights for women and minority workers, pressure to take ecological considerations into account) and the extension of "decommodified" areas (Offe 1984).

The "inward investment" of organised capitalism, in other words, now found itself operating within a new context which was deeply unfavourable to continuing profit rates at levels higher than could be achieved by financial investment. Thus the switch of the 1970s, with all its well-known consequences from structural mass unemployment to new global divisions of labour, was in a sense a forced pull-out from an increasingly unfavourable battlefield and in this sense both an admission of tactical defeat and an unintended consequence of the growing strength of movements from below, not so much between 1968 and 1973-5 as between 1945 and 1968. So this shift was also a strategic moving of the battle to a more favourable terrain, or (to

extend MacIntyre's metaphor) if the response "from below" to the sedate Kt-QB3 of the corporatist system was a lob over the net, the response "from above" was to move the goalposts.

I am not of course suggesting that this was the perception of the global service class as a whole, though the social and cultural cohesion of the group and its "directive and theoretical" organising role does suggest that insofar as any group can be a conscious social actor (cf Melucci 1989), it is they. But I do want to argue that the dominant internalist and purely economistic account of the reasons for the shift from M - C to C - M_1 or from organisation to disorganisation needs to be put in context and seen as the way the global service class understood (within the language of relative profits which is after all its native language, not just ideologically but also the way it coordinates its practice) the new context it found itself in. Again following the logic of its own language, it considered this in the instrumental terms of the changing returns on profits rather than asking after the cultural and political reasons for this change. These latter kinds of questions were asked somewhat later, as new state elites tried to remake their territories and populations - and states - to respond to this changing investment pattern. If there are 5 years between 1968 and the first oil crash in 1973, there are another 5 between the decisive crash in 1975 and the arrival of Thatcher (1979) and Reagan (1980) in power, widely understood (Hall 1988) as the development of a new kind of hegemonic movement from above[35].

Just as in large part the hegemony of the globalising project depends on its ability to capture and coopt pressures from below, so movements from below in this period have largely been successful to the extent that they have been "pushing on an open door". Thus, women's movements' demands arose primarily out of a situated (in class and ethnic as well as gender terms) perception of women's needs. However, the relative readiness of capitalist states to facilitate women's entry to the labour market (Walby 1990) as compared to their relative unwillingness to make serious childcare provision (except where, as in Sweden, women's movements had strong positions within the state, or where as in France natalist commitments - for military and ethnic

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[35] Incidentally, alternative responses were possible: though Kohl in 1982 follows the same lines, France and Italy moved leftwards with Mitterrand and Craxi, with varying degrees of success.

reasons - outweighed economic considerations) is best explained in terms of the growing pressure in the globalist project for the commodification of all potential labour and the declining willingness to make concessions on profits - and is in some measure a sign of the extent to which the new order "works" for capital, but also of the increased hegemonic power of the new order as against the old.

Preconditions for the war of position

If the disorganising project of the global service class cannot be seen in purely internal terms, neither can the project of the counter culture. In this section I will suggest some general considerations as to how we can understand contemporary movements from below in a *historical* as well as a *dialectical* framework, in other words how we can locate the counter culture within the long history of movement conflicts. To be able to challenge the existing hegemony so successfully in the late 1960s and early 1970s (successfully not in the sense of achieving all their goals, though a surprising number of concessions - from welfare to voting age to withdrawal from Vietnam to an end to gerrymandering - were extracted, but rather in the sense outlined earlier of forcing a whole new strategy on their opponents in capital and the state: a strategic victory, in other words (Capanna 1998)) there had to be a considerable period of prior development.

As is to be expected within a highly institutionalised order, this development was fragmented and rather "working towards" convergence than starting from any common point: to be a coherent social actor, even briefly, is a major achievement and usually only sustained over time through control over resources to enable unproblematic routinisation. Important developments of this period - from the early 1950s to the mid 1960s - include the development of new campaigning (Black Civil Rights' development of non violent direct action) and organising (the British peace movement's achievement in sustaining a national political campaign outside party-political structures) skills; the development of a whole range of "New Left" theories across the Northern hemisphere and in a series of Third World countries; the creation of significant autonomous subcultural spaces in youth lifestyles from Beats to hippies; the development of a new range of techniques of the self from "Movement organising" to "psychedelic voyaging", etc. (Gitlin 1988). Most crucially, but least

spectacularly, it involved the development of new networks of cooperation (through drug use as much as through student politics), new means of communication (from beat literature via the alternative press to rock music), new ways of experiencing the self, new agreement on shared goals (the rhetoric of liberation) and new "repertoires of contention" (the sit-in, non-violent direct action (NVDA), street theatre, the student occupation, etc.)

This kind of movement project is of course still quite vague: ideas may seem clearer than practice, convergence may mask mutual misunderstanding, and when the time comes some participants may vanish while new people are mobilised. Nevertheless this "Movement" - at the time usually referred to in the singular, marking precisely this looseness of definition but also its widely shared character - was a necessary condition for the "war of movement" of 1968: not that action could not take place "spontaneously" once the possibility was seen, but that "spontaneous" participants drew their sense of "what to do", "how to do it" and "why" from the "frames" offered by the existing movement project. This dialectic was of course crucial for making 1968 a *world*-revolutionary moment, as it had been at the end of the First World War or in 1848, but can best be seen in a single country such as France, where despite the fact that (unlike West Germany or the USA) the events of May took the state and media totally by surprise, Hamon and Rotman (1987, 1988) have shown the prior development of new leadership elites in the French "New Left" - not only the Situationists, but crucially the opposition to the Algerian War. In terms of repertoire, the movement very obviously drew on the Parisian tradition of urban revolt, and in terms of themes in constant reference to West Germany, America and Czechoslovakia as well as Vietnam (Caute 1988).

The war of movement

This new period, then, from about 1967 to 1969 in countries such as France, West Germany, Czechoslovakia, the USA or Northern Ireland, falls within what Gramsci (using metaphors from the First World War) designated the "war of movement": the head-on challenge to the central relations of coercive power (1975 [1932-1934]: 1613 - 1616). Later writers have either celebrated the location of "new social movements" within civil society (Cohen 1985, 1996, Offe 1985) or denied that there is a "Winter

Palace" to storm at all (Jordan and Lent 1999). To the first it is sufficient to observe that this argument entails a total separation between "1968" and "new social movements"; a better way of putting it might be to say that what they describe as new social movements are precisely movements from below within the "war of position" in civil society that Gramsci thought necessarily preceded the "war of movement" in Western European contexts (1975 [1930-32]: 865-867)[36].

As to the latter point, the value of Gramsci's argument is precisely that whether power is concentrated in one strategic point or not is a question of what kind of society we live in. In "peripheral" countries, "the state is everything and civil society nothing", and (as in Russia) there really is a Winter Palace to storm, and by so doing power relations really do change, for good or ill. In "core" countries, this is not the case and power has precisely to be conquered slowly in civil society before an attack on the state can succeed. Yet even if it is not the only, or even the most important, site of social power relations, any serious attempt at transforming those relations will sooner or later bump up against the legal and administrative framework of the state and its coercive machinery. Furthermore, the ability to challenge the state seriously, even if unsuccessfully, is a major achievement for a social movement, given the resources of consent and coercion at the state's disposal. For these reasons, while "wars of movement" - successful or not - are only one "moment" of social movements, they are an important one, and conceptually and practically very different from "wars of position".

The direct challenge to the state reaches its height in the late 60s, then, with the occupation of inner-city Paris - and of the Bogside - the radicalisation of the Prague Spring and the Democratic Convention at Chicago. In each case, it is defeated *in these terms* of state power, whether by recourse to outside help (the British Army, the tanks of the Warsaw Pact) or by the internal resources of the old order, sufficient in the core to hold on to power at least temporarily (de Gaulle's re-election followed by

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[36] In relation to the relative isolation of the West German and American movements and the electoral triumph of de Gaulle, it could be argued that Gramsci was correct as far as the core goes, though the need to call on external force in Northern Ireland and Czechoslovakia suggests that, as he himself observed, this situation obtains in some societies - Italy - and not in others - Russia.

his resignation the next year; the implementation of emergency legislation in West Germany followed by the arrival of the SPD in power; the failure to get anti-war candidates selected in the USA followed by withdrawal from Vietnam, etc.)

The war of position

This led the counter culture into a "war of position", at least within the core where this was possible. This is what is described by critical theorists approvingly in terms of self-limiting movements within civil society (minus the observation that actors limited themselves in part because they were aware of the existence of effective limits set by clubs and bayonets in a way their predecessors of a few years ago had often not been). It is thus a period within which the tendency is often to avoid general claims of a kind that would lead their proponents to run up against what they perceived as the existing limits beyond which violent intervention would follow. This has to do less with the idealist explanation of the problems with universalist ideas and more with the practicalities of alliance and movement-building: broad and far-reaching alliances are both more necessary preconditions and more plausible byproducts of mounting a serious challenge to the state than they are of campaigns within the fragmented and fragmenting terrain of the welfare state and cultural formations.

Consistent with this, organisation (including violent and illegal organisation) around broad and radical ideas has remained possible where the counter culture has been able to survive as a pillarised subculture in its own right[37] (eg Germany or Italy); where this has been simulated in small-group contexts (cadre parties and terrorist organisations in the 1970s); in contexts of desperation, marginalisation and utopianism (Rastafarianism, squats, communes); or where "civil society was nothing" or more to the point the state had lost massively in legitimacy (Czechoslovakia, Northern Ireland).

This long war of position between counter cultural and disorganising projects, now roughly 25 years old, has not been fought only from below, although as e.g. McKay's (1996) work shows the counter-cultural struggle from below has its own history and

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[37] See Poguntke (1989) for an analysis of "realignment" within European party systems, consistent with this argument.

developments - the rise of women's and anti-nuclear movements in the early 70s, the development of organised urban and rural "scenes", the flourishing of zines, bookshops, cafés, venues, alternative radio stations etc., the entry of Marxist, feminist and minority work into the academy, the development of women's refuges, community development projects, anti-racist work, third world solidarity centres etc. into a grey area in and on the fringes of the welfare state, etc[38].

It has also been a struggle waged insistently from above: Thatcher's attack on the GLC and the neo-conservative rollback of challenges to dominant cultural forms in Britain and the USA; intensive policing and intelligence intervention from attacks on Black Panthers and Red Brigades to the rollback of civil rights in West Germany and the exclusion of radicals from state employment; the "war on drugs" and moral panics over new religions; the physical restructuring of inner-city areas (Berman 1983), and more generally an ongoing discourse of trivialisation ("hippies"), demonisation ("terrorists"), and silencing ("Sixties ideals") geared to undermining the "conditions of plausibility" of countercultural ideas and practices[39].

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[38] A similar analysis is found in Taylor and Whittier (1995):

> "Rooted in the radical feminist movement of the early 1970s, lesbian feminists built an extensive network of alternative institutions such as bookstores, music festivals, self-defense and martial arts schools, rape crisis centers, publishing houses, and travel agencies. The communities nourished a complex oppositional culture in which participants politicized the actions of daily life [....] We found that in the hostile climate of the 1980s, the culture of lesbian feminist communities not only served to comfort, protect, and console activists in retreat, but also nourished women involved in myriad protests, both within and outside the women's movement." (1995: 165)

[39] The war of position has itself of course also had a developmental history, though contrary to many idealist and Anglophone writers this has varied enormously from one local situation to another (see e.g. Threlfall 1996 or Kaplan 1992 on European women's movements; Richardson and Rootes 1995 or Müller-Rommel 1989 on European Green Parties). It is possible that it is changing shape again, and even returning to a war of movement, as social-democratic governments across Europe, some with significant "New Politics" input, demonstrate the narrow limits available "within the system"; as new kinds of direct action spread across the minority world (eg McNeish 1999); and as new kinds of alliances "from below" between movements are explored (Encuentros; June 18th; Reclaim the Streets etc.) This theme will be picked up again in chapter seven.

It is this general context that forms the rational core for the fragmenting and naïve analyses of "new social movements" (reifying a particular moment of this history as universal), "postmodernism" (as Harvey (1990) and Jameson (1990) have argued, catching something of the experience but failing to understand it and often refusing the project of understanding), "postmaterialism" (treating the complex orientations produced in struggle as simple linear products of psychological development), etc. Unlike neo-traditionalist left writers (e.g. Eagleton 1996), I am not suggesting that these authors are not responding to real experiences, but rather that they are abstracting those experiences from an actual history of struggle between situated social forces.

If we relocate those experiences within their historical context, "new social movements" writing (Roth and Rucht 1987) appears as capturing one part of movement projects from below during the "war of position", but confusing the issue by bracketing both 1968 and state responses out of consideration and so offering purely endogenous - and often mechanistic - explanations of changing movement orientations (Bagguley 1992). "Postmodernist" writing (e.g. Laclau and Mouffe 1985) registers the breakdown of a historically specific moment of counter-hegemony but fails to see the broader structures established from above within which this loss of "grand narratives" operates (Jameson 1990). Similarly, the concept of "postmaterialism" (Inglehart 1990) treats orientations which are in fact complex movement *achievements* (Melucci 1989) as the mechanical *products* of particular childhood environments. In other words, these approaches are curiously weak on agency, both that of movements from below and that of movements from above, and tend to ignore the latter or take it for granted.

As we shall see (chapters five and six), contemporary movement participants do not necessarily confine themselves to "old" or "new" movements alone; do not always refuse to see themselves within broader perspectives; and to the extent that they step outside dominant frameworks of meanings and practices, this begins with a dissociation from other people in comparable social contexts. To make these kinds of judgements, however, we need first to be able to account for our own claims to understand the local rationalities of movement participants (chapter four).

Chapter four: the politics of knowledge

Introduction

On the basis of the arguments developed to date, the key problem facing social movement researchers is to develop a methodology capable of guiding effective research into local rationalities while being sensitive to the power relations involved in moving from local rationalities to movement projects and retaining a sense of openness, potentiality and totality.

In this chapter, I argue for the centrality of research on the skilled activity of ordinary participants as a means of examining local rationalities; examine the methodological problems arising from this; and discuss the implications for my own research.

Starting-points: the local rationalities of "movement milieux"

The argument developed in chapter three sees "social movement" as a directional activity proceeding (at its most developed) from local rationalities to campaigns to movement projects. This coincides, as far as the first two categories are concerned, with Melucci's (1989) view that social movements are complex accomplishments underpinned by "submerged networks" for which mobilisation (as "campaigns" in my terms) is only one possible mode of activity, contrasted to that of "latency":

> "The normal situation of today's 'movement' is a network of small groups submerged in everyday life which require a personal involvement in experiencing and practicing cultural innovation. They emerge only on specific issues, as for instance the big mobilizations for peace, for abortion, against nuclear policy, etc. The submerged network, though composed of several small groups, is a system of exchange (persons and information circulate along the network; some agencies, such as local free radios, bookshops, magazines provide a certain unity.) [...] Latency creates new cultural codes and makes individuals practice them." (1985: 800)

A similar assessment is present in Vester et al.'s (1993) focus on local movement milieux as relatively stable structures underlying the rise and fall of movement activity. But to make this identification is not yet to have a theoretical grasp of such milieux capable of grounding research.

Conceptual issues

The ultimate shape of this assessment, in an author like Melucci, is still determined by a conceptual separation between networks and movements "proper", tied to a conception of movement which remains governed by a political reductionism. This is not the standard reading of Melucci, so it is worth going into some detail. Although for Melucci movements' effects on the wider world are achieved at least as much through the "signs" sent by their organisational structure (1989: 60) as through any instrumental effect on the state, and although movement networks and milieux (in effect, alternative public spheres) are acknowledged to have an independent existence (1989: 60, 70), what ultimately appears to constitute a movement is presence in the dominant public sphere (cf. 1989: 72). At the same time, however, Melucci suggests that movement networks are ultimately dependent on political activity, which renders the whole argument rather circular (1989: 71 - 2; cf. 1985: 801) and leads to the "paradoxical" (incoherent?) conclusion that

> "[U]nless collective action is represented it becomes fragmented and dispersed; at the same time, because it is never fully capable of representation it reappears later on new ground, with changed objectives and altered strategies." (1989: 72)

The real difficulty seems to be with Melucci's concepts: his practical understanding of the actual range (from everyday life to challenges to the state) and diversity (from cultural to political) of social movements doesn't really fit into a definition of social movement as ultimately political. Although he is a good enough sociologist to sacrifice consistency of conceptual usage for the sake of his substantive understanding, he does not try to develop concepts adequate to that understanding. While he is prepared at one point to argue that "[l]atency and visibilty are the two interrelated poles of collective action" (1989: 70) and that

> "there is a major difference between mobilization and a movement [...] [M]ovements live in another dimension: in the everyday network of social relations, in the

> capacity and will to reappropriate space and time, and in the attempt to practice alternative life-styles" (1989: 71)

nevertheless he treats "violence and terrorism" (1989: 58), "the proliferation of neo-religious groups and the move towards hard drugs" (1989: 59), and "sects, emotional support circles or therapy groups" (1989: 72) as *not* part of the "everyday network of social relations" or of "collective action", despite the fact that he proceeds to devote considerable space to discussion of struggles around issues such as the body and mental health. A possible reading of this would be to see this as an opposition of "the search for individuation" (1989: 59) to "collective action", but one page earlier the former was seen as a shift within within the "development of a new model of collective action" (1989: 58). In an earlier work, Melucci had noted

> "In the field of collective action the lack of more adequate concepts makes it difficult to get rid of a notion such as 'social movement'; but I am aware that the concept of 'movement network' is a temporary adjustment covering a lack of more satisfactory definitions and perhaps facilitating the transition to another paradigm." (1985: 799)

Refocussing research

Within a materialist theory of social movement, however, political campaigns are seen as *one* possible product of local rationalities, which latter are of interest *in themselves* as the ultimate explanans, and not simply to the extent that they produce explicitly "political" effects. If articulated political action is an initial explanandum, then, the search for its cause leads to the discovery that the same cause may explain other forms of social action - as Thompson put it, "the Luddite cropper [...] the 'utopian' artisan, and even the deluded follower of Joanna Southcott" (1963: 12) as much as the committed trade unionist or the socialist organiser[40].

As the concept of "movement" broadens and deepens, so too does the focus of research; notably, it moves one step "down" from elaborated ideologies and formal organisations to the movement milieux, local rationalities and ordinary participants out of which the former grow. This is an important shift in focus for a historical

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[40] As Robbins (1988) shows, the sociology of "new religious movements" has drawn quite explicitly on the social movements and new social movements literature for some time; see also Hannigan 1993.

sociology - both in the sense that this "history from below" is looking at more "fundamental" features of particular historical periods[41] and in the sense of retaining a clearer sense of openness and determinacy. When we research local rationalities, the determining situations to which they are skilled responses come more fully into focus.

On the other hand, a focus on local rationalities alerts us to the openness of what participants do with them. If we start from a specific *product* of local rationalities, we can either restrict ourselves to describing it or - constructing a retrospective or synchronic account - produce a causal discussion suggesting that it has to be this way and no other. Yet the owl of Minerva only needs to fly at dusk - and the Angel of History only needs to look backwards - if our sole focus is on the existing *products* of social action. If we are interested in the shapes of that action itself, we can both show how actors combine it in particular ways and why, *without* implying that it has to be this way. In other words, we can produce open concepts which can be of use for movement participants in considering their own action: by reflecting their own action back to them, certainly, but also by introducing a concept of *skill* which makes of action not simply an instrumental goal-rationality, an automatic reaction to conditions or a discourse in action, but rather something which is hard to produce, which comes out of a history, a context and an attempt at collective action, and which we can do more or less well.

Methodological implications

The proposition that local rationalities are the way in which the everyday activities of social networks are structured conceals two important methodological shifts. The first is that it gives no a priori ontological primacy to *political* activities, or to activities of any particular type. It may be that these networks are thoroughly

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[41] In the sense of longer-lasting and potentially productive of multiple campaigns: as Davies and Flett put it, writing of "hidden from history" approaches to researching activism,

> "[T]he ideas are carried forward and, from time to time, developed by networks of activists. It is these activists who are hidden until the next upsurge of struggle occurs when they surface to influence that struggle to one degree or another" (1999: 3).

politicised - or it may be that politics is simply one aspect, and not necessarily the most important, of the inner life of such networks. Politicisation makes for a certain coherence; it is not, however, as the history of cultural conflicts in Britain suggests (McKay 1996), the only way to achieve that "representation" that concerns Melucci[42]. As Touraine writes:

> "[A]ll aspects of social and cultural organization manifest, instead of general values, *both* cultural patterns and power relations, and the social movements which express them." (1985: 766)

The point is not to exclude the political, rather to relativise it and rethink its meanings; as Gordon puts it,

> "If political is to do with power, there are ways in which the masses are involved in political activity and political relationships in their daily lives. There is no reason why questions of power, even the measurement of power, should not be fit into descriptions of, for example, women's writing, mothering, housework, or leisure." (1986: 25)

A second shift is that no special priority is given to the experiences of "intellectuals" in the sense of specialised organisers and thinkers. Instead, the emphasis is on the ways in which "all human beings are intellectuals", that is, organise their everyday lives and think and talk about it. This may be particularly relevant in contemporary movements, where, as Offe writes,

> "while there are at best rudimentary membership roles, programs, platforms, representatives, officials, staffs, and membership dues, [these movements] consist of participants, campaigns, spokespeople, networks, voluntary helpers, and donations [....] [T]here seems to be a strong reliance upon de-differentiation, that is, the fusion of public and private roles, instrumental and expressive behavior, community and

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[42] Representation is only one aspect of the development of campaigns and movement projects, along with co-operation, organisation, theoretical articulation etc. The extent to which movements *need* to develop their "representation", for example within a parliament or the mass media, is historically conditioned by the existence or otherwise of these institutions, as well as by their relevance vis-a-vis movement-internal organisations; in the terms of Lipset and Rokkan (1967), it is a sign above all of the breakdown of cleavage alignment.

> organization, and in particular a poor and at best transient demarcation between the roles of 'members' and formal 'leaders'." (1985: 829 - 830)

The weight of "the political" and of full-time participants, then, is particularly weak in the counter culture in general by comparison with the movement projects of organised capitalism (and in Ireland by comparison with core countries). Even in other contexts, however, it is useful to problematise this relationship rather than take it for granted.

Movement milieux

To study social movements from below, finally, it is useful to look at milieux where the alternative local rationalities relevant to these movements have been relatively well developed, in other words at areas of the social world where the hegemonic rationality has been at least partially challenged.

Hence a focus on *movement* networks, sets of social relationships which are already significantly structured or created around alternative local rationalities. This need not be, and for movements from below probably never can be, a total thing; some elements of the dominant rationality are necessarily present wherever it is dominant. But it would be difficult to study local rationalities in any positive, active sense (as opposed to the purely defensive sense of "resistance", which has been studied in depth (e.g. Hall and Jefferson 1991)) without looking at contexts where they have been worked out to some extent in practice and have achieved a certain level of development and complexity[43].

"Movement milieux" (Vester 1993: 124 - 125) - long-standing networks that routinely produce campaigning mobilisation, and where elements of counter-hegemonic movement projects are present in practice and theory - are then particularly useful *both* as a way of situating existing campaigns and movement projects in relation to

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[43] As Fantasia and Hirsch put it,

> "[W]e often find, constructed beyond the sight and earshot of the powerful, socially structured 'havens' that, in the context of acute social struggle, serve as a social encasement for oppositional cultural creation, providing a spatial and social-organizational basis for cultural transformation." (1995: 146)

particular local rationalities *and* as a way of thinking about what other possible articulations - as campaigns and movement projects - these rationalities could have given rise to in the past and might give rise to in the future.

Skill and knowledge

How can *local* rationalities be researched, then? Rationality, in the related approaches of Weber (1984), Lukács (1971) and Habermas (1984, 1987a) appears initially as a rational*ist* category - that is, one (apparently if not always in practice) derived from relatively abstract considerations of social theory - possible sources of legitimacy or more exactly possible kinds of legitimate reason for Weber, the objective situation of the proletariat vis-à-vis the social totality for Lukács, the implications of speech acts for Habermas. It then follows that what we can expect to find as the result of empirical research are essentially upsets of this pattern - disturbances and contingencies for Weber, political-theoretical failures (implicitly) for Lukács, deformation, instrumentalisation and colonisation for Habermas.

While these are certainly not non-answers - for Weber, the empirical knowledge that is produced is found through this gap, while the pure type is presumably a more general contribution to scientific knowledge; for Lukács, there is presumably a process of increasingly rational action; for Habermas, the two kinds of rationality are meticulously shown to have the same origin - none of these approaches leaves us much space to *learn* from the social world, which is of course a common difficulty with rationalist accounts. An alternative way of putting this objection is that categories such as "instrumental rationality", "value-rationality", "substantive rationality", "formal rationality" and "communicative rationality" are themselves *formal* rather than substantive. Until we know *what* results, *what* values, *what* form, *what* substance, *what* criteria of truth, sincerity and normative rightness are employed, we have a highly formalist theory, which remains in essence a principle of classification: to be used in effective interpretation we need to go beyond these categories.

Local rationality as skill

Within critical realist approaches, rationality comes to appear as a central, *but only provisionally known* category: no longer a function of the workings of language, but a way of thinking about how far our existing abilities - physical, mental and verbal - enable an effective engagement *from specific locations* with the not-yet-fully-known real. Another way of thinking this local rationality, then, might be skill. This understanding is particularly important to Gramsci's conceptualisation of intellectual activity:

> "The active mass human being acts practically, but does not have a clear theoretical consciousness of this activity, which is however a knowledge of the world, in that it transforms it. In fact, their theoretical consciousness can be historically in contrast with their practical activity. It can almost be said that they have two theoretical consciousnesses (or one contradictory consciousness): one implicit in their activity and which truly unites them with all their collaborators in the practical transformation of reality; and one which is superficially explicit or verbal, which they have inherited from the past and have accepted without criticism. Nevertheless, this 'verbal' consciousness is not without consequences: it connects them to a given social group and influences them in their moral conduct and in the direction of their will, in more or less energetic ways, which can lead to a point in which the contradictory nature of their consciousness does not permit any action, any decision or any choice, and produces a situation of moral and political passivity. Critical self-understanding thus comes about via a struggle of political 'hegemonies', of opposing forms of direction, first in the field of ethics, then in that of politics, to arrive at a superior elaboration of their own conception of the real." (Gramsci 1991 (1932 - 33): 13[44])

To rephrase this argument: human beings have two kinds of rationality available to them. One part of this is their practical knowledge, which can reasonably be described as skill insofar as this is the tacit knowledge (local rationality) of how to engage with the kinds of problems they find themselves faced with in the situations

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[44] The last part of this has already been quoted in chapter three. In this context, the construction of the link between local rationalities and movement projects as one of conflictual development becomes more visible.

they are in. However, there is also the verbal knowledge available to them and the "official" ways of doing things. Under routine situations, of course, this is precisely where hegemony is deployed; under others, it could appear as the sedimented skill of a movement from below. Such movements seek precisely to give their tacit knowledge a recognised and institutionalised theory and practice by displacing existing "official" language and routines. This is the sense of Wainwright's (1994) theorisation of the knowledge-productive role of social movements from below, elaborated within an explicit critical realist framework: movements from below know things about the world that are not captured by the "official story".

Skill and social movements

As Berger and Luckmann (1967) argue, institutions cannot exist without knowledgeable human activity; alternatively, we could say that institutions or practices are a means of making given modes of skilled activity practically available[45]. These modes of skilled activity, as Gramsci observes, can be prediscursive in the sense of contradicting currently hegemonic ways of talking and organising; they can also, however, become prediscursive through retraditionalisation, in the sense of becoming sufficiently institutionalised not to need verbal explanation, and in some cases of becoming so "taken-for-granted" as to be abstracted from lifeworld contexts altogether (consider Habermas' (1984, 1987a) analysis of money and power). Language is itself a form in which skilled activity can be sedimented (consider the practical orientations embodied in the languages used to discuss emotion, ethics or kinship), but only one form among several.

If human activity is practical learning activity, then skill is something that can be developed[46]; whether practically, in direct interaction with the natural and social

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[45] Eyerman and Jamison put this slightly differently:

> "[C]ognitive praxis is there, but its dimensions must be found by someone looking for them. They guide actors but not necessarily consciously or explicitly. Even more importantly, they cannot exist without the actors being guided by them. They are a kind of glue that makes a social movement what it is."(1991: 62)

[46] It can also be lost, not only in contexts of deskilling but also in periods of reaction, which consist among other things in a sustained assault on the institutions that embody the skills of subordinate

world, or indirectly, for example by transmission of particular modes of organising social movements and thinking about politics. The point of Marxist or feminist theory and organisation, insofar as they are "theories from and for movements", is arguably precisely to enable such indirect learning, to avoid having to reinvent the wheel.

Social movements are a privileged case of such learning, as Vester's (1975) analysis of Thompson's *Making* seeks to establish. For Vester, social movements represent "collective learning processes", in which the elements Marx and Engels (1967) analyse as key to class conflict – an increasingly clearer self-understanding, a fuller grasp of social structure and historical process, and an increasingly adequate mode of organisation and struggle – are generated in the conflict with a movement's opponents. Similarly, Eyerman and Jamison write:

> "The collective articulation of movement identity can be likened to a process of social learning in which movement organisations act as structuring forces, opening a space in which creative interaction between individuals can take place." (1991: 55)

Skill and methodology

This concept of skill involves a significant rethinking of conventional methodological categories, in that (a) verbalised accounts of skilled activity are a necessary part of maintaining, developing and transmitting it as well as of researching it. At the same time, they are unlikely to be complete. This is so (b) because of the relationship between tacit and verbal knowledge where tacit knowledge (though less stable and institutionalised than verbal) underlies the production of the latter and is routinely somewhat "ahead of" (more skilled than) what has been formalised. It is so also (c) because on this account skilled activity is itself a key element in social struggle - so that (as in the "hidden transcripts" argument) tacit skill may be (indeed routinely - that is, in hegemonic situations - *is*) running directly counter to verbalised skill or (as in the "Good Soldier Schweik" situation) playing with and on it in "second-order" ways.

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movements, from political parties and the movement media down to basic conceptions of the world: particular us / them distinctions, basic ethical categories such as solidarity, and so on.

If skill is so central to movement action and social conflict, it is unsurprising that movement institutions devote much time and effort to transmitting it. As Eyerman and Jamison (1991) show, complex "professional" movements devote significant resources to elaborating "cosmological" (that is, ideological), organisational and technical knowledge. In less professional contexts - such as the Irish alternative press, or indeed in my own interviews in the counter culture in Dublin - one can get deeply frustrated (as a sociologist, but also as an activist) by the *lack* of explicit ideological or organisational discussion, and the total preponderance of "technical" knowledge of an apparently "taken-for-granted" kind - pieces of legislation, polemic facts, misunderstandings about "Celtic" religion - with no explanation as to its purpose.

But if this apparently "technical" discussion is fitted into a broader conception of skilled activity - how to win court cases, how to argue, how to build networks (to quote Watson et al. 1997, *Campaigns: and how to win them!*) - it starts to make more sense within the more general categories, widely deployed in the movement, of "information", "resources" and "networking". In the literature from more highly organised counter cultures, explicit discussions of skilled activity dominate the movement's own literature: how to do NVDA, how to run a group, how to argue, how to keep yourself going, how to crack a squat, how to build a bong, how to avoid trenchfoot....

In my own interviews, four different institutional locations were particularly mentioned: the Dublin movement scene for its opportunity to learn from other people's experience, the London squatting scene for the development of practical skills, literature on the American 1960s as a source for indirect experience of social change, and interaction among engineering, computer and physics students geared towards solving technical problems (see also chapter six). One particular discussion centred around the book *Ideal Home* (Suspect 1986), produced by London anarchists as a guide to squatting and travelling, and described by Irish ex-squatters in the following terms:

> Jim: It's a remarkable book, you really should read through it. "How to break and enter." [laughs] Cheers! [laughter] Legally. You know, it's like, covers the complete legal situation on it, everything.
>
> Das: What's it, it's just called *Ideal Home*?

Jim: It's called *Ideal Homes*, yeah. It's er, you know, "how to squat: the law." - "Thankyou!" [laughs]

Das: D'you remember that book?

Jim: I forget who used to, it's Crowbar

Das: Right

Jim: It was a squatter's organisation. Crowbar used to distribute it.

Das: Three of them, there were Crowbar, ASS and BSA.

Jim: Yeah. [laughs]

Das: Cause we had

Jim: We had leaflets from all of them. [laughs]

Das: Yeah. Em

Jim: Very useful stuff that was disseminated around the place, actually.

Such literature is by no means unusual in this milieu. It is typically (like *Ideal Home*) focussed entirely on the practical[47]. The history of systematic attempts at stabilising and developing particular forms of knowledge goes back in the case of contemporary movements at least to Saunders' *Alternative England and Wales* (1975) and Hoffman's *Steal this book* (excerpted in Hoffman 1989). Comparable literature exists for continental Europe, from details of how to set up alternative radio stations (Network Medien-Cooperative 1983) via how to oppose the census (Rottmann and Strohm 1987 - which ran through at least 4 editions, 24 printings and 240,000 copies!) to how to carry out actions against arms firms (Maass 1983). And, of course, much of the alternative press is devoted to such matters, from computer encryption to details of forthcoming demonstrations, for which *Green Anarchist* was recently closed down by the British police (Atton 1997b). The production of such material continues unabated; one can now learn how to stop a road (Road Alert! 1997), how to organise a Rainbow Gathering (Rainbow Family 1995) or how to carry out direct action against genetically modified plants (Tulip et al. 1998).

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[47] The book proceeds from advice on particular acts via discussion of eviction proceedings and details of how to defend a squat to histories of successful squats and lists of contacts.

Where such explicit discussions of skill are available they represent a significant material and institutional achievement on the part of the movement - as the articulation, standardisation and transmission of "packages of knowledge" (see chapter three) - and offer a fruitful line of approach for researchers attempting to get at the tacit skill of the movement. Where, as in the Irish case, this is not available, the researcher's task is more challenging, and I will discuss this further in the next section.

Ethnographic sensitivity in research

If the starting point of movement research is local rationality or skill, this raises the problem of epistemological sensitivity: how to capture this in research. Both researchers and participants have a tendency to adopt a "taken-for-granted" language; this is of course to some extent a feature of human activity generally, and is if anything weaker in movements from below, since as we have seen they involve a challenge to at least *some* forms of taken for granted knowledge and ways of doing things. Activists, then, are under some constant pressure to bring new elements of tacit skill into the verbalised / institutionalised ways of talking and thinking.

Researchers need be under no such pressure; and faced with the "official" discourse of a movement, they may as outsiders with perhaps no direct experience of the way discourse *works* within movements even "fall for it". They may fail to see the movement as in any way different from their own life-experience; or they may adopt the "official story" (ideology and official organisation) for themselves without asking critical questions about its relationship to tacit ways of doing things. Both are deeply problematic; yet unless we theorise them as problems and set out to tackle them systematically we are likely to reproduce them.

Thematising rationalities

Firstly, researchers on social movements frequently fail to ask themselves questions about the *rationalities* involved in the movements they study, relying implicitly or explicitly on the assumption that the world "works" in the same way and things "mean" the same - if not universally, then at least between the researcher's own

rationality and the movement's[48]. In particular, researchers frequently "impute" to movements (to quote Lukács' (1971) most heavily criticised concept) an instrumentally rational orientation or an exclusive concern with the marking and demarcation of identity. The technical name for this is surely *ethnocentricity* - the failure to recognise the interpretive dimension to human action and to consider that other people's rationality may not be the same as our own. For "outside" researchers the danger is then one of projecting external categories - because derived from their own rationality - onto participants' discourses and action; for "insider" researchers, the danger is that of taking *internal* categories for granted.

Effective and credible research, then, needs to place this problem squarely in the centre of research - how do we understand what people in a movement are doing, given that the way they engage with the world (local rationality), how they are trying to tackle it (campaigns) and how they would like to remake it (movement projects) are potentially radically different (not to mention diametrically opposed) to those of other people in the same society - as well as the fact that movements are almost inevitably the subject of fierce conflict, controversy and struggles over representation? As Rosaldo puts it:

> "There is no Archimedean point from which to remove oneself from the mutual conditioning of social relations and human knowledge. Cultures and their 'positioned subjects' are laced with power, and power in turn is shaped by cultural forms. Like form and feeling, culture and power are inextricably intertwined. In discussing forms of social knowledge, both of analysts and of human actors, one must consider their social positions. What are the complexities of the speaker's social identity? What life experiences have shaped it? Does the person speak from a position of relative dominance or relative subordination?" (1993: 169)

Whose rationality?

Local rationality, then, has to be an explicit theme of movement research if it wants to be sensitive to this interpretive dimension. This much is recognised by Cohen, who writes:

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[48] Among the few counter-examples are Lichterman 1996 and Vester et al. 1993.

> "The access of interpretation to identity is through the interrogation of forms of consciousness. This procedure can take the form of an examination of theories so long as the theories in question are those of participants, produced for movements and, to an extent, within movements." (1985: 665 - 666)

But what Cohen does not do is to account for her *own* ability to select the theories to be examined, arguing instead that

> "[t]he new identity within contemporary social movements [...] is in fact the *only rational* identity that is compatible with the organizational form and conflict scenario of movements today" (1985: 667; italics in original).

Thus she arbitrarily opts for Gorz and Touraine in their "post-Marxist" phase (*Farewell to the working class, Anti-nuclear protest*) rather than their "68" phase (*Strategy for Labour, Le mouvement de mai*); for the *Realos* in *die Grünen* rather than the eco-socialists or the *Aufbruch* group. She may or may not be correct in her analysis, but it is hard to see how she can ground it other than in the ethnocentric assumption of her own version of rationality as the only possible way of seeing things[49].

I would argue, then, that research needs to ground itself adequately in a lived context which enables it to *situate* particular kinds of activity and ways of talking about it. It is not enough, in other words, to recognise the *possibility* of difference: researchers need to situate themselves in such a way that they can see how the "other" rationality works (as "outsiders") - or see in what ways it differs from dominant forms of rationality (as "insiders"). This ideally implies a combination of "participatory" methods (membership, participant observation, action research), which generate a practical and theoretical engagement with the peculiarities of the movements' local rationalities, with "theoretical" reflection on how this differs from dominant forms of rationality, but other approaches are possible: Hamon and Rotman (1988) locate the shift among the French New Left from Marxism to post-Marxism within the life-histories of their interviewees, while Raschke (1988) locates the different ideological

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[49] She makes no appeal to its adequacy to the empirical situation, and in fact this is ruled out by the logic of her argument, which aims precisely at understanding the actual situation via the theories of participants.

strands of *die Grünen* within a picture of historical conflicts within the party and extensive interviews with party elites. It is possible, in other words, not only to thematise local rationality but to do so in reflexive ways that do not assume that "we" know what is rational and adequate in advance.

An interesting illustration of the problem is given by Tilly's (1985) analysis of police predictions of strike action in 1906, which, as he observes, was both accurate and useful to the government's control of the situation, unlike the contemporary theorists Le Bon and Sorel:

> "I do not mean that the police agents of 1906 had a theoretical understanding of working-class collective action. Instead, they had knowledge gained through two kinds of practice: as direct participants in many of the public actions of workers, and as recipients of information from observers who directly transmitted the militants' plans and practical lore. In fact, there was and is a wide gap between 'indigenous' familiarity with popular collective action and the theories that constitute the language of government officials [....]" (1985: 726 - 7)

In other words, it was when the police drew on participatory understanding of the local rationalities of workers that they were effective. When they adopted "a language of order and disorder, of attitudes, of good workers and bad" (1985: 727) they had little to contribute. It is the former orientation that is useful to research.

Seeing through ideologies

A second problem can be phrased as working backwards from official or verbal discourse and organising activity to tacit knowledge, given the non-linear relations between the two. How can we find the tacit knowledge behind the official, and the situation behind the response, given that the one is not a mechanical reflection of or reaction to the other? The problem, as Thompson points out, is a general one:

> "evidence does not stand compliantly like a table for interrogation: it stirs, in the medium of time, before our eyes. These stirrings, these events, if they are within 'social being' seem often to impinge upon, thrust into, break against, existent social consciousness. They propose new problems, and, above all, they continually give rise to *experience* - a category which, however imperfect it may be, is indispensable to the historian, since it comprises the mental and emotional response, whether of an

> individual or of a social group, to many inter-related events or to many repetitions of the same kind of event [....] [C]hanges take place within social being, which give rise to changed *experience*: and this experience is *determining*, in the sense that it exerts pressures upon existent social consciousness, proposes new questions, and affords much of the material which the more elaborated intellectual exercises are about..." (1977a: 7 - 8)

The way to engage effectively with the problem has to be through the skill of the actors themselves. On the one hand, if we choose situations where (originally tacit) "knowledge from below" has been able to displace official "knowledge from above", at least to some extent - such as movement milieux - we can at least see how actors have managed, under the constraints of their situation and in pursuit of their purposes, to institutionalise and articulate something of their tacit skill in a form which - because designed for transmission - is purposely accessible to other human beings; and this last point is of course the basic principle behind participant observation (Hammersley and Atkinson 1995, Hammersley 1989). While we may be some steps behind tacit skill, or may only find it articulated as "official" in some contexts, this gives us something at least to work with - with the added advantage that it has to an extent been "abstracted" from its originating contexts and thus rendered more easily communicable. Chapter six in particular attempts such an analysis.

On the other hand, if we adopt *reflexively* participant positions, we can come to see something of how movement-official ideas and practices "work" by using them ourselves. If we are outsiders, we are unlikely to be as skilled at this as more experienced movement participants, but this is then a question of *degrees* of skill, rather than a situation of simply not knowing how the official language and structure "works". In chapter seven I attempt to make something of this participant understanding explicit on the larger scale of the counter culture as a whole.

Processual categories

The passage from Gramsci quoted earlier continues as follows:

> "The consciousness of being part of a given hegemonic force (that is, political consciousness) is the first phase in a further and progressive self-consciousness in which theory and practice are finally unified. The unity of theory and practice, then,

> is also not a given mechanical datum, but a historical becoming, which has its elementary and primitive phase in the sense of 'difference', of 'distance', of barely instinctive independence, and develops up to the real and complete possession of a coherent and unitary conception of the world." (1991: 13 – 14)

By implication, this political epistemology does not expect to find, in the normal course of affairs, completely developed movements from below that are capable of mounting a fully-fledged practical and theoretical challenge to the social totality; such a situation represents rather the limiting case of a counter-hegemonic project on the brink of a revolution (as well, of course, as the normal situation of hegemonic movements from above). Nevertheless, this limiting case remains important as the most articulated self-expression of a given movement, illuminating most clearly its relation to the totality and to its opponents. What can this mean in practice for research on social movements?

If our categories are to be historical ones, that is, geared to movements as they develop and are eroded over the short and long timescales of conflict, they must be oriented to the whole history of a movement, not simply its current appearance at a single moment in time. As Eyerman and Jamison write,

> "[A] cognitive approach to social movements means having a processual focus, seeing social movements as processes in formation. One of the main barriers to recognising social movements as producers of knowledge is the widespread tendency to reify them, to identify social movements with organisations, parties, sects, institutions etc." (1991: 59)

The tradition discussed in chapter three offers two related ways of thinking the problem. The first is outlined by Lukács in his discussion of "imputed class consciousness". Given the disfavour into which the concept has fallen, it is worth noting that Lukács himself saw it as similar to Weber's "ideal type"; it was oriented to asking what, all other things being equal, one could expect the interests and self-understanding of a particular class to be:

> "class consciousness consists in fact of the appropriate and rational reactions 'imputed' to a particular typical position in the process of production" (1971: 51; see p. 81, note 11 for the reference to Weber).

The problems with this point of view have already been discussed. A second, less "contemplative" approach, to quote Lukács'own later critique of this concept, is Touraine's (1981) methodology of sociological "intervention". This is geared to discovering, in his case through a complex dialogical procedure between the researchers and specially constituted focus groups drawn from movement activists and opponents, the highest possible self-expression of a given movement; in other words, starting from its actual but fragmented position, to see how far and in what directions it is capable of understanding its own nature and interests, those of its opponents, and of articulating an independent social project (see Borda 1993 for a related approach).

The underlying methodology has come in for strong criticism, which I think misinterprets its goal. Such approaches are not trying simply to *describe* the specific situation of particular organisations of given social groups; rather, they are trying to identify both the local rationalities which are at the root of movement orientations and the directions in which those rationalities are articulated, theoretically and practically. In other words, within phenomena which are spread across considerable areas of time and space, express themselves in a great variety of ways and thematise many different issues, it is attempting to extend the logic implicit in participants' skilled activity to a more comprehensive standpoint. My methodology retains something of this sense of directionality, but looks for it rather within participants' existing attempts at direction-finding, both those internal to a particular network (chapters five and six) and those aiming at a wider movement project (chapter seven).

Ethnographic sensitivity, participant reflexivity and an eye for the processual, then, are necessary, though not sufficient, conditions for understanding movements. In their absence we remain caught within our own taken-for-granted categories, on the "official" surface of movement institutions and ideologies or frozen in a particular moment; whereas if we thematise these issues and try to do something about them, we can at least *start* to "make sense" of social movements. In chapter three I have argued that the theoretical perspective I have adopted meets the ethnographic criterion of thematising the issue of rationalities; later on in this chapter I will argue that my research methods meet the reflexive criterion of engaging with the tacit skills

of the actors by using participant knowledge to "locate" the research. In subsequent chapters, I will attempt to replace some of the sense of directionality.

The politics of movement research

The issues I have dealt with in this chapter so far concern firstly the question of what we research in social movements and secondly the question of how we handle the differences between rationalities and between official and tacit knowledge. But what if that knowledge is itself contested? The counter cultural milieu itself is not homogenous: one participant's knowledge is not necessarily exchangeable with another's. As Melucci (1989) has stressed, "movement" is an accomplishment: a movement project consists of the partial exercise of hegemony over a range of campaigns and local rationalities[50]. The diverse nature of any movement project implies that movement milieux are likely to include people who participate in a wide variety of different ways and who have a wide range of ideological and practical agendas, whose pursuit is combined more or less effectively within the movement project as a whole.

This contested nature of movement knowledge can be turned into a strength in various ways. In general terms, chapter three's recognition that counter cultural rationality is not an abstract or an ideal given, but rather the actively produced result of learning and struggle (as local rationality) as well as of cooperation, coordination, communication and conflict (as campaign or movement project) offers a theoretical parallel to this research situation, and one which can sensitise researchers to "read" participants' statements and actions more effectively than if they are taken to reflect a homogenous, static "discourse". The relationships I have tried to construct between participants' statements and between their statements and their life-situations, in chapters five and six, are hopefully of this former kind: trying to see people wrestling in their lives with problems I do not claim to have solved myself, but also alive to *differences* within this milieu.

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[50] The contested nature of this hegemony is important: due to bad interviewing on my part, one interviewee fell back into a defensive mode, speaking within dominant discourses rather than alternative ones. His partner, however, told a different story!

Collusion and conflict

Firstly, the researcher, in their research, necessarily colludes with the micropolitics of some participants and conflicts with that of others. As feminist methodology has stressed (Lentin 1993), research relationships are also power relationships[51]. To know the world, in critical realist perspectives, is always a practical intervention, in that we only know the world insofar as we engage with it, and we engage with it with particular, situated intentions.

In other words, research structure and processes involve both practical organisation of social relationships ("directive intellectual activity") and abstract verbal statements about what is involved ("theoretical intellectual activity"): researchers meet with some participants and not with others, in some contexts and not others, meet with them individually or in groups, in natural or "artificial" situations, say some things to them and not others, ask certain questions and not others, use closed or open questions, react in certain ways, intervene in this way or that, close the process at one point or another, organise their material in one direction or another, provide more or less access to their results and give more or less scope for feedback, do different things with their findings in pursuit of particular agendas, and so on.

Since participants are also intellectuals, as Plows (1998) has observed, they are also engaged in this kind of process. The researcher, then, is not *per se* an alien intruder into a "natural" group context - although their methods may of course be alien or reassuringly familiar. It is not that questions of epistemology and ethics do not arise, rather that the key question here is not one of the *authenticity* of the research or the *insider* status of the researcher so much as of the *politics* of their research process.

This can be assessed as one might assess the politics of any other participant: whose definitions of the movement are they aligning themselves with, and why? Whose experience of the movement are they reproducing, and why? Whose networks are they picking up on, and why? Whose agendas are they paralleling, and why? And, of

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[51] A similar argument could, I think, be distilled from Marxist arguments as to the relationship between given theories and doctrines and their authors' political positions, organisational strategies and the social groups they sought to appeal to. Buried in the internecine polemics of the workers' movement is a sophisticated conception of knowledge politics.

course, whose definitions etc. are they *not* colluding with? If research parallels politics, in other words, one can ask what kind of political position a researcher assumes or simulates.

It is along these lines that researchers need to give an account of themselves, both to the movement and to their professional peers: what kind of movement are they "constructing" (practically, in the organisation of the research; theoretically, in the account they give of it); what kind of position within the movement does this implicitly parallel? and what kind of position does it most sharply collide with? To give an adequate answer to these questions - as I will try to do at the end of this chapter and in chapter seven - is not to resolve all possible problems and put ourselves in the clear; it is, however, to make our knowledge "transparent" to others.

The material preconditions of research

Secondly, part and parcel of the social and power relations these set up between researchers and participants are the *conditions* for the employment of particular research methods. Research usually takes place in a context of power and inequality; in the case of social movements, typically also one of conflict. What situation does a researcher have to be in to use particular methods? Two examples can be given, from opposite ends of a spectrum.

In one case, the use of in-depth interviews with members of radical groups, to get anything more than "official stories" or even refusals and sabotage (cf. Kriesi 1992) a reasonable level of trust is needed. This is often gained in practice by researchers participating and contributing to the movement in ways that can convince participants of their *bona fides*: whether this means going on demonstrations, living on protest sites, or running the office. In the other case, that of the elaborate methods recommended by Touraine (1981) and Melucci (1989), the business of organising large focus group-style events, with video recordings in Melucci's case and multiple iterations in Touraine's, calls either for high levels of prestige and resources on the part of the researcher (for example, several interviewers are needed) or explicit deals with those involved (discussed at length by Melucci (1989, 1995b). Clearly these general research situations, and not simply "methods" abstracted from the actual

social context, need to be examined critically, and I will attempt to do this towards the end of this chapter[52].

Reflexivity and transparency

Thirdly, movements are active constructions, and as I have argued they are rarely static for long, in that they are constantly pushing against opponents who are always pushing back. If in this situation we want to produce a historical sociology which might be of some use to movement participants, perhaps the best service we can do them is to make this situation of "open determination" - that movements do not come from nowhere, but that there are always changes, choices and learning involved - as clear as possible by showing how *we* have constructed the movement and what the results are: in other words, something of the kinds of organisation and theorisation of the movement that is possible.

While common in feminist and anthropological research, reflexivity is an extremely rare beast in the "social movements" literature, represented primarily by young postgraduates such as Maxey (1998) and Plows (1998). Rather than claiming to tell the actors the true meaning of their actions (by hiding the construction of our research and its situated nature) we can aim to furnish an (explicitly) situated reading which may offer them a way to identify the real choices available to them - and those which are not. Chapter seven attempts to offer such a reading of the counter culture.

If this is so, then, an emancipatory politics of knowledge does not necessarily depend, as some authors (Ben-Habib 1983) seem to suggest, on the assumption of a straightforward underlying harmony of interests. Rather, it can be grounded in making visible the active accomplishment of solidarity in political activity and something of the nature of the context in which they are acting. Movement participants are of necessity reflexive to some degree, and it is by no means

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[52] A further issue is that of the implications of funding sources. As Jones (1993) points out, to date the only collection on researching social movements (Diani and Eyerman 1992) was co-funded by NATO, a fact mentioned without explanation in the introduction. Similarly, as Amin (1993: 103 - 104) points out, the American military funded large-scale counter-insurgency research in Latin America in "Project Camelot". Tilly's use of police files, cited earlier, reminds us that this is not a new situation.

necessarily the case that researchers are better placed than they to see the movement as a whole.

What research may offer them, however, is a second vantage point: if we can take the position we find ourselves in too much for granted, the value of an alternative position lies precisely in the *distance* and *difference* between its construction of a movement and our own. The real contribution of reflexive research is to open up this space to movement participants. From this point of view, then, reflexivity is not simply a methodological choice to be defended on grounds of its academic value; it is also an ethical choice that is of value to the movements we research. To say "I have looked at the movement from this point of view and through these experiences and so I see it this way" is emancipatory - or, more accurately, can be used by other people in an emancipatory way - where "The movement is like this" is not. In the next section, then, I will offer an account of how I did the research and why I did it that way: where the picture of the counter culture developed in this thesis is coming from.

Problems of the research process

Up to this point I have outlined a methodology for social movement research based on the theoretical perspective elaborated in chapter three. At this point, I will attempt to redeem some of the claims made to date[53]. I discuss three issues, in each case working "back" from a general methodological perspective to a particular discussion of method. Firstly, I move from the discussion of local rationalities to an account of the nature of the movement network where this research was carried out and the wider context of the counter culture in Ireland within which it is located. Secondly, I move from the question of "locating" research to an account of the way in which the research proceeded. Finally, I move from the question of the politics of

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[53] Of course the order of presentation and the order of intellectual production are to a large extent reversed: both the theory and the methodology outlined in previous chapters were developed while working on the research project outlined in this and subsequent chapters. The risk is then that the former acts as a retrospective justification for the latter; the hope is that it is rather an articulation and working-through of issues raised by the research process.

knowledge production to a reflexive account of my own relationship as researcher to the movement network I was researching, including questions of differing rationalities and power[54].

The purpose of these discussions is to enable an assessment of the knowledge value of the subsequent findings chapters: how far can this research context illuminate social relations in the rest of the counter culture? what kind of knowledge has it produced? and how has the specific knowledge politics of my own relation with this particular network affected the way I have "constructed" it?

Understanding the research context

I have argued that if we want to research the local rationalities of which social movements are born, the best place to do so is in "movement milieux" (Vester et al. 1993) where those rationalities have been moderately developed and institutionalised. Within such milieux, "submerged networks" (Melucci 1989) underlie mobilisation in *different* types of campaigns within a shared movement project. These are "natural" locations for the study of movement rationalities insofar as they are formed by and around them, as opposed to (say) campaigning groups formed around single-issue campaigns which might have no greater coherence. They have a greater range than the purely particular sources of local rationalities, however, in that they not only give

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[54] Stanley writes that " 'Feminism' [...] should be present in positive ways within the research process, as feminist epistemological principles underpinning behaviour and analysis both", identifying

> "five related sites of these: in the researcher – researched relationship; in emotion as a research experience; in the intellectual autobiography of researchers; therefore in how to manage the differing 'realities' and understandings of researchers and researched; and thus in the complex questions of power in research and writing." (1990: 23)

Chapter one has already discussed something of my "intellectual autobiography". The issues covered in the rest of the chapter discuss the researcher-researched relationship, the difference in understandings and something of the issues of power. I have not discussed emotion within the research experience, both because I was not keeping notes of this at the time and because the interviews in particular took place within a framework of relative emotional "normality", as relaxed conversations between friends. It is certainly the case, though, that strong emotions *were* bound up with the research process more generally; something of this should transpire from the thesis generally.

rise to campaigning but are also products of movement history: brought together in movement contexts and surviving through successive waves of campaigning, they are "representative" of the movement as a whole in a way that groups that have not been formed in this way could hardly be.

Since we cannot assume the identity of "full-time intellectuals" - full-time activists or full-time theorists - with the movement as a whole, a further desideratum would be to find a movement network which was not an elite network, in other words most of whose participants were "ordinary participants", not full-time intellectuals.

The network I have studied fits these criteria well. Firstly, it is a network which has regularly given rise to campaigning activity over more than a ten-year period. Secondly, it is a network formed in "movement" (counter-cultural) contexts and with a wide breadth of social recruitment (local rationalities) and campaigning activities. Thirdly, only a minority of participants have ever come close to being "full-time" movement intellectuals (at present, one is).

Ethics and publication

At this point I need to insert a methodological caveat. It is a routine feature of research into groups that are in some way under threat from dominant social institutions that ethical questions arise in relation to the publication of information about such groups. Such activities as protest, direct action and political organising; squatting, drug use and in some countries unconventional religious behaviour (cf. Robbins 1988) place people at risk from the agencies of formal social control, and on occasion from informal forms of control.

To be too specific in the publication of research details, particularly in a closely-knit city like Dublin and a small context like the Irish counter culture, is then to place participants at risk, a point noted by virtually all my participants in agreeing to be interviewed. If this discussion of the research therefore seems at times to err on the side of vagueness, this is entirely deliberate. Names have of course been changed, as have details; and I have at times had to content myself with general assertions (e.g. as to the activities engaged in by participants) where a more specific example would have been more convincing (and produced a far better story!) but also made identification of participants all too possible. I have of course also arranged for the

destruction or safe removal of potentially compromising documentation related to the research.

The research context

My research, then, was based around interviews with nine "core members" of a movement network based in the Dublin counter culture, in which I had myself been a long-term participant before the research was conceived. The choice of interviewees (see next section) was based not on representativity but on factors such as perceived centrality, availability for interview and relevance for particular aspects of the network not covered by interviews with other participants. Thus the data given below is indicative more of the *range* than of the *spread* of network participants; it is of course in any case far too small for statistical analysis[55].

All participants were in their mid- to late-20s when interviews were carried out in the latter half of the 1990s; they are thus now in their late 20s and early 30s. While contacts exist to similar contexts of younger participants, isolated older participants, and non-age-based groups, this "political generation effect" is a direct result of network formation and shared movement experiences in the mid- to late-1980s, and likely on present showing to remain largely stable pending new movement upswings. The network thus has an age of between ten and fifteen years - the latter representing first contacts, the former representing its rough stabilisation in terms of participation (contexts and participants).

Occupation

Occupational situations vary across a certain range, with parental occupations including housewife, skilled manual worker (watchmaker), small farmer, public-sector service class (civil engineer), retired self-employed (publican) and small capitalist (camping site owner). All participants started third-level education, though several failed to complete it. At time of interview situations ranged from unemployed and unskilled manual worker (e.g. removals worker) via research student to skilled

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[55] One of the interviews was carried out for the purposes of a student research project and covered somewhat different ground.

non-manual employee (e.g. computer programmer); at present class positions range from skilled manual worker (e.g. gardener) via unskilled non-manual worker (shop worker) to self-employed (e.g. computer technician).

This represents a wide range of occupational backgrounds, although a smaller range of current positions, consistent with the generally declining importance of small-property ownership, the rising importance of credentials and the growth of the skilled working class and the service class. Since the "self-employed" were either skilled workers attempting to set up independent workshops or in effect sub-contractors, the overall trend is clear: none own property, but most have skills; most are working for someone else, while none have subordinates. At present, then, this is largely a skilled working-class group, some of whose members may in the future move into the service class or become small business owners. This is similar to Thompson's (1963) "demotic" composition of the late 18th and early 19th century working-class movement in England (skilled workers, artisans, and the occasional intellectual), and is consistent with Bagguley's (1992) arguments about the occupational range of movements from below.

Gender

The interviewees were of both genders - seven men and two women. This is in part an artefact of the research strategy (drawing on my own contacts and looking for "extreme" cases) and in part a reflection of differential centrality to the network. While a number of women, including those interviewed, were "participants in their own right", others were present by virtue of their relationships to male participants, with structural consequences:

> "The girls seem to be pretty separate. I think I'm an exception, in that I'm very good friends with Maria *and* with Amanda *and* with Emer, and they're not, any of them are actually particularly good friends, would ring each other, and I'm actually the only one that would go out for a pint with all of them." (Tina[56])

The women I interviewed, however, had independent "rights of participation" in the group irrespective of their current relationships (see chapter six for more discussion

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[56] Hence Tina was interviewed, but not the other women mentioned in this extract.

of gender practices). It is probably the case that the more "macho" contexts of network formation - squats and occupations (cf. Auckland 1997 on gender and direct action) - and the more public rather than privatised nature of this network (cf. McRobbie and Garber 1991, Gaetz 1993) have skewed recruitment[57].

For participants with stable relationships[58], there is no obvious pattern of imbalance in occupational status between partners. This may change in future, as few have children as yet. Of the two female interviewees, one was two years younger than most other participants and the other was a European immigrant. Other women present in the network "in their own right" were also more unusual than the men - immigrants, from political families or the high service class; even in the subsequent generation, women participants are from highly politicised backgrounds or ethnic minorities. Gender ratios, then, are probably connected to the extent to which "public patriarchy" is replacing "private patriarchy" (Walby 1990), enabling greater participation in the public sphere.

Ethnicity

Finally, ethnicity is marked most strongly by relatively weak local ties. Seven interviewees grew up in Dublin, but most had at least one parent who had moved from a smaller town, or in two cases from Northern Ireland; of the remaining two, one had moved to Dublin from a rural setting while still a child, the other had emigrated from a metropolitan context in Western Europe to Ireland while a student. Another way of putting this would be to say that most participants were to a certain extent "blow-ins", or more exactly the children of blow-ins.

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[57] It is also probable that the conventional "policing of women" (contraceptives were legalised for the unmarried in 1985, the year before many participants left school) took its toll on women's ability to participate in the contexts where the network was formed (cf Coulter 1993 on the exceptional class backgrounds of "mainstream" Irish feminists). In this respect it is noteworthy that the subsequent generation "sponsored" by one of the formative institutions of the network is dominated by a strong team of women.

[58] This includes all bar one of the interviewees; all relationships are mixed, though one interviewee is bisexual.

This is not unusual for counter cultural participants in Ireland; in small towns the strength of "community", kinship and friends is such that it is more likely that those who have moved from a different county (personal conversations with Waterford activists) carry out most of the environmental and arts activity, while several community development activists are originally foreign or have spent many years abroad. Even on a national scale, the proportion of German, British, American and Northern Irish participants, of religious minorities and of course of people from political families in the counter culture is very high (personal conversation with member of Green Party leadership). This is primarily an effect of the social closure enacted through the conservative revolution (Breen et al. 1990, Lee 1989) and the production of locally-based, kinship-organised communities originally of property owners: counter-hegemonic interactions are easiest where hegemonic relations are weakest.

Shared experiences

What enables the formation of heterogenous, "demotic" groups like this? A conventional critical theory response is "public spaces", that is, spaces not structured by the segmenting and corporatist structures of private life. In the case of this group, however, such spaces are the product neither of access to markets nor of coercive state structures, and in fact they have routinely had to be non-public (because involving illegal activity) at the same time as they are non-private (because open beyond circles of family and friends, and at times concealed from or in conflict with both)[59].

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[59] As Fantasia and Hirsch put it,

> "The very subordinate position of outsider groups means that their oppositional cultural expression cannot be cultivated openly." (1995: 145)

Such spaces were made possible in part by decommodification (Offe 1984), in particular the provision of subsidised education and unemployment assistance, which provided respectively a context and support for the development of this network[60]:

> "both [the new middle class and 'peripheral' groups] share the condition of 'decommodification'. The economic logic of efficiency, of thinking in terms of costs and returns, is, for different reasons, far less applicable concerning the use of one's own labor power and efforts than is the case, for instance, in the area of industrial production of commodities." (1985: 852)

This decommodification is in turn the product of previous movement struggles, even in the mixed corporatist-liberal form found in Ireland: education as a product of the small-property logic of the post-autarky society as it reoriented itself to deal with industrialisation and credentialisation; unemployment assistance as an ever-present necessity for the survival of populist governments (Allen 1997). Decommodification offers a resource for the construction of alternative public spaces to the extent that it entails a distancing of the logics of control within the capitalist firm and the property-kinship nexus; as well as strategies of recommodification, however, this space can be "clawed back" through processes of clientelism.

If this account seems overly banal, it may be worth recalling that a central part of my argument is that social movement activity is *not* unusual, nor are social movement participants "special people". One form of social movement activity - nonviolent direct action or drug use, say - may, however, stand out against another - Mass attendance or watching the national football team, for example. It is then not surprising to find new forms of movement developing where hegemonic relationships are weakest: outside the sphere of "community", family and property.

Research method

My approach in this research consisted of in-depth qualitative interviews "located" by participation. Conventionally, participation, usually in the form of participant

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[60] For comparison, rates of third level education participation rose from 20 to 36% in the relevant age group between 1980 and 1992 (Clancy 1995: 486); real unemployment rates were around 20% in 1985 and proceeded to worsen (O'Hearn 1995: 93 - 94).

observation, has been seen as a way to develop an understanding of the interactionist construction of group knowledge by going through the learning process through which participants acquire the knowledge acquired in being competent group members (Hammersley and Atkinson 1995).

In my case the problem was somewhat different, in that I was already a participant through "natural" processes before beginning my research. The problem was thus not so much to discover previously unknown characteristics of group construction through recording and reflecting on the process of participating as it was to use knowledge - explicit or implicit - that I already possessed, to elicit other participants' understandings of the network. (See Plows 1998 for a sensitive reflection on the practical relevance of insider and outsider status in social movement research.)

Participation as locating research

Hence the concept of participation as enabling the "location" of a research process centred on interviews. By this I mean first of all drawing on the background knowledge I already possessed as a member of this network to decide who to interview and how; being able to gain agreement to all interviews sought and carry them out in "natural" contexts; being able to intervene sensitively and relevantly in the interview process; and being able to elicit sufficient trust and solidarity to be given reflective "insider" accounts of how people "do" certain things rather than being offered "the official story". (In the one case where this did not work, the interview consists largely of a series of denials!)

Secondly, on a broader scale, participation enables the development of useful research questions and the effective interpretation of research data; in other words, it made it possible to locate the specific process of interviewing within a more general, "lived" context, and to organise the material gained within non-arbitrary explanatory contexts. In saying this I am not of course arguing that all participants see the world the same way; rather, an effective account of the situation of the researcher in relation to other participants is necessary to the evaluation of the knowledge produced.

In any shared context there is necessarily a certain amount of practical knowledge which is sufficiently shared to enable sustained interaction. This cooperative moment - as opposed to the conflictual moment discussed shortly - corresponds, firstly, to the

verbal knowledge elicited through sensitive "insider" questioning of one participant by another: the articulated, shared "how to do it". Beyond this, and of necessity only partly accessible to participants or researchers, is the *tacit* knowledge: the developing, not-yet-fully-institutionalised skills that participants bring to their interaction. Here agreement breaks down - or rather, becomes less relevant - as interviewers ask about things that puzzle them and respondents reflect on questions they haven't been asked before.

The organisation and analysis of this data is then inevitably a construction, but as Thompson observed (1977a: 209 - 210), the fact that we can make various things out of a given piece of wood does not mean that we can use it to make "just anything". The baseline for this kind of research is inevitably its location in a shared context: the talk produced between two participants, as well as the subsequent reflection on that talk by one participant, "sets limits [and] exerts pressures" (Williams 1980: 31-32) on what can and cannot be said. Secondly, the micropolitics of that interaction and of the researcher's situation push for a particular "reading"; a politics which then needs to be made as transparent as possible to the reader. Thirdly, the requirements of written academic research imply the need to be "convincing" in terms of theory and data as well as in terms of background knowledge that academics may hold as participants in comparable contexts (as opposed to their "recipe knowledge" as outsiders, which is likely to be actively unhelpful).

A good example of this need to "locate" research can be found in Scott (1990). Scott's aim is an "examination of [the] main ideological strands of 'the new social movements' " (1990: 80). This is reduced, and without explanation, to an examination of "ecological ideology" alone (1990: 81), which in turn is then taken as effectively represented by *die Grünen*, despite the well-known complexities of the relationship between the party and contemporary movements (Raschke 1993: 499 - 528, 682 - 696). "Ideology" is then reduced to the writings of professional ideologists, again without any examination of this highly problematic assumption[61] (Eagleton 1991). The choice of ideologists is highly revealing.

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[61] A similarly unsatisfactory approach is that of Giddens (1987: 31), who discusses the "ecology movement" on the basis of an examination of the manifestoes of the European Green Parties, without

Of the six figures discussed, only Joschka Fischer had any claim to representativity, as a regional boss and faction leader. Of the others, Petra Kelly was the only one even to be a party member in 1990, but her influence within the party was minimal[62]. By the time Scott was writing, in fact, Otto Schily had joined the SPD; Rudolf Bahro had left the party five (!) years earlier, virtually alone (Raschke 1991: 26); to the best of my knowledge (as a participant researcher in 1990 – 91) Carl Amery had no political affiliations (cf. Schäfer 1983: 127); and Herbert Gruhl had spent a decade in the political wilderness. Apart from Fischer, the actual ideologists and faction leaders – Antje Vollmer, Jutta Ditfurth, Thomas Ebermann, Frieder-Otto Wolf, etc. – are ignored, as are the communication organs of the movement[63].

Scott's writing exemplifies the ethnocentric assumptions I criticised earlier. The conclusion that "[d]espite its grass-roots democratic principles the European ecology movement has indeed thrown up, and often centred around, political celebrities such as Petra Kelly, Otto Schily and Joschka Fischer" (Scott 1990: 117) represents simply the *assumption* that anyone the theorist has heard of must be a leader.[64]. Instead, what is "obvious" within the author's own local mode of rationality is projected elsewhere, at its worst reducing empirical research to what can be found in English in the university library – or so one has to assume, since Scott never situates his own tacit understandings.

Research details

The participation within which this research is located, then, runs to some 12 or 13 years of regular interaction, at times full-time, at times very occasional, with network

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considering the extent to which they represent the actual ideology of the *parties* concerned, let alone the movement. Any party member could have told him that the relationship of manifesto to party is highly contested.

[62] Witness her failure even to be reselected, her lack of factional affiliation, and her isolation at the time of her suicide.

[63] See e.g. Jurtschitsch et al. (1988) for a snapshot of party debate around this period.

[64] The problem of the effectiveness of "grass-roots democratic" rules in weakening hierarchy was the subject of intense activist and academic discussion at the time (Raschke 1991: 80 – 113), but none of this is reflected in Scott.

participants; at various times I have also held key roles in network organisation (notably in organising events and holding open particular "free spaces" in the form of college societies.) I would consider all those I interviewed friends, to a greater or lesser degree.

For the purposes of this thesis, I interviewed 9 people over a period of some 3 years; this constraint was imposed by availability on their part (conditioned by emigration) and work on my part. The choice of interviewees was governed by two factors:

- Assessment, based on my own participation, as to their centrality or otherwise to the network; this can be confirmed to some extent by interview data (who stories are told about, who was present at key events) and to some extent by participant records (who was at particular parties, who took part in particular projects, who appears on other people's email lists, etc[65].) This is inevitably also conditioned by my own position within the milieu, and notably by class and gender differences in activities: alternative versions of the same network, then, might focus more on drug use and related activities, or more on relationships.
- A concern to identify the key features and range of the network, operationalised in an attempt to interview the "extremes" of the milieu (Kleining 1986; cf. Cox 1994): thus the busker, the dealer, the activist, the mystic, the cynic, the immigrant, the weekender, the drifter and the one who got caught[66]. This has the added benefit that the attempt to understand what is shared across this life-world, whether on the part of the researcher or that of interviewees faced with the question, forces a greater degree of reflexivity and a greater focus on underlying features of rationality rather than "taken-for-granted" answers along the lines of "Mick and me get on well because...."

While this certainly produces one version of the network rather than others, it is one which is not a million miles away from that of some other participants:

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[65] Thus, for example, at a traditional Christmas party held at an interviewee's house in 1995, participants included myself and 6 out of 9 interviewees. There were three further participants.

[66] I offer this obviously not as a summary of the people in question, but simply to highlight experiences which are brought out by particular interviewees and not by others!

> Das: Even if it's say, A considers the person hangs round most with is B, B would consider the second person to be C, who hangs around a hell of a lot with D, by that kind of chain you see what's happened, we stay in contact. Victor gets in contact with, say
>
> Jim: with Mark
>
> Das: with Mark. Mark gets in contact with em
>
> Jim: Josh and Ciarán.
>
> Das: with Josh and Ciarán, Josh and Ciarán spread the news to every, say, to Steve, to us, to Jim, Jim feeds it out to me, or someone else'll feed it to me, or I might get it through Shay.[67]

Interviews ranged in length from approximately 45 minutes to approximately four and a half hours. All were carried out in "natural" context, usually but not exclusively interviewees' own homes, in other cases environments familiar to them - friends' houses or "free spaces" they used. There was generally a fair degree of willingness to be interviewed: no-one refused, and in a couple of cases people went out of their way to set up good interview environments - in one case arranging a double interview with a friend which lasted through most of the night. Interviews were then transcribed and copies returned to participants to use as they wished; tapes and transcripts were then stored safely[68].

In carrying out the interviews, I used checklists of issues that I wanted to cover. These varied from interview to interview as new themes were raised by previous interviews or as older themes produced repetitive answers. With the exception of one or two interviews, though, discussion was sufficiently lively and spontaneous that I did not find myself in the situation of posing "formal" questions, but rather arriving at the material I wanted to cover by relatively spontaneous questions of my own, guided by my participant interests as much as my research concerns. Towards the end of the interviews, I gave participants the chance to ask questions about the nature of the

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[67] Those interviewed include Mark, Josh, Ciarán and Steve as well as Jim and Das.

[68] The selections from interviews presented in this thesis have been "cleaned up" in the sense that hesitations, repetitions, etc. have been removed to produce a smoother and more focussed text than is normal for actual speech; the substance and vocabulary have not been altered, however.

research; in some cases, this gave rise to the most interesting sections of the interview, as participants responded to my presentation of my own understanding of the situation.

Interpretive strategy

Up to a certain point of the analysis an attempt was made to follow a "grounded theory" approach (Glaser and Strauss 1967) of working up to indigenous and then abstract categories, via the coding and organisation of transcribed material. This procedure was carried out at a point when five of the nine interviews had been carried out and transcribed. It was subsequently relativised rather than abandoned, in that attempts to interpret and explain this material in any substantive way in conference papers given around this period proved to require a shift to a more dialogic mode in which as researcher I (a) tried to make sense of what participants had said (b) for the benefit of academics who were not familiar with the context. In other words, the difficulty with grounded theory for *participant* research on social movements is that it requires a pretence of ignorance as to that "tacit knowledge" which, as we have seen, is central to movements from below.

The analysis presented in chapters five and six is thus one whose "workability" rests not only on my own assessment of the case and on what talk could be produced in interview situations, but also on the internal analyses of at least some participants and my own attempts to become clear about this (see next section). If it is also theoretically and empirically workable is up to readers to judge. I do not claim, however, that it is the only possible interpretation: that participants themselves have different views on what they do is sufficient to make such a thing unattainable.

Interestingly, in moving to this more interpretive mode I moved considerably away from my own initial assumptions and came instead to adopt an analysis more closely geared to that of two other participants in particular: to articulate tacit knowledge (in this case while engaging with other participants' perspectives) is to learn something, not simply to confirm our own prejudices. By contrast, fieldnotes which I kept on my participation in the network and in wider counter cultural contexts between July 1995 and February 1996 proved of little interpretive value, as they essentially restated what I already knew.

Knowledge value

Within a critical realist account of methodology (McLellan 1981; Collier 1994; Wainwright 1994) it can be said that (a) there *is* a shared tacit knowledge that makes the network possible but (b) existing verbal knowledge is not necessarily identical with this. Research thus consists of a dialogic exploration of shared knowledge with other participants, in which we can reasonably expect (b) to be elucidated and differing positions as to (a) to arise. The researcher then constructs their own best sense of (a), whose sole advantage over that of other participants lies in the attempt to bring other participants' knowledge into play (in fact relying on it for the construction of the argument) and in a reflexive analysis of the structural relations within which this knowledge was produced.

For this specific network, then, the discussion is relatively particular and is intended to offer a "tight fit" - good workability for a broad range of existing knowledge - although not a perfect identity - not the only such workable account. Moving beyond this, the relationship of this material to the broader counter cultural project and the theoretical arguments made in this thesis is necessarily one of a looser fit. If the analysis of this network as part of the broader counter cultural project is accepted, as well as the suggestion that a network formed in and through movement is likely to embody a counter-hegemonic movement rationality, then we can expect that there will be structural similarities between the operation of local rationalities in this network and elsewhere; not an identity, but a more or less effective "purchase" on those other local rationalities: something which can also be assessed through its relationship to the existing literature and its ability to explain particular features of the counter culture (see chapters five and six).

As to the relationship between what is said of this network and the counter culture as a whole, it is necessarily metaphorical or analogical: in other words, it offers something of a language in which those more general and more abstract processes can be talked about. The "knowledge value" of the findings chapters (five and six) is then twofold: a tight fit as regards the interpretation of this particular movement network, a loose fit designed to contribute to understanding the counter culture in general. Returning to the criteria set out at the start of this chapter for a methodology of social movement research, then, I conclude that this strategy is capable of guiding

effective research into local rationalities. It has not yet arrived at a sufficient level of reflexivity to deal with the power relations involved in moving from local rationalities to movement projects or provided an "open theory" useful for participants; that is the task of the final section of this chapter.

Reflexive researching

The discussion to date has primarily depended on a consensual account of knowledge production and to a lesser extent on an externalising perspective (what Habermas (1987a) calls the "system" perspective). A reflexive examination of the structural relations involved in producing knowledge places the accent rather on the conflictual and the internalising (Habermas' "lifeworld" perspective), in that it takes the existence of a shared situation and knowledge "for granted" and asks about how different participants relate to these. By making these kinds of research relations more visible, I hope to make the research more "transparent" in the sense of enabling a more effective evaluation of the experience from which the thesis has been written and hence of its knowledge value. I will discuss firstly my own relationship to the counter culture in general and secondly my relationship to the network.

Hidden discourses

I have argued that researchers who do not take the local rationalities of movement milieux explicitly into account will misread what they see in terms of their own taken-for-granted assumptions. The problem is reinforced if the researcher's perspective corresponds to that of some participants. Much of the literature in practice offers an uncritical (because implicit) identification by researchers with movement organisers. The researcher's construction of movements as primarily political is likely to be shared by the most politically active and organised among their movement contacts, and both can collude in this analysis. There is of course a parallel between their situations: both are intellectuals, engaged not only in the theoretical construction of a "movement" as an essentially political entity, but also in the practical organisation of social relations (of mobilisation, of research) which attempt to involve other participants on these terms. Participants who have held formal positions in political organisations are also more likely, in this milieu, to have

followed conventional career paths in other respects, and hence to inhabit a world familiar to the researcher[69].

Yet committed activists (like researchers) are a rather small minority within the networks of those they (occasionally) mobilise, and only one element, albeit an important one, of movement milieux. A focus on the most politicised, organised and articulate elements of the lifeworld is in some ways a focus on its *least* characteristic elements, and on those which are in some important ways least different from dominant rationalities. By extension, activists' orientation towards mobilisation may even render the cultural logics of other participants opaque to them. As Landim (1993: 227) observes, there is a

> "divergence and misunderstanding between our language (the language of the NGOs, of projects, of conscientization) and the vast areas of cultural life of the popular sectors [....] It would be worthwhile to analyse the reasons for the blindness of agents at the base with respect to whole dimensions of the social life of the groups who benefit from projects – despite the agents' experiential contact of living with them [....]
>
> For example, analysing the results of participant research done in Brazil, we see many important contributions, but they have not succeeded in surpassing certain limits. Normally infused with common sense, their analyses rely on the verification only of problems experienced in work, production, exploitation and the economic activities undertaken by the groups.
>
> The participant researcher and the popular educator hear the people, but one has the impression that their hearing is selective in terms of the symbolic and social universe of those whom they contact [....] The agents of the NGOs because of their formation, their origins, and the frameworks of thought to which they refer, are unfamiliar with these branches of popular culture." (1993: 226 – 227)

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[69] As Sulkunen puts it, "The very familiarity of the new middle class is deluding [....] Its thoughts are difficult to recognize because they are our own" (1992: 3). What I am suggesting here is that this is particularly the case for the relationship between researchers and full-time activists.

Participation and local rationalities

There might then be some value in examining how those other participants view mobilisation. Reflecting on the occupation discussed earlier, one participant says:

> "I think most people realistically were in the occupation because it was damn good fun. To me, from my perspective, politics is something that, and I think it's reasonably common within this group of people, politics is an interest, but not the driving force, and those for whom it is the driving force, such as Seán and Muireann, are now very much peripheral to the group." (Josh)

Another agrees:

> "Obviously, the whole thing was politically motivated, but once you got in there you were, I spent quite a lot of time in there at the start of it, that you had a lot of time to fill, that, you know, you had your time when you were doing things and where you were just basically hanging round with the other people who were there all the time, and getting to know them intimately and getting introduced to things that you hadn't been introduced to before." (Steve)

While these participants are aware of the other logics of full-time activists, they locate them in terms of their own perspective of a reflexive milieu made up of a series of projects, and in terms of their own rationality:

> "I remember sitting in the Coffee Inn, and Das gave everybody a conker, for some weird reason, and we were sitting in the Coffee Inn with these weird plans for building this windmill in Jonathan's back garden, and you had this kind of odd plan for world domination, trying to [laughter] bring the Sixties back to Dublin because they'd never really hit, which I remember I kind of went 'Well, OK, that's weird, but I've nothing better to do for the summer and [laughs] it might be fun.' " (Ruth)

Thus the hidden discourses of ordinary participants coincide with Melucci's analysis of movement mobilisation as simply one part of a broader way of life for the majority of those involved. These participants are fully capable of inserting political action into their own local rationalities, and of relating the two:

> "There were a lot of discussions going on about what was happening and what people were trying to do and stuff. I wasn't really all that involved in many of those. And I don't think I was at any of the big sort of decision meetings. If anything, I was sort of a hanger-on rather than seriously involved in it [....] I was in the party end of

> it, and one of the things that people there were trying to do was make sure that there was sort of a minimum number of people around, so as not to give security an opportunity to come in en masse and throw everybody out, and I certainly would have been there as cannon fodder in that sense, but really just another face more than anything else." (Josh)

The point is not to argue that only the most inarticulate and disorganised of participants can speak for movements. It is to say that researchers who fail to notice this double hermeneutic, whereby movement cultures are both *other* than the dominant culture and *divided* between those engaged in their instrumental rationalisation (for political or indeed economic reasons) and those for whom local rationalities prevail, are very likely to systematically misunderstand what is going on in the cultural milieux from which movement mobilisations grow. A fully reflexive sociology of the broader movement, by thematising these issues, might make it possible to move beyond this self-confirming situation.

Living in the counter culture

My own relationship with the counter culture was (and is) conditioned primarily through being a second generation member of the counter culture and secondarily through an ambiguous ethnic status coming from migration to Ireland at age 4. The former enabled me to relate to various elements of the counter culture as in a sense available elements of repertoire and habitus rather than something to be conquered by difficult struggle; in a sense the situation of a native speaker rather than of a second language learner. The second pushed me into a relationship of opposition to dominant social formations (to which I had, as Philip Larkin (1988: 104) puts it, no "elsewhere" to oppose, but which were and are emotionally alien); and so to a whole-hearted embrace of counter cultural strategies as the only personal way forward.

This meant that when I came to research the counter culture it was certainly with a view to establishing its specificity, but from the viewpoint of a long-term inhabitant of that archipelago, not the zeal of a convert. In essence, as I shall argue in chapter seven, I think my fellow participants are right in their goals, skilled in how they set about achieving them, but not sufficiently inclined to reflect collectively on the adequacy of means to ends. Beyond this, a long experience of participation in the

counter culture in Germany and Norway, travelling in France, Italy, Britain and the USA, and a familiarity with the history of the British, American and German counter cultures inclined me to look for the most general features and the largest-scale explanations rather than be satisfied with "technical" accounts and ad hoc analyses.

Acting in the network

Within the network, I have tended (with one or two others) towards a role of "full-time intellectual" in the sense of specialising in organising - events, projects, routines - and theorising - not only research, but also more directly political writing and talking. Tina presents this first as an absolute, then as a question of articulation:

> Tina: You were always the one trying to push for things to happen, and [laughs] if you weren't, they wouldn't. And that'd be it, like, you know?
>
> LC: That's the D&D [game] and stuff[70]?
>
> Tina: That's the D&D, or the Greens, or you know, the Greens feast, that kind of stuff.
>
> LC: Yeah, but sometimes they did happen, like 'let's do this', sometimes people say 'Ooh yeah, let's do it!'
>
> Tina: Yeah.
>
> LC: And it would happen.
>
> Tina: Yeah, but no long term project. I don't think that really, I mean people weren't even thinking about it, you know? I mean, maybe you were [laughs] possibly, but nobody else was.

Thus this research process - "organising" the network into a book, "theorising" it in a particular direction - is in a sense a "natural" continuation of my pre-existing role within the counter culture. At the same time, as chapter five illustrates, this direction is routinely resisted by other participants, often not so much in its details as in the project of organising and articulating itself, or is "reread" in terms of their own agendas:

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[70] In fact the game was run by my partner more than myself, but I was largely responsible for recruitment.

> "Every time someone set up a committee it was so that they could further *their* type of political, you wanted to further *your* type of political. Which in some ways was relatively vague, you were into more European politics, rather than localised politics, meaning Ireland, England and stuff related around that, and Union politics. In some ways a success, but I think one of the major problems is everyone picked up more on the American Beat-stroke-hippy literature, American 60s and 70s music and the rest of that, so there was more of an interest in that than say what Eastern Germany was doing. No, I mean, you did not succeed in making us totally aware of the Eastern German [laughs] problem at the time. But, hey, we had some good times in Glendalough! [laughter]" (Das)[71]

While I have tried hard - notably in the selection of interviewees, only one of whom is in a similar position to my own- to bring out the "other side" of the coin, this tension is intrinsic to the counter culture as a whole. Intellectuals do not come from nowhere, but express and work with the everyday intellectual activity of ordinary participants as formal organisation and written word. Other participants do not reject this entirely - they do participate in events and read what is written - but neither do they wholly accept it - in which case they would presumably become full-time intellectuals themselves. Mark, for example, distances himself from that possibility thus:

> "You always find that anybody who's prepared to attempt to communicate a particular world-view seems to end up being the kind of people that, it seems to work this way, like mathematicians who are much more interested in exploring how to fill in the gaps of the system rather than simply take it as given and see what it doesn't deal with and try and find something that deals with *them*, integrate it with that. Or, instead of it being a stepping-stone it's the rock on which they build a house. I think you find that with all kinds of things, that it's the more dogmatic people, people who lean towards dogma and are much more interested in communicating than in expanding the actual thing itself."

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[71] As the network history in chapter five demonstrates, this distancing does not do justice to participants' own activities, even the specifically "political" ones. At the time, Tina was working as a volunteer in a women's refuge; Das was soon to be arrested for a spectacular piece of political street theatre.

At times in the interview process (notably the "failed interview") this tension is resolved in more decisive opposition[72]; at other times analyses coincide closely and participants cooperate in developing the discussion. Most commonly, though, the process is negotiated: participants are willing to be interviewed and remain in a common intellectual frame with the interviewer, but distance and difference are maintained.

Solidarity and conflict

Finally, it should be noted that (as chapters five and six will show) other participants do also at times make more or less successful bids to organise events (from parties to rituals to shared journeys) and articulate ideas (from writing to music to talk). These are not alien or reserved activities; rather, even or especially in the production of counter-hegemonic local rationalities, verbal and tacit knowledge are in a constant state of tension.

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[72] Reading the transcript, my sense of this interview is that I made the mistake of starting from an event which Steve did not find particularly important. Trying to salvage the interview by moving to one which had perhaps been more important for him, I probably gave a false impression of what I was looking for:

> LC: Was that [London crashpad] different from where you'd been before in Dublin?
>
> Steve: Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah, Definitely, definitely.
>
> LC: Was it a shock, or
>
> Steve: Oh God no, no. Not a shock at all. It's like 'great! Wonderful! [laughs] Lovely!' Shock, no [....] Nothing shocking, why would it be shocking?

Following from this, much of the rest of the interview was very defensive:

> LC: I mean, do you think there's sort of something which is common to those people that you don't find in just sort of anyone?
>
> Steve: I'd have no reason to kind of necessarily believe that, no, like, in practice quite a lot of groups of people that you may observe at any one time you'll find completely and utterly boring, you know, if people looked at us they'd find us completely and utterly boring too, from another viewpoint, but I dunno, you just have to check enough, like you know go research as much as possible and come up with something.

That both the network and the research process are to some extent conflictual does not, however, mean that there is not a more "consensual" sphere of cooperation - around the control and interpretation of which conflicts develop, but which is a shared and therefore "closely" knowable point of reference. Nor does the fact of conflict mean that we have to abandon the attempt at understanding: we can still give an account of why it looks a particular way from a particular point of view; if this is not the full story or the only one, it is still a relevant *part* of the story. Specifically, it is what enables me to offer critical and political perspectives on the counter culture, from a position other than Cohen's apparently universalising rationalism discussed at the start of this chapter; as Rosaldo writes,

> "Rather than work downward from abstract principles, social critics work outward from in-depth knowledge of a specific form of life [....] they use their moral imagination to move from the world as it actually is to a locally persuasive vision of how it ought to be. Because different communities differ in their problems and possibilities, such visions must be more local than universal." (1993: 194)

These tensions, then, need to be thematised, both in order to show the relationship of local rationalities to movement projects, but also to see what possibilities are available - both as current "constructions" (interpretations) of the movement and as future "constructions" (developments) of the movement project. Accountability (Plows 1998), or in more familiar language reflexivity, is an important prerequisite for understanding the one and thinking the other: until both others and ourselves can see where we stand and understand how we come to see things in the way we do, our statements hang in the void. Once they are *situated* within their own micropolitical context, they become workable. At that point, we can return to the central question of praxis, which, as Stanley (1990: 15) writes, entails

> "a continuing shared feminist commitment to a political position in which 'knowledge' is not simply defined as 'knowledge *what*' but also 'knowledge *for*'."

The uses of research

What has this research contributed, then? Three concrete examples may illustrate something of the character and limits of this interaction. One is that of interviews and transcripts. With only one exception, all participants have expressed a good deal

of interest in their own transcripts, and in at least one case have circulated it further. It seems from conversations that the lapse of time between interview and transcription (typically 1 – 2 years) and the unusual experience of seeing accurate transcriptions of one's own speech, made reading transcripts something which could help participants gain a clearer sense of their own self-understanding and history.

A second example is that some participants have given me considerable assistance in producing an alternative magazine that grew out of much the same roots as the research. It is hard to know precisely what value they feel it has, but help has often been given unsolicited, which suggests a feeling that it is contributing to a shared project. Thirdly, to research a milieu means among other things to find a way of contributing to it. Thus, for several years one part of this role was to maintain as an open room a college society which served as a crash-pad, a drop-in centre, a library and other things for participants.

Such contributions do not add up to a picture of the leading role of Theory and Organisation; rather, it suggests that their role has to be analysed from the point of view of ordinary participants. Touraine (1981) argues that the process of intervention research is concluded when participants have come to adopt a more adequate understanding of the movement. We might also want to ask whether the researchers have come to engage more closely with the participants.

Chapter five: building a reflexive autonomy

In this and the next chapter I explore the local rationalities of the movement network I researched. This chapter gives a brief history of the network and outlines the basic elements of this rationality, which I describe as one of reflexive autonomy: autonomist in its relation to dominant instrumental rationalities, reflexive in its own self-development as *conscious* way of life. Chapter six will explore some of the contradictions and possibilities of this rationality, and asks how participants live with them.

A brief network history

This network was formed by a group of young Irish school-leavers, mostly oriented towards the technical education that state strategy has strongly promoted throughout the 1980s and 1990s, who developed links of friendship, sexual relationships, sociability, cooperation and shared culture within the London squats, a college occupation, a student political society and several shared houses in Dublin and London. In turn, this network has formed a context for a variety of alternative "political" and "cultural" projects and experiments, such as:

- political projects (anarchist and green groups, street theatre, student politics and direct action);
- experimentation with living forms, in particular shared houses, squats and "crashpads";
- economic projects such as a coop, an alternative bookshop and local economic trading systems (LETS);
- alternative sexual practices, including bisexuality, open and multiple relationships;
- exploration of drugs, in particular hash, acid and mushrooms;
- cultural challenges, such as alternative music, Rainbow Gatherings, pagan and occultist rituals and groups, and so on.

In this process the network divided, as we shall see, between those for whom "politics" was only one element of their lives and those for whom it was the dominant interest. In this research I have concentrated on the former for reasons already given, though including one interview with a representative of the latter tendency, which slowly found organisational homes.

Explicitly political activity, however, has remained one feature of life among others for the "holistic" tendency, with involvement in green parties, environmental direct action, third world solidarity, and feminist projects mobilising different participants at different times, as have alternative economic projects, new religious movements, drug use, travelling, intense exploration of relationships. Over the last two years, for example, different participants have:

- worked as a volunteer co-ordinator in an organic food co-op;
- worked as a peace observer in a third world war zone;
- worked in a co-op supporting a meditation centre;
- worked in a women's refuge for immigrant women leaving violent situations;
- refused to consider offers of defence-related employment;
- given considerable technical support for an alternative magazine project;
- allowed their house to be used as base for large-scale direct action;
- carried out a spectacular piece of political street theatre.

Participants in this network have been involved in the kinds of activities that are routinely discussed as "social movements", then. At the same time, as chapter four showed, these are rarely the centres of their lives. At one extreme, as Steve describes his own participation in a student occupation,

> "[That political interest] was never very very strong, like it wasn't something I would have done on my own initiative, it was just like I sympathised with, put it that way, and if a similar thing came up I would sympathise with it again."

At the other extreme, it involves being "the kind of person who goes on demos" (personal conversation with Frank), and at times rather more than that in terms of volunteer work and assistance with different projects. It is not that most participants find the centre of their lives in family and career, as might be expected from Irish

demographic and employment patterns: those are only arriving now, and then only for some participants[73]. Rather, the gap between "ordinary" expectations and "unusual" movement activity is bridged by participation in a particular way of life which I try to explore further in these chapters.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, the combination of structural mass unemployment and the stronger attraction of counter cultures abroad - Italy, Germany, USA, Australia, Britain, Belgium - led to large-scale emigration. In the late 1990s, this is now being transformed by "partnership" and *Standortpolitik*-induced growth that have improved possibilities of employment in Ireland and rendered much of what was marginal and oppositional in the 1980s widely available[74]. The original needs for and purposes of *group* togetherness have faded to be replaced by more extensive *networking* between individuals (and, increasingly, couples). Nevertheless, levels of contact - face-to-face, phone, email - remain high, internationally and intercontinentally as well as within Ireland or Dublin; it is not unusual for people to cross the country to see friends, to fly back from Britain or Belgium for a weekend, or to return from America or Australia for Christmas - and then spend the bulk of their time with other participants rather than with their families.

Locating the Irish counter culture

By comparison with the impressively articulated counter cultures found in Germany (chapter one), Britain (McKay 1996) or the USA (e.g. Jasper 1997: 183 – 209), this network (and the wider counter culture it fits within) does not appear as massively oppositional, possessed of a very strong identity, or well-resourced. Rather, it is

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[73] Of the nine people interviewed, only one is a parent, one is an expectant parent and one is a step-parent. Four are looking for employment or in explicitly temporary work, four are considering migration, two have seasonal work, one is self-employed and only one has a permanent contract with pension possibilities: this for a group at and around thirty, more than half of whom have university degrees, in a country with near-full employment in some sectors.

[74] To take a single straw in the wind, books universally read in this network like *Fear and loathing in Las Vegas* (Thompson 1972), *The electric Kool-Aid acid test* (Wolfe 1969) or the *Illuminatus* trilogy (Shea and Wilson 1986a, b, c), in the mid-80s only available abroad or in specialised second hand bookshops, are now routinely available in chain bookstores.

scattered (physically and metaphorically), and dependent on outside resources (cultural, personal and practical).

In chapter three I argued that social movements come from above as well as from below; at times, for example in wars of independence, a movement from below can *become* a movement from above. Such a transformation would involve not only a take-over and transformation of the institutions of power, but also a progressive sidelining of those exploited groups (which might include the working class, small farmers, women, ethnic minorities) whose allegiance was necessary to take power.

Something of this happened in Ireland at the end of the nineteenth century and the start of the twentieth, to a degree unusual in Western Europe: the transformation from tenancy to peasant proprietorship is equalled perhaps only by France, the success in achieving political independence only by Norway, and the transformation of the Catholic church from underground organisation (in the eighteenth century) to large-scale public influence (Nic Ghiolla Phádraig 1995) perhaps best comparable to post-1989 Eastern Europe.

This has produced very strong hegemonic relationships, despite well-known shifts such as that from economic strategies of import-substitution to strategies of dependency on foreign investment, the declining influence of religion on the body (Inglis 1998) and the rise of feminism (Mahon 1995). To cite some obvious indicators, the "Civil War parties" still dominate politics absolutely, despite their changing sources of legitimation; religious practice remains at levels more characteristic of America than of western Europe, despite the changing meaning of religious practice (Whelan 1994); and class mobility remains strongly unequal, despite massive credentialisation (Breen et al. 1990). *Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose* [75], one could say; or, *Se vogliamo che tutto rimanga come è, bisogna che tutto cambi* [76].

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[75] "The more it changes, the more it stays the same."

[76] "Everything has to change so that everything can stay as it was." Lampedusa (1978 (1958)): 684.

Subordinate challenges

Movements from below within this post-colonial order have also definitely "known their place": Peillon (1982) and Allen (1997) have shown that despite the institutional strength of the Irish labour movement, its major political orientations have always accepted the essentials of the social, economic and political order; though the 1980s mark a new period in corporatist arrangements, this has to be set against the background of "partnership" going back long before that. A similar argument can be made for the Irish women's movement. Coulter (1993) and Connolly (1998) have argued that nationalist feminism between the 1930s and 1960s was "radical for its time", and have carried out much good research to establish its dimensions. What they have failed to observe is that this feminism remained *subordinate* precisely in that it accepted the hegemonic terms of nation, community and religion, and that "radical for its time" means accepting the general existence of patriarchy and arguing for local modifications.

Thus Connolly writes that "the IHA was extremely radical in the context of Irish society from the 1940s to the 1960s" (1998: 7), meaning apparently not that it rejected fundamental features of Irish social structure (e.g. patriarchy) or adopted forms of organisation that placed existing power relations in question[77] but that it stuck its neck out further than other people. This demonstrates, however, that hegemonic relations made it *so difficult* to raise major issues that movements had to remain within very narrow limits:

> "if you were one step ahead with public thinking at the time you were a communist. And we got branded on occasions just by making a suggestion and often lost a branch overnight" (IHA activist cited in Connolly 1998: 9).

Contrast this with, for example, actual communist parties such as the KPD, the PCF or the PCd'I / PCI of the same periods (before, during and after fascism): international rather than national in orientation, rejecting the structures of the

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[77] Thus Hilda Tweedy:

> "Conscious of the dual role of women in the mid-century they presented to the public the solid frontage of the Irish housewife; strategically they instructed their members on how to negotiate the complex maze of the Irish party machinery" (cited in Connolly 1998: 10).

existing state, challenging the fundamentals of the economic order, and so on. In order to talk sensibly about hegemony, we need to know what a counter-hegemonic situation might look like[78].

Recuperation and peripherality

Within the new dispensation of the post-1958 period, too, social movements - even where they have had radical moments - have been recuperated, faster or slower, as Broderick (1998) has argued for the environmental movement, Geoghegan (1998a) for the community development movement and as suggested by the title alone of Mahon's (1995) piece on the women's movement, "From democracy to femocracy". Following a pattern developed, as Allen (1997) shows, in relation to the labour movement, the state has offered various forms of "partnership" - advisory and consultative roles, funding arrangements, institutionalisation - to movement organisations, which in turn orient themselves towards the state in the hope of gaining influence and funding.

To an extent, this is a routine feature of social movements in peripheral contexts: where "the state is everything and civil society primordial and gelatinous" (Gramsci 1975 (1930-32): 866), movements have the choice at an early stage (as Foweraker 1993 has pointed out) between co-optation and uncompromising conflict - in effect, exposure to state violence, an option common in Latin America but restricted in Ireland to the republican movement. Vilas (1995) has outlined the pressures leading towards co-optation well, in his discussion of Latin American social movements:

> "[B]ecause they are only able to deal with small segments of the population, these approaches [substitute employment programmes] usually reinforce people's fragmentation as much as they foment renewed clientelistic and corporatist practices. Access to a temporary job in a road-building project, or to material resources to build the neighbourhood's day-care center, may be not so much a matter of fitting into an official, statistical definition of poverty as much as a matter of knowing someone at

[78] A local example would be the Irish nationalist movement itself prior to independence, with different aspects challenging property relations, the form of the state and everyday culture and numbering civil disobedience, boycotts and violence among its tools *along with* "the complex maze" of the British party machinery.

> the mayor's office or at the governing party's *delegación*. Because such programs are administered by government agencies, usually people and community organisations have no alternative but to get involved in a sharp competition to get favors - that is, resources - from bureaucrats. As the state retreats from direct involvement in development, state bureaucrats and government officials increase their own roles as brokers of survival. It is not uncommon to find that an implicit goal of these programs is the building of political constituencies for municipal, provincial and even national officials." (Vilas 1995: 144 - 5)

This is then furthered by the particularistic orientation of movement activists - equivalent to Hall's (1996) "negotiated" relationships, accepting the basic framework of power relationships and challenging only their specific implications. "Oppositional" orientations, on the periphery, are all or nothing.

Co-optation and movement structure

There is no autonomous "civil society" in such contexts within which significant autonomous structures can be developed; or (to put it another way), such societies tend to have a single pillar, that of the national community, combining state, church, sport and (in Ireland) pub, which is in effect the institutional sedimentation of earlier movements from below[79]. The choice of co-optation - of partnershipping and clientelism, of funding applications and professionalisation - is rendered attractive in part by the low proportion of committed activists in the counter culture generally, hence the attractiveness of strategies which use their carefully hoarded communication, legal, technical etc. skills to influence elites (Cox 1998a), but also by the widespread adoption of consensualist ideologies[80].

Movements from below thus tend to attempt to position themselves as allies of "modernising" state elites, or what the eighteenth century knew as enlightened

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[79] Visitors from the Italian counter culture sometimes ask where they can find "left-wing pubs", an entirely normal request in Italy but one which does not make much sense in Ireland.

[80] This includes not only explicit nationalism, but also liberal state-centred "educative" strategies, communicative visions of consensual communities, and more generally the lack of any sense that there might be structural rather than contingent reasons why "the state" might not belong to "the people" - so it is seen as capable of relatively easy reform even if at present a bit unacceptable.

despots. In so doing, they have become deeply fragmented: by seeking state support in the form of influence and funding, social movement organisations necessarily find themselves in conflict with other groups in the same "sector" and forced to present their ideas as capable of being accepted without great changes to the shape of the state or Irish society - in other words, to substitute themselves for traditional factional and clientelist relationships in the generation of what (borrowing an idea from Durkheim) we could call "organic" rather than "mechanical" hegemony. Routinely, this gap between wide vision and narrow mechanism is bridged by an appeal to cultural change: if the problem is not in social structure or state organisation, it is in people's heads. Hence ecological survival becomes a matter of private consumer morality, domestic exploitation the result of traditional ideas, and poverty an effect of lack of "recognition".

Hence the paradox that in their praxis full-time social movement activists are often rather more conservative than ordinary participants, and the apparently "cultural" edge of the counter culture is rather more radical than much of its "political" manifestation. An obvious, even banal, example of the latter discrepancy lies in the intensive policing of drugs, music and dance (cf. the critique in Moore 1999) and the regular introduction of new items of legislation targetting precisely those apparently "unpolitical" activities, such as the 1994 Public Order Act. What these activities are in practice charged with, of course, is threatening "community" - kinship, religion and policed pastimes like drinking and sport - as well as undermining the work ethic and respect for authority.

It is not that *no* movement from below has been possible in Ireland, but that hegemonic relations have massively constrained its ability to articulate itself (which is of course what hegemonic relations are there for) and under normal circumstances forced movements to articulate themselves with, and to a large extent within, the state. Nor is it that the network I am interested in found *no* counter cultural context to which it could connect, but that it had to do most of the work itself and to a large extent reinvent the wheel. This, then, brought it into relation with a *global* social movement (Tarrow 1998); in other words, the context is not simply that of the Irish left but also that of the American 1960s, the London squats, the Zapatista rebellion.

Though the bulk of social movement writing has been focussed on core countries, the bulk of the world's population does not live in the core; more importantly, in disorganised capitalism the national organisation of social relations in general is replaced by a more global one. In this sense, the relationship between peripherality and community in the Irish counter culture is perhaps a better paradigm than the West German case: the dual relationship to a broader determining context and a narrower local one, and the increasing difficulty for movements from below to overcome this tension, are problems facing social movements everywhere.

The politics of autonomy

In local terms, the network participants I interviewed had no difficulties about seeing marked differences in ways of life and life-purposes as between themselves and dominant ways of life:

> "I think there's an element of 'well, I don't really give a fuck so long as I have a bicycle and a pot of tea and a bottle of wine, and I can go out to a club and drop an E' [laughter], depending on which people, the E comes in as more important than the bottle of wine, in some [laughs], sort of whatever, not even according to age even [....] A lot of people are just 'yeah, feck it, I've decided I can do without the car and that sort of stuff, or I'll have an old banger or whatever, but, you know, I'm going to', or maybe it's not even that, with some people they manage to get set up so that they have their income but what they're losing is time. They're putting time into these things, so somewhere along the line they're saying 'Yeah, I can give certain things a miss that a lot of people reckon are important', you know, the standard consumer desirables, whether it's in terms of time or money or whatever. And I think there is a perceived gain, I don't know how consciously [laughs] perceived it is, but the gain is that we're doing something together, we're actually, yeah, making this commitment to changing the world, we are recognisable to others of our type and therefore, I don't know, I think there's something like that." (Frank)

This sets up a fairly explicit opposition between different cultural rationalities: a rationality which is sufficiently dominant that participants have to argue against its motivational terms, and one grounded in a shared alternative lifeworld. Since

participants have themselves been socialised into the former, this opposition can also take the form of a critique of their own past assumptions:

> "The whole time I lived in [South Dublin], I was completely convinced that the majority of humanity gets a 9 to 5 job, goes out twice a week, and I'm not at all convinced of that any more. I'm meeting more and more and more people that just don't do that, meeting loads of people who, maybe because it's America, maybe it's a bigger thing there, but all over the place, meeting more and more people who are doing things that I would consider odd. You know, they've been travelling around the world for three years, and they're perfectly normal looking, and they just, this is what they do." (Ruth)

Here the contrast is not with ownership per se, as with Frank, but rather with the taken-for-granted structures of social stability and career. It can also be phrased in terms of modes of interaction:

> "The easiest way for me to answer [the question of contrasts] is to point to somebody I get on very well with, a guy who is in my class in college [....] He's an extremely nice bloke but at the same time has quite conservative views on an awful lot of things and will tend to, possibly through being intimidated, will tend to reject people because of the front, the face that they wear without really giving them the benefit of the doubt and digging beyond the face, which I think is very characteristic of that group. There're a lot of people who are, I wouldn't say social misfits, because that's a very damning and strong term, but people who don't entirely fit in with conventional society for whatever reason and, in spite of their faults and in spite of a certain difficulty in getting on with people in a normal environment this group of people tends to, I think, just accept them and you know 'Yeah, find, join in, whatever', you know? Which I find an extremely commendable attitude." (Josh)

Here the contrast is one with hegemonic expectations as to social performances. It can also be framed in explicitly political terms:

> "[There are] a lot of people in Ireland now who are doing some fairly seriously different things to traditional Irish values and current world-dominant economics and the kind of, yeah, consumerist values which are not new, I mean there are a lot of people trying to construct alternatives and defend those." (Frank)

Thus, in related ways, participants identify a basic contrast of rationalities grounded in different ways of life, a dominant one against which they have to struggle in various ways (personally or politically) and an alternative way of being.

Critiques of the network

Even where participants did not ascribe fully "alternative" status to the network[81], this was in terms of their own orientation to a way of life that they felt was only partially realised within the network, the latter being criticised from a feminist point of view:

> "[M]yself and Emer and I think Caitríona is the other person, we were talking about this some time ago and we were saying, all the girls, just, so, imitating all this 'Oh, not again, talking about the occupation, not again talking about Paddington [St.], no, [laughter] please, no." (Tina)

or as insufficiently communicative:

> "I suppose I had this idea in my head of coming across a kind of Merry Prankster-ish bunch of people who were interested in bouncing off each other as much as they could, rather than going to the pub." (Mark)

or as not sufficiently politicised:

> "[T]he anarchists were kind of more committed to the idea of a communal living squat, of a WG [*Wohngemeinschaft*] kind of thing, and therefore, I suppose felt it wasn't just bloody selfish of these people not to pay up the money or not to do the washing up, it was also [laughs] an attack on the programme, or whatever [...] they resented us, they thought we were mad with the sort of programme stuff." (Frank)

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[81] As we have seen in chapter four, Steve tended at times to deny any specificity on principle, but at other times in the same interview he was capable of identifying differences between the network and his friends from the same college course:

> "They're all very nice people, but they've got their own world, they focus on their own thing. They're not focussed in the middle of what's happening with you. Which is different with this group."

There are, in other words, more and less radical positions within the network, and conflicts around the extent to which it succeeds in embodying participants' individual perspectives[82].

Autonomy as self-development

Nevertheless, whether ascribing the movement rationality to the network as a whole or to themselves alone, most participants are in no practical doubt that they hold an alternative rationality which contrasts sharply with dominant rationalities. Naming those dominant rationalities primarily in terms of money and power, what is opposed to them is a rationality of autonomy and self-development:

> "[I was] feeling like I'd met a whole bunch of people who were interested in the same kind of thing I was interested in, which is, I wouldn't say it was overtly self-development, but at least interest in or awareness of self-knowledge." (Mark)

The principle of autonomy is of course not a new one within modernity (Wagner 1994). Yet most modern formulations take the self for granted: thus instrumental rationality treats both the self and its goal as assumptions, and enquires merely after the most effective way of getting from A to B. Even in its most hedonistic forms, possessive individualism is simply a special case of this approach. Romanticism, commonly ascribed to movement milieux (Eder 1993), assumes a natural, pre-given self, albeit obscured by conventions and civilisation[83]. Yet the logic of autonomy developed within this lifeworld places the self in question, as an open ended project,

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[82] This is obviously in a sense true for this thesis as well; like Tina, Mark or Frank I would welcome particular kinds of development. I see this more in terms of a development of orientations that are already present, to some degree, and that people are struggling with in different ways. In chapters six and seven I try to develop something of this immanent critique.

[83] In Marx the emphasis falls rather on the "disembedding" effects of the capitalist mode of production, which is celebrated (Marx and Engels 1967) for its initial release of the potential for freedom from tradition and autocracy, yet damned for the limited nature of the freedom it ultimately offers. Autonomy cannot be realised within capitalist society; or it can only be realised for the few. Similarly, Habermas (1987a, b) argues that capitalist modernity unleashes a potential for autonomous reason which is systematically curtailed by the imperatives of economy and state. In these perspectives, then, autonomy is a *potential* inherent within capitalist modernity, which we can grasp and use to criticise that modernity, but which cannot as yet be fully realised.

something to be constructed or transformed (cf. Heelas 1996). Thus participants make comments along the following lines:

> "Ciarán is ambitious within himself, it's himself that he wants to develop, not a career or any of that kind of stuff." (Josh)

Another participant speaks of

> "People who do all kinds of odd and extremely innovative things, an awful lot of people whose top priority is sorting their head out, or whose top priority is something along the lines of enlightenment." (Ruth)

In this context the pursuit of autonomy and self-realisation is explicitly contrasted to the goal-rational pursuit of material interests:

> "It comes back to this idea that the way in which people perceive ambition as *not* a material ambition, which again links back to the ideas about people's attitude to property and that. Whilst they have fuck all of it, I don't think that is entirely responsible for their attitude. The development is sort of personal development, it's not material development. So the idea of going away to make money isn't really, you're not going to impress anybody, really. 'Oh wow, he's earning fuckloads of money, good for him, so what?'" (Josh)

The main theme is that of moving away from the instrumental approach of seeking the best available employment towards an explorative approach to one's own life. This explorative sense is underlined by the relatively weak articulation of the nature of the alternatives and of how to get there: this is not simply choosing an alternative strategy to achieve pre-existing goals. Rather, goals are something to be revised along the way.

The similarity of this project to the reflexive concept of the modernist "project of the self", and its *dissimilarity* from the romantic position normally imputed to these lifeworlds, which would imply a sense of a "true" self pre-existing social conventions, can be seen from the contrast with Berger, Berger and Kellner's interpretation:

> "The implicit anthropology in all of this is quite clear. Underneath the constraining structures of individuality and rationality lies the healing reality of our 'natural' being, an *ens realissimum*, which is the object of a quasi-soteriological quest." (1974: 182)

This is not the position taken by participants in this network, who are familiar (as we shall see) with the romantic rhetoric of Sixties literature, but do not adopt *this element* of it for themselves. The self is not something to identify with but something to develop. One distances oneself from the given "self" in order to change it or observe it changing. Or, as McRobbie puts it,

> "Different, youthful, subjectivities [...] require and find in youth cultural forms strong symbolic structures through which 'who you are', 'who you want to be' and 'who you want to go out with' can be explored, not in any finalised way, but as an ongoing and reflective social process." (1994: 192)

Culture and politics

To state the tension between dominant and alternative rationalities is not, of course, to say how it can be resolved, as we shall see in chapter six. Apart from the possibility of a privatised pseudo-resolution, participants can and do explore the possibility of a purely internal ("spiritual") liberation, as well as that of a quietist, retreatist or utopian group withdrawal, along with collective challenges to the structures blocking autonomy. The combination of these latter three within the same individuals and network suggests that at a personal or group level they are not the fixed opposites they are sometimes thought to be, or as Mark puts it,

> "They say there's two things, there's the urge to be out in the world, to extend oneself into life, and at the same time to withdraw from life, to avoid the suffering that life is, like the Buddhists have it, but I guess it's gotta be somewhere between the two on the knife-edge, but this is a paradox that you can surmount, the pull to life and from life. It goes in cycles, we live and die."

Since social structure and everyday routines are not themselves opposites but mutually presuppose one another (Giddens 1993b: 122 - 126), Lichterman (1996) is right in arguing that social movements need to challenge both: participants need to "free their minds" (break out of their own socialisation and reorient themselves in terms of a new "movement psychology"), live out alternatives to everyday routines *and* practically challenge dominant structures if they are to tackle the hegemony exercised by "movements from above" in all its shapes.

What we need to start from, then, as Barker and Dale (1997) have suggested, is a sense of human needs, or in my terms what is locally rational, first as a response to the situation people find themselves in but subsequently - through movement challenges to structures and routines - as an articulated "movement rationality" with priorities of its own. The rationality discussed here sees narrowly "political" activity as something relative, to be located within the broader rationality of the movement itself. In this perspective, political mobilisation can be, as critical theorists (Offe 1985) have argued, in defence of autonomy[84]; it may also be a means of pursuing the goal of self-development, much as for Lichterman's (1996) Greens. A third possibility is action in solidarity with others seen as embodying some part of the same struggle (see Cohen 1978: 244 - 245 on the importance of this).

Autonomy and politics

In keeping with the logic of autonomy as self-development, then, the instrumentally rational pursuit of politics in a narrow sense can be rejected outright in the name of autonomy:

> LC: Groups are bad things?
>
> Ruth: Yeah, kind of limiting. If you try and set up anything a lot of these people will just go 'I'm not interested'. If they happened to be somewhere and something happened they'd go for it, but anything organised they're not interested in, anything that sounds remotely political they just don't want to know.
>
> LC: Why is that?
>
> Ruth: Don't believe in politics, a lot of people just find it boring, or completely pointless, or they live their life the way they want to and they live and let live, if other people want to get into politics, it would kind of be 'if you're into politics that's your trip, whereas me, I just want to wander round and play guitar.'

If politics is "your trip", it is simply one way among many of pursuing the project of self-development. Alternatively, it may be a means of defending the free space required for the pursuit of autonomy:

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[84] Not, however, that of a "colonised" natural lifeworld, but rather that of the "free spaces" within which movements develop (Cohen 1985).

> "Politics is the mechanism by which decisions that affect my life are made, therefore if I wish to have any control over my life I must have an interest in politics, but it is not the driving force of my life." (Josh)

Or again, speaking of a proto-anarchist group:

> "[T]he people who were most of the time the Network were anarcho-libertarian em hippy types [laughs] whatever, and very interested in that kind of free space [....] I think it was the looking for a free space kind of thing, which, you know, was politically voiced as anarchist and then kind of culturally voiced I think in things like Tarot cards and seances and whatever, I'm not sure, but I think they were areas that people were experimenting with." (Frank)

Free space can also, however, be a very "concrete" issue, where for example a way of life is criminalised:

> "Busking was decriminalised in 1988 for a year for the millennium as a tourist attraction. That was very funny because the year before there was some huge meetings of buskers and I was quite impressed at the number of people that came to the meetings. We were trying to get a guild together [....] There were about thirty people coming to those meetings who *knew* roughly what was going on." (Ciarán)

Tolerance and activism

Thus political activity takes its place as one lifeworld interest among others, to be handled with tolerance. Speaking of a couple of heavily committed activists, for example:

> "People know what Seán and Muireann are up to, but they're not very strongly influenced, and that's an example of Seán and Muireann being part of that group, coming from that group, and finding their own space [....] But Seán and Muireann didn't ram it down anybody's throat, and nobody tried to make them conform to what was going on." (Josh)

This tolerance appears as a condition of autonomy:

> "There is a sort of laid-back attitude which allows people to do their own thing and is very very tolerant of people's individuality and people doing their own thing and coming and going as they please." (Josh)

Political mobilisation, then, can form a small or large part of an individual's project of self-development, and it takes its place within the local rationalities of the network on this basis. This logic of autonomy as self-development, however, has immediate effects in relation to the forms of politics which can take root in it and the attitudes taken to the political.

Autonomous forms of politics

On the one hand, political forms conducive to this type of autonomy are preferred. The description of a college occupation sets the tone:

> "Early stages was just trying to organise things inside, so that people weren't just running round amuck, but still having lots of fun anyway, but at that stage it was real kind of patting each other on the back and like 'We got in, we've succeeded' [...] and then just a lot of talking to people, a lot of getting into people's heads and things, and when it got kind of [laughs] more organised, if you can call it that, when we started defining exactly what we were doing there, and you remember, getting the magazine out and all that, and it was actually something to do. But the thing I remember from it was all those engineers in there doing their homework all the time, they'd set up a little kind of classroom where they were studying and doing their homework. Everyone else was running around the place, trying to set up a little commune type thing, Das arrives, starts cooking food for everyone [laughter], like a free-for-all, bondage, etcetera, that kind of thing. You know, also Joanna was there at the time, and there's kind of things like that happening, people getting into tarot cards and stuff." (Steve)

The direct democracy of the squat or the occupation and their articulate counterpart in anarchist organising, and the network of alternative projects and *its* articulate counterpart in green politics, offer two possibilities of "doing" politics:

> "[A]lthough you get a lot of strong individuals, I suppose like myself, like Marijke or whatever, who do a fair amount of organising, I don't think people have this desire to organise other people. They want to get things done, but there is a desire to do them in a group, as a team, which I suppose you don't get in the normal workplace, even if you're working as a team or whatever, even in an academic department [laughter]" (Frank).

The immediate, lifeworld-bound activity of demonstrations, direct action, the local project or the once-off event are preferred to more hierarchical political forms, whether of large-scale organisation or of clientele-building, whose only possible meaning is instrumental and whose operation runs directly counter to the logic of autonomy:

> "I think the fact that these people have the laid-back attitude of allowing people to do their own thing is a mechanism which allows very strong personalities and very strong individuals to be able to interact with each other without stomping on each other's toes, and the sorts of ambitions that these people have, and the way in which they allow that ambition to be fulfilled, doesn't involve getting a group of people to centre round you." (Josh)

On the other hand, as we have seen, the political is itself relativised, as *one* means of pursuing or defending the project of self-development among others. As Melucci has said, activists engage in movement activities on the basis that it has meaning for them, not in terms of its instrumental value: "if it doesn't make sense to me, I am not participating; but what I do also benefits others" (1989: 49). In terms of the arguments developed in chapter three, this attitude is itself a form of resistance to the instrumental logic of the political system: participants see the defence of personal, psychological and group free space and independence as primary, and participation in more organised "political" ways of realising this goal is always provisional. Thus local rationalities themselves position the political and allocate it a very specific place in terms of the pursuit of autonomous self-development:

> "There's different forms of political. I mean, there's political active Students' Union, and there was mine, which was more, something like civil rights I'm more supportive of, I mean, I've got my list of priorities, and to be quite honest student politics don't come near. I reckon by the time there's a setup where you're able to be a student and the only thing you get harassed by the police for is drugs, you're laughing. Em [laughs] you're being fairly well left alone. Whereas you've still got other countries where becoming a student is something almost impossible and if you are a student and you do anything political, that's you strung up by the balls. And then Greenpeace, fine, that was something I could do, I mean if I wandered down to Amnesty International they'd just say 'Write a letter', when you write a letter you go home and you write a letter, and you put a stamp on it and you send it off. And the

> strong point about Amnesty is, it's something everyone can do about the same and everyone can do it at home. Which is like write a letter. Em, Greenpeace it's a bit awkward. I mean, you can't save a whale, like [laughter] sticking one in the fridge and leaving it for later." (Das)

As I will argue in chapters six and (especially) seven, this orientation seems to me incomplete, in that it lacks a realistic strategic sense of what would need to be done to secure existing free spaces against movements from above and to bring about these possibilities for others who do not yet have them. In this sense the network is "reinventing the wheel", and there is not much sense of reflection on past defeats.

At the same time, it is often a strength of new movements that they do not "know" certain things to be impossible (and may score surprising successes because of this if conditions have changed), and a weakness of much traditional activism that it falls into a purely instrumental pursuit of power where the goal is so far off that in effect the means (recruitment, organising) become the end. As Thompson (1977b) argues, there is a need for the utopian element; my hope in this thesis is not so much to undermine that as to develop it - to deepen the movement's seriousness about *realising* its utopias. As one participant puts it, the difficulty is that

> "[T]here is a lot of, not real thinking ahead, really, seriously, sort of 'We'll still be partying in forty years' time', but not really thinking it, because I think now we wouldn't do the same, you know?" (Tina)

Different kinds of challenges

The relativisation of narrowly "political" activity on the part of participants is not a simple rejection, in a network formed in movement contexts and most of whose members have been and are regular contributors to movement mobilisations. What they are not, with one exception, is full-time activists. As the one "full-timer" among them observes,

> "I think the big difference that I run up against time and time again is the people who are running around doing things and the people who are hanging out, and that at times leads to a certain amount of intolerance on both sides and a blindness at times, but I think that that split between the people who are going and being politically active or the people who are getting wasted, and perhaps what's happening now is

> that the people who're going and getting wasted, most of them are as you say getting their act together in some kind of a way, and the people who are politically active, a lot of them are not quite slowing down, but they're not being quite as manic as they used to be." (Frank)

However, along with these strictly "political" mobilisations - directly challenging social structures - there is a more systematic challenge to everyday social routines implicit in the contrasts of lifestyle we have already seen. At times this is sufficiently threatening to dominant instrumental rationalities to invite coercive intervention if detected - squatting, occupations, drug use, free festivals and Rainbow Gatherings, for example. At others, the energies are more "internal", building up alternative institutions and developing alternative ways of life. This latter should not be underestimated: what is received as socialised routine represents the sedimentation of much skilled effort on the part of past movements from below and currently dominant movements. To abandon this and start to reinvent new ways of living is, at its most basic, an enormous effort requiring personal resources to initiate and external resources to institutionalise - a point often lost in more "idealist" formulations of cultural studies.

Roots of autonomy

Where then does this local rationality come from? Why, in other words, the politics of autonomy? One answer is given by neo-conservatives à la Berger, Berger and Kellner (1974): that the movements of the 1960s in particular undermined the cultural conditions of reproduction of organised capitalism - the work ethic and labour discipline, political docility and privatised values, etc. If we add to this Claus Offe's (1984) reflections on the contradiction between the state's attempts to recommodify labour and the decommodifying effects in practice of state intervention into ever-new areas of social life, and the widely-noted attempts by capital since the 1960s to liberate itself from the constraints of national power relations and thus cease to contribute to the conditions of its own reproduction, the following analysis seems possible:

The dual effects of the counter culture and globalisation - the two movements dominating disorganised capitalism - in developing and reacting against the Fordist welfare state - have produced a situation where capital is not only increasingly

financial rather than industrial, global rather than national, but crucially no longer subject to the collective rationality inducing private losses for the collective interest of capitalism, embodied in the Fordist regime of production and reproduction. Henceforth the reproduction of the conditions for capital investment and profit - the defence of property, the reproduction of appropriately socialised workers and consumers - is left to the efforts of "local" actors - nation-states, fundamentalisms, etc., whose attempts at turning back the clock are bolstered by the stick of disinvestment rather than the carrot of social investment.

Externalising the costs of reproduction

Given this, the reproduction of the social relations conducive to capitalism becomes a far more hit-and-miss affair: as Bauman (1995) has observed, not only are large portions of humanity irrelevant as producers, they are increasingly irrelevant as consumers. Under these circumstances, the authoritarian and corporatist relations of closure characteristic of organised capitalism are no longer backed up by effective relations of internal hegemony, and mechanisms of external coercion - policing, recommodification, labour market exclusion - tend to replace the latter. The "costs of reproduction" of capital are then increasingly externalised - in other words, capital as such now adopts a "functional" rather than "intentional" orientation towards them[85], weakening the agencies of internal social control (Magnusson 1996). It is under these conditions that it becomes easier not to internalise these relations:

> "I started doing a business studies course in UCD, I did that for three weeks and dropped out [....] First of all it was boring, and then it was really training you to be aggressive and competitive and looking out only for yourself. I mean, even the class, you'd have the teachers say 'OK, I've put down books for doing work. These people, group A, eight in the morning, group B, blah blah blah' and then you'd have to go and sign your name into the group, and there were loads of us, we'd a big amphitheatre kind of thing, and she goes 'Come on [claps] down! Hurry down and get your name, don't let people go past you or you won't get the time you want!'

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[85] That is, global capital can afford to leave it to nation-states and other local agencies to take care of reproduction, unlike national capital, which has an immediate interest in ensuring the conditions of its local survival.

> You know, I was going 'Jesus! What's this?' you know? After that, I think that was the last drop, [laughs], 'I'm not staying in this environment!' " (Tina)

A logic of autonomy vis-à-vis capital and the state becomes easier to sustain, then, on a scale running from full withdrawal through radicalised reflexivity to "internal exile" (see chapter six). Characteristically, participants in this network express a strong affinity for the most developed forms of autonomy - organic farming and permaculture, New Age Travellers and Sixties drop-outs:

> "From what I can gather from the people I know, the *few* people I know and the little I've read, there's very strong parallels with the English New Age travelling community in terms of that attitude of people doing their own thing. Those people would fit into this group, and vice versa." (Josh)

And again, from closer experience and with a more intentional orientation:

> "I'd say that things do tend to be going towards kind of the idea of communities, which means like the travellers very much, the New Age travellers and the rest of it, it's very much in community, yes, that's why they keep in contact with one another, they will arrange with someone, 'if I don't see you beforehand I'll meet you next year, at such and such', and that's their plan, they know they're gonna be there and if their van goes down they'll hitch, they'll do anything to get there because they've promised they'll meet someone and stay in contact. To an extent we've stayed the same." (Das)

Autonomy, in other words, requires community; and the literature which contrasts a docile "system" population with a fringe pursuing its own concerns - Gibson, Sterling, Loveday, Hunter Thompson - is widely read, and indeed passed onto new participants as a form of introduction:

> "People kept throwing books at me, which was quite good too. I read a lot that summer [...] Things like *The Great Shark Hunt, Generation of Swine, The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test,* a whole pile of Kerouac books, Carlos Castaneda, *LSD and the American Dream.*" (Ruth)

This orientation towards an alternative community is certainly the dominant one in the Irish alternative press; still, in interviews I was occasionally surprised how much people took it for granted:

> Jim: No, I mean, what're you actually at? [laughs]

LC: I'm interested in looking at the way not just sort of immediately people like us and the kind of people we've been talking about, but also say German Greens I've come across, or people who now are out in the West doing organic farming for the past twenty years or whatever, all that seems to me to be moving within some kind of shared space

Das: Obviously

Jim: Yeah, I'd agree

Das: Oh, so d'you wanna open this up to the wider thing, then?

Jim: About the whole notion of like why for example somebody would go into the ILAC [library] and look up *Common Ground* [magazine] because they'd heard about such a publication...

Building reflexive autonomy

The form of autonomy institutionalised in counter cultural rationality is reflexive both in its form - how participants hold it - and its content - what it is substantively about. In this section I first examine, and try to historicise, the reflexive construction of an autonomous lifeworld, then the ways in which participants "do" this lifeworld.

Breaking out

The world that participants grew up in appears from the interviews discussed below as one of everyday routines of social control and a deeply unreflexive culture (cf. Varenne 1993), tied to structures reproducing inequality. To construct an autonomous lifeworld was thus no easy task, and participants stress the effort involved in making changes. In discussion of their own life-histories, what frequently appears is a narrative of reflexive self-development against the taken-for-granted elements of the lifeworld they grew up in, of family, school and popular culture. This might start with an inability to take the situation for granted or to fit in:

"In secondary school I felt kind of lonely, that I wished I was in, and all the rest of the stuff, all the teenage dating and discos, but I just couldn't see myself fitting in for the life of me. But I was very withdrawn and shy, and things like that. I was quite depressed for a while after we came to Dublin. It was pretty grotty, and the sky was this unpleasant shade of orange constantly, and there was this constant rumble of

> traffic that would never go away, and there was absolutely no space, and the nearest hills were only a few hundred metres high, and they were several miles away, and the smoke, the dirt, the noise, and the people, they were the worst thing about it. I used to fantasise that everybody in the world would vanish. Mysteriously, suddenly, and I could explore the world at my leisure without having to deal with people. Sociopath? Yeah." (Mark)

Already before the network developed, then, participants had withdrawn – or been excluded from – the taken-for-granted culture around them:

> Das: [I]t's a group of people that, I think most of them, one way or another, had been the relatively quiet person at school who read a lot, an awful lot of them tend to have that sort of idea of people who in the seventies would have wandered round in an ex-army parka with relatively long hair [laughs] reading out of Kerouac, and this is kind of the eighties equivalent, where they just kind of wander into college, discovered like, eventually move into the occie [occupation], sit in the occie, they kind of recognise each other as kind of 'Aha! Someone else. Wanna game of chess?' 'Yep'.
>
> Jim: Yep. [laughs]
>
> Das: Almost every single one of them had done something stupid like try to assemble a ZX81
>
> Jim: Yeah, that's true actually.
>
> Das: Save the tenner, cause it came in a kit. That kind of stuff.

A logical prerequisite for any developed form of reflexivity is a certain measure of distancing from the "normal" and "taken-for-granted" assumptions of unreflexive lifeworlds. At its most basic, this appears as a personal attempt to find another path:

> "People [in the Dublin suburbs] seemed to be content with just kind of shambling along, and into secondary school and out the other side, into a job, and not losing touch with their friends in the pub every night of the weekend, but that wasn't enough for me. I was looking for something other, and massively more, something to quench a deeper thirst for life. Like zombies, those people." (Mark)

Or, as Ruth puts it:

> "If you grow up in a suburb, you live in a row of identical houses with net curtains, and the first thing you think is 'I never want to live in an identical house with net curtains. It's the very first thing."

Breaking with assumptions

Thus participants recount breaks with class assumptions about education as a form of inheritance designed to provide access to a suitable career:

> "Even before I went to college I went 'I want to do a sort of liberal arts thing that isn't going to qualify me for one thing, so I can't just be pushed into doing a HDip [teaching qualification]', and a lot of people said 'Oh, so you're going to be a teacher.' I said, 'No, I don't want to be a teacher.' I just wanted to leave Dublin for a while, do a lot of travelling, I'm grand." (Ruth)

Most participants, in fact, failed in one way or another to take the instrumental attitude to education demanded by conventional Irish assumptions about its role in providing secure employment. Similarly, many avoided the "obvious" strategy of taking the available opportunities in e.g. computers, translation or the music business:

> "I could get a job now, if I decided to, that I want to translate." (Tina)

Participants also stress the break with the ethno-communitarian assumptions of "normality" and homogeneity:

> "There are things you know, but they still have to be right in front of you to be obvious, like I always knew that the entire world wasn't white, Irish, all the rest of it, you know that all these other cultures exist, but it's when you actually meet them that it's different, because they live their whole life in a totally different perspective to you, which is great." (Ruth)

Similarly, routine forms of racism and exclusion have been abandoned:

> LC: When you're on the street, and not all of them, but you know a lot of travellers, homeless people and people just hanging round on the street assume you're on their side.
>
> Ciarán: After you've spent a few years talking to them you *are*.

Lastly, they identify conflicts over gendered assumptions:

> "It was like *Stepford Wives* or something [....] [The film]'s about this couple who move to this town called Stepford cause the husband gets a job in this local hi-tech company and all the housewives in the vicinity are like something out of a Fifties ad for the happy housewife. And this is distressful for her, cause this is the Sixties, and she's getting into female consciousness and stuff and another newcomer arrives nearby and they get to know each other and they're all going 'Yeah, what's the story with all these other women, who are like so incredibly conformist?' And then one day her friend turns round, it's like the *Bodysnatchers* or something, and she's all happy and content and has to get home and make a dinner for her husband [laughter] and I forget how it's revealed but it turns out that she's a robot, and all these husbands are replacing their wives with robots that the factory makes, and eventually she gets replaced, her double turns up to take her out and clean up the mess. Anti-coming of age. Yeah, I saw the suburban ideal and nearly vomited." (Mark)

These are not just, as with Mark, the observations of outsiders:

> Tina: You know, sometimes I wish 'Why'm I not like my sister?', you know? Why do I make life so hard for myself? Why don't I just want a normal job, and a husband, and two kids, and a house, and two cars?
>
> LC: Well, why?
>
> Tina: I don't know why, I just don't. [laughs] I just find it immensely boring.

As this last comment indicates, these are real choices that have to be made, and continually remade, within individuals' lives ("Why do I make life so hard for myself?"); but they are also made in relation to an alternative *habitus* ("I just find it immensely boring"). The break with the taken-for-granted elements of prior *habitus* involves a whole emotional reorientation, whether as cause or result: one participant who had spent time sleeping rough abroad and returned to college put this break at the level of an impossibility of identification with dominant routines:

> "So after I got back from there, I ended up in college, which was like being right back in secondary school again, which was about as far removed from where I'd been as I could have got at the time. So I wasn't very well acculturated, I kind of disacculturated myself somehow from all that kind of thing, I didn't relate to it very well. It'd lost all fear of loss of social prestige or position, all the subtle motivations

> for the middle-class Dublin life, they're all based on social position, standing and material comfort. All those kind of values I kind of shed [abroad]." (Mark)

These contrasts are similar to those Vester et al. (1993) found between participants in "new social milieux" in Germany and their parents:

> "*Marked processes of change* from the elder to the younger generation express themselves in the erosion of values oriented to achievement and order and conventional or conformity-oriented models of behaviour [....] The children experienced the opening of the social space rather as a chance for emancipation from having their minds made up for them in class- and gender-specific ways [....] Here, in the youth cultures, the momentous breaks in the reproduction of habitus schemas are to be sought." (1993: 204 – 206)

Solidarity as a resource

But how do people who grew up in, for example, the homogenised banality of South Dublin housing estates find the resources to make this break? One possibility is simply solidarity with like-minded souls:

> "[I]f it was kind of like 'How do you make a group of people like that?' and do it specifically, you'd go 'Right, I want to make [laughs] twenty test subjects like this!' Em [laughter] you'd have to be very picky in the beginning [....] I'd pick a group of people who were basically a bit like us in that you pick the people who, say in school, are closer to the outsider groups than the really serious cliques. Em, so that when they do actually find them, there's a hell of a lot of people like them, but from other schools. In college, they tend to get out, together a bit. They're the people who all seem the oddity because you had one or two interests which were totally outside this particular clique at school, I mean, all right, I'd already smoked dope by that stage, I hadn't considered it as important as maybe it was when I was in college, but I smoked it in Spain when I was like sixteen" (Das).

A key resource for the institutionalisation and plausibility of any new practice is the connection with the real or imagined community of others who "were really living the kind of life they were talking about":

> "It does help you if you've got a slight idea about something but it's vague, and you're really not that sure, and then you'll be sitting in a room with somebody who'll be talking about it and you'll go 'Yeah, that's it, that's exactly what I was

looking for. Where is that?' Or 'What book was that in?' And they can tell you [....] If you find somebody who's already done what it is that you're about to do you can get a lot of advice from them. You can get some pitfalls as well. It's like 'I did this for ten years, and it's not worth it. Try something else instead.'" (Ruth)

This could be a shared discovery:

Jim: An awful lot of people moved over to London [...] as a group we managed to change ourselves completely by, in that sense, I mean, you had an awful lot of people suddenly, as opposed to 'I'm going to college and do engineering cause that's what I was told I should do'

Das: An awful lot of us suddenly realised that we'd been, there'd been no conscious thought going into what they were doing, and everybody was doing maybe a degree or whatever, but there wasn't necessarily any interest, because either 'I've got enough points for engineering, I'll do engineering' [....]

Jim: I think everybody had realised that they'd gone from, like, you know, in most cases a nice middle-class secondary school straight into

Das: To drugged hippy dropouts! [laughs]

Jim: Straight into a very, I don't know, college being like the rarefied atmosphere of college, and finding sort of people in common, and I dunno, had discovered like, by going from school to college you had completely missed an entire area of life already. And particularly in my case I was doing a, you know, a degree that was professional, in which case, you know, go to school, go to college, come out, hassle all the right companies, get taken on, you know, basically it was like a recipe for getting a watch in fifty years. [laughter]

To break out in this sense, however, is not simply a cognitive liberation; it is also an emotional one, and the participation of others is central to this:

LC: I think there is a lot of, as you were saying about the Occie, people sitting round sorting each other's heads out. What's really going on there?

Steve: Well, I think being treated with respect by other people, having them spend time with you and having basically other people mirroring you, actually saying 'You really are a nice person, you know, you're a wonderful person', etcetera, it's like being involved in a relationship [....] So, obviously, the more people that you are friendly with, the more people you know that are real with you, not just on your

basic social level, the more people you get to know very intimately, the better that is for you.

Physical distancing

This distancing, then, is not an easy exercise; and it depends crucially on the availability of local rationalities within which it makes personal and emotional sense and which can offer participants the ontological security to criticise dominant rationalities and explore alternatives:

> "Even the freedom, that, just say, take for example something like acid. I wouldn't, I couldn't really go tripping in Dublin, too many people know me. I'd meet some of them, and you'd hear like two days later 'So-and-so, I saw him off his head on drugs, in such-and-such a place'. Whereas like in London that didn't happen." (Das)

This very often implies a physical move towards known movement milieux:

> "People go [to San Francisco] from all over the world. Usually people looking for something, or people who are too weird for the small town that they live in. I mean, people come from [...] places where they're just too freaky for where they live, or they can't handle how racist where they are is. A lot of people say they couldn't deal with how racist it is." (Ruth)

This suggests something of the working of this conflict between lifeworlds: the pursuit of autonomy leads both to rejection by unreflexive lifeworlds ("too weird", "too freaky") and to rejection of those same lifeworlds ("they can't handle how racist it is"), pushing people towards movement milieux or, at its simplest, towards "something else":

> "I remember leaving for Paris in 87, and I'd just turned eighteen, and I said to myself 'Right, now I'm eighteen, my parents can't stop me from doing what I want to do, so I got out from there and got as far away as I could. Over the horizon wouldn't do, and I had to [go] overseas. To an alien culture." (Mark)

Along more conventional emigration, it is noticeable that this network also includes a number of people who have emigrated *to Ireland* from western Europe, as well as a number of Irish people who have returned from significant periods of time in the movement milieux of e.g. London, Paris or Berlin. Such movement milieux offer free

spaces within which people can develop the skills that make up alternative local rationalities:

> "When I was squatting over in London and then, you know, I was keeping a squat together, I was kind of, you know, a useful person if somebody was stuck and homeless, em, [I] was running a pub [....] I was keeping me act together independently for a change, whereas were I to have gone straight through and like, you know, walked into a McJob, as I say, pick up a watch in fifty years time, that would've been, you know, I would never have had the problems and the hassles [laughs] granted, but I'd never've you know stepped out." (Jim)

As della Porta and Diani note,

> "Ideas concerning organizational structure, strategies of action or definitions of the world 'travel' from movement to movement, sector to sector, city to city, centre to periphery and, on occasions, periphery to centre." (1999: 246)

What moves, though, is not just ideas, but skilled human beings.

Earlier generations

To develop new skills, the practical example of other people who have already broken out to a greater or lesser extent may be deliberately sought out:

> "I think it was the kind of connection I was looking for. It was more or less the first thing I did when I got to college was looked around for people like that, I'm not sure I knew exactly what I was looking for, but I was looking for people like that [....] I was interested in the occult at the time, I was interested in neo-paganism, and I wanted to meet people who were into that kind of stuff, also buskers, musicians. I was interested in what people were doing in Dublin who weren't in college. You know, people who were just sitting in their flats, painting or writing. I think the way I looked at it at the time was, I wanted to know bohemians." (Ruth)

In some cases, participants were in a position to make direct connections with earlier generations of the counter culture:

> "[In London we met] people like say Des K, who's [laughter], who's just been at what we're at for longer than us. And he's also another, he's quite funny, in London he got called Papa Smurf [laughter] because he could smurf anything together, basically, also because whereas then you have an awful lot of kind of like scientific

> interested people, who are into kind of like sitting down for a while, [laughs] smoking some drugs and trying to get their life together, which is like a very bad idea [laughter], Des K had been at it since the Sixties. Des K is 42. But you don't say that to him, it's impolite." (Das)

Both in Dublin and in London some of the social movement organisations of previous decades - students' unions, squatter organisations, green and anarchist groups, peace and Third World solidarity campaigns etc. - were still more or less active:

> "[T]here are a lot of people there who've come from lobby groups, sort of a very small and marginalised nature, I suppose. The [country] solidarity group would be a very interesting one to look at, where its activists from the 80s have ended up." (Frank)

This enabled the transmission of a whole range of skills, from those involved in setting up squats (see chapter four) to those involved in open relationships. Thus, talking of a somewhat older participant in the occupation:

> Frank: The sex stuff as well, the kind of way people in two sort of ways, I mean all the fun and games of a very mild bondage in inverted commas [laughs], but then the things that were going on with people like Joanna and Robert and the two Emmetts and all that sort of relationship stuff
>
> LC: I was [laughs] not only not involved in any of this but hearing about most of it sort of at third hand several years later
>
> Frank: Right, well, that was mainly Joanna having relationships of varying levels and degrees and frequency with various people, and a couple of other people in slightly similar, much less complicated [laughs] positions, but people trying to, this being half publicly discussed, and that kind of thing, and a feeling that yeah, we weren't going to be monogamous or monandrous or whatever.

The uses of other movement milieux

Such contacts, though important for participants, were mostly of short duration - during holidays or periods of intense mobilisation - so that participants have more frequently found themselves thrown on their own resources. Another way of putting this is to say that if association cannot be face-to-face, mediated participation in other

milieux, relativising the here-and-now by making present other cultural possibilities, can be an important building block for local reflexive milieux. Other milieux are rarely seen as something to be imitated verbatim; rather, they are used as a tool for opening up a sense of possibility with regard to one's own life - in other words, to enable reflexivity. Thus one participant stresses

> "the fact that [those involved] are very well read and are involved in, *interested* in most things." (Josh)

In particular, this meant participation in alternative "imagined communities". This was not, and could not have been, the neat importation of a pre-packaged "discourse", but rather a reflexive habitus of (literally) reading other ways of life as a means of gaining distance from one's own background and of creating new possibilities:

> "I dunno, the Eastern religion bit, the opportunity, like, being honest most of us come from Christian and majority Catholic background, and you grew up, whatever moral codes you were drawing on, what you knew was Catholicism. And then when you went to redefine that, you really didn't have anything different to compare it with, and that was the one thing that Eastern religion *did* do, it allowed people to start going 'Well, it's all bollocks.' " (Jim)

So, for example, the American counter-culture of the 1960s is critically examined as a sort of map of the territory opened up by the reflexive perspective:

> "What I thought happened in the sixties was that people started thinking very differently, not for the first time ever, but that they had this wealthy class of people who should have been happy as flowers [...] and instead they went 'Well, sod this for a game of soldiers, I don't want to go to college, get a degree, get a good job and have a huge house, mortgage and 2.5 kids.' So then they'd started, you know, they started exploring alternatives, and as always happens with that a lot of people just spent a lot of time doing a lot of drugs, wandering round, getting fucked up, and trying to be enlightened. And of course a lot of them weren't enlightened, a lot of them ended up doing heroin, but a couple were, so it was well worth trying." (Ruth)

The choice of the 1960s is not random, but makes sense if chapter three's argument about the 1960s as the starting point of the counter culture is accepted[86]:

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[86] Wainwright identifies the possible knowledge value of the 1960s well:

> "I think there *was* a kind of feeling 'well, yeah, it's twenty years on from '68 *almost*'. And I think people's attitude to '68 was not just ultra-left radical things, it wasn't seen as just, ultra-left in Paris, it was also sexual revolution and all that sort of stuff, the '67 [...] I think it was a fairly romanticised idea of it, but there *wa*, I think people had the general idea anyway that it was a kind of youth revolt that was attractive to workers, but one where youth actually insisted on having its day and being useful and this kind of thing, and the idea of, samizdat posters and graffiti and all that kind of thing was pretty attractive." (Frank)

"To know that it could be done", as Ruth puts it, was clearly enormously liberating; equally clearly, it was not enough. Though participants may have been fascinated with events like the public Acid Tests, lifestyles like those of New Travellers, practices like Castaneda's presentation of Mexican shamanism or revolutionary situations like the Spanish Civil War, they were in no position to imitate them in the Ireland of the mid-1980s. Thus, their appropriation of the skills and ideas of these milieux was always highly selective and guided by their own immediate needs:

> Josh: They've taken on an awful lot of influences from popular culture and literature
>
> LC: But they've selected them
>
> Josh: They've chosen the nice bits and thrown away the bits they don't like, yeah.

Beyond this, the language of these other contexts was clearly stretched to cover new practices, as Marx observed:

> "The tradition of all the dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living. And just when they seem engaged in transforming themselves and things, creating that which has not previously existed, precisely in such epochs of revolutionary crisis they summon up anxiously the ghosts of the past to their service, borrow their names, slogans and costumes, to stage the new scene of world history in this venerable disguise and with this borrowed language."(n.d.: 270)

> "The challenge of the late sixties generation to the legitimacy of those in power is closely associated with their immense confidence in themselves as the subjects rather than objects of historical change. The extraordinary political energy of those years demonstrated in a concentrated way the power that people potentially have to dissolve constraining structures which in 'normal life' they passively reproduce." (1994: 75)

The practical development and maintenance of a reflexive lifeworld *ex nihilo* was no small feat, and the symbolic relation between Sixties-as-wished-for and Eighties-as-were opened up a creative space within which new practical logics could find a recognisable verbal form.

Free spaces

The reflexive (re-)creation of self starts from deliberate acts of distancing from one's lifeworld background, but for its stabilisation it needs to be embodied within the alternative rationalities of movement milieux:

> "[The occupation] introduced people to each other, and it sort of set a framework within which people interacted with each other [...] I think a framework of the way in which the social interactions that that particular group of people have subsequently continued to use, em, a lot of music, people sitting round playing music. Talking, often about trivia, but there have often been, you know, *good* serious discussions as well, and I think that sort of framework was set, for a lot of people set up there, but that was similar to what was going on in Montague St [squat] as well. If anything, for me, because of the level of my involvement with the two, I would say Montague St was an awful lot more seminal than the occie [...] in terms of my interaction with those people and that kind of social intercourse." (Josh)

Individual trajectories of liberation, just as much as the appropriation of other movement milieux, require collective contexts. If modernity creates the *potential* for some kinds of autonomy, it remains deeply problematic:

> "There is no general reason why, faced with such a diversity [of values, beliefs and lifestyles], more than a very few individuals would be able to succeed in securing their identity in the way required for autonomy. They are just as likely to wander perpetually in this 'pluralisation of life-worlds' with what Peter Berger has called a 'homeless mind'" (Taylor 1982: 160).

While Taylor identifies "secular family communes" as a means of securing such stability, other writers (Raschke 1988: 427–9; Vester et al. 1993: 204-206) have identified more general contexts (movement milieux, metropolitan "scenes") as contexts within which people can develop alternative rationalities. These contexts are

commonly understood as "free spaces" (cf. e.g. Bey 1991); as Fantasia and Hirsch write,

> The very subordinate position of outsider groups means that their oppositional cultural expression cannot be cultivated openly. Thus, subordinate groups must operate in private, isolated from the surveillance and rule governance of elites. These 'havens', or 'free social spaces', are relatively isolated social settings where subordinate groups may question the rationalizing ideologies of the dominant order, develop alternative meanings, iron out their differences, and, particularly in times of acute social struggle, transform traditional cultural meanings and construct emergent cultural forms." (1995: 145 – 146)

For this network, such havens have meant self-controlled spaces (a squat, a shared house, a college society, an occupation) in which to move from individual development to mutual recognition and affirmation and from the reception of other milieux to personal practice:

> "I think we had, at least some of us had this very crazy idealistic view of the world, we'd spend evenings talking about this and how we'd stay the way we were and wouldn't be corrupted, and blah blah blah [laughs]. This is embarrassing! [....] It was this big thing, like, 'I'm not getting into the system, I'm not going to get a career' – which actually is coming true and [laughter] though not in the sense, you know..." (Tina)

Subsequent to the stabilisation of the network, participants have also continued their interest and involvement in other areas of the counter culture as they have had the opportunity to engage with them: the alternative press, women's refuges, the permaculture movement, Third World solidarity, anti-racist organising, alternative spirituality, and so on. The formation of a movement rationality obviously entails both elements: on the one hand, a reformulation of locally felt needs in terms of the available ideas and institutions of a wider movement; on the other, a reinterpretation of these ideas and institutions in terms of local practical logics. The effective operation of this dialectic amounts to the construction of the counter-hegemonic relations of a movement project.

Networks on the periphery

The extent to which Irish movement milieux can be independent, however, is severely limited by the relations of hegemony discussed earlier. Unlike, say, the German left, this network has no published accounts of previous local generations available to it, and relies on a perpetual importation of ideas from the past and from abroad, giving rise to occasional surprises:

> "I've met people in San Francisco who are *exactly* like the people here. Which really surprised me. Like, exactly. Right down to the kind of things that they read. I mean, if you go six thousand miles away to the other side of the world and find that people saw the same films, were influenced by the same books, they completely paralleled the way I developed as well, which is amazing. That was just really interesting, that was fun. But then they might have a couple of other things that were different." (Ruth)

And again:

> "There's been a fair bit of transplantation. The JCR [student café] would be an example of that [....] Like I mean, I think that kind of cooperative run café and information, political information and political posters and murals and all that sort of stuff, and, that's, didn't really click with me until Sarah came over to Berlin there six months ago, and on the second day she was there she walked into one of the squats and she said 'My God! [laughs] Now I know where the JCR came from!' [laughter]" (Frank)

While importing the finished products, the network exports labour power - it is often easier and more rewarding for individual participants to head for Australia, Germany, the USA, Britain, Mexico, Spain or Belgium than it is to try to plant the seeds of a developed counter culture in the arid soil of the ROI:

> "[I]n London and in Berlin there was a much more advanced, bigger, and more active radical scene that *had* control of houses and all that sort of stuff, space to do things in a very marginalised way, which is something that's very different to Dublin, I think. I think the kind of marginalised alternatives in Dublin don't have the same resources. I think the alternatives with resources [...] are much less marginalised." (Frank)

If it were not for the constant influx in the other direction of participants in continental and American counter cultures, such networks would be even more

deeply isolated than they are. At the same time, however, migrants retain contact and interest in developments at home:

> "I reckon there's a feeling that 'yeah, you know, we go off abroad and (a) you know, have fun seeing new places, doing different things that don't exist in Ireland at the moment or whatever, but (b) we're kind of building up a toolbox to bring back home and at the same time we're keeping up the contacts at home, so that, you know, we're kind of going off abroad to gather the tools, but we're back at home every now and then to gather bits of wood [laughter] when we have a full toolbox and a full woodpile [laughter] we'll come home and build the dogkennel', kind of thing." (Frank)

The difficulties of reflexive autonomy

As we have seen, the meaning of autonomy in this network is something like "personal development" (Josh) or "searching for enlightenment" (Ruth). In other words, the assumption is that the self which is the subject of autonomy is not given but to be made, practically and emotionally. Mark's elaboration of the problem is probably the most complete:

> "I mean existentially there's another thing, there's the bedrock and the bedrock experience that I had, the kind of magical realist bit, the transtemporal, transpersonal awareness, but the real question is how to develop this and how to motivate oneself to develop this, because if you try, you find that almost everything you can think of has a motive, every motive you examine or every impulse you look at, you find in yourself that it brings you towards this kind of thing, has its roots somewhere in your upbringing." (Mark)

From the givenness of social structures it is extremely difficult to create something genuinely autonomous. This acts as an individual parallel - and perhaps also a metaphor - for the construction of an autonomous lifeworld, or the development of a counter culture. The intention is not to replicate some idealised past, but to create something as yet unknown:

> "I kind of kept an eye on myself, waiting to see where it would manifest itself, but the lifestyle I had and what I was doing wasn't bringing out this block, whatever it was, so I more and more was prepared to just do whatever turned up next on the

> assumption that this is going to bring me closer to, that the way my life was working with, in bursts of sustained serendipity it was bound to turn up whatever was, I felt was preventing me from getting sort of closer towards what it was that I really wanted to be doing." (Mark)

Tacit knowledge, we might say, cannot be brought out by an act of will alone. If participants frequently say that they do not know what they want in their lives, then, there are reasons for this:

> "I was kind of adrift then, with the knowledge that I could go wherever I wanted, but not knowing first of all what the options were, secondly which one I wanted to pursue, so that the ensuing several years were a bit rudderless." (Mark)

The difficulties of commitment

As this last quote suggests, the definition of autonomy in these terms is not without problems. In particular, it leads to a constant tension around organising and commitment:

> Tina: [Y]ou don't put yourself out. I mean, I'm not saying that nobody every does, you know what I mean, but you don't, like I mean, people that can be and are very nice and help and this kind of thing, but I think all this thing about doing your own things loads of times was basically 'I don't want to commit myself to anything.' It's used very much for breaking up with somebody. You wanna be free.
>
> LC: Right. And you don't think that was sincere, or?
>
> Tina: It probably was at the time. I'm sure it was. I mean, I've used it myself. [laughter]

On the one hand, to live this autonomous life implies actually constructing other routines, other ideas, other institutions, other networks, and if it is to be sustained some kind of long-term commitment to these. On the other hand, these relationships - of membership, identification, commitment - share form if not content with the relationship that participants are rejecting. Having successfully (for example) given up their commitment to a conventional career, they cannot simply "swap labels" and transfer unproblematic and routinised *habitus* to something new:

> "Most people I know don't want to be committed to anything. Or anybody, because they're so desperate to get their lives together, get whatever it is that they want to do

> together, that that takes up an awful lot of time, so they don't want to compromise that by being stuck in one place or one job or with one person or in one country." (Ruth)

"Getting it together" - creative and reflexive activity in general - is potentially threatened by too great a degree of commitment to any specific project. The logical conclusion is that it is normal for participants to see the milieu as something that is ultimately provisional and external, in other words, to maintain the reflexive attitude towards the movement itself:

> "It's kind of paradoxical to want to be part of a group and at the same time not yet part of the group. To want to create a comfortable subset or define its boundary or something." (Mark)

The lifeworld, then, is legitimated by its contribution to reflexive projects, and if it moves towards becoming "taken-for-granted" in its turn it needs to be ditched, and for the same reason it was initially entered. Thus it is always an open-ended exercise: too tight an articulation would defeat the purpose. The fascination with experimentation discussed in chapter six, and the double-edged tolerance and refusal of commitment, are ways of structuring interaction within this "free space", the skills of living together in a particular way. This may be formalised at times in particular institutions, but exists primarily as a way of doing things, a common "structure of feeling" geared towards reflexivity.

Seeking and drifting

This has important consequences for movement mobilisation. Not only is commitment only likely to projects that have strong personal value, but the lack of commitment to the milieu itself makes stable organisation difficult. Virtually all participants have spent considerable periods of time abroad, for example; the very mobility that facilitates reflexive creativity also makes sustained involvement a difficult achievement. The problem is exacerbated by the tendency of social relationships to lose their reflexive edge and become "retraditionalised". One participant says of his decision to emigrate:

> "[The difference new people make is] new influences, new ideas. If I can be excused using a sort of Americanism cliché, personal development, in the sense that my

> interaction with these people, whilst it is completely wrong to suppose that I can't get anything more out of interacting with these people, I had got caught in a rut, where my relationship with them was such that something had to change before I could get more out of my interaction with these people. That something needed to be other people bringing new attitudes, new ideas, fresh outlook on old ideas, anything, into it, would have possibly changed that and sort of got me out of that rut." (Josh)

Hence some of the most obvious features of the counter culture: the high proportion of "drifters" and "seekers" (Musgrove 1974) to active members; the tendency even for the latter not to identify with the organisation, and the difficulties experienced with long-term commitment (witnessed by the repeated mobilisation, but also repeated demobilisation, of these participants). More generally, there is a tendency for the *practical* logic of building institutions and ideas to crumble as it reaches the point of verbal or official logic: hence perhaps the oft-expressed preference for building "castles in the air" (see chapter six) rather than go through the disappointment of seeing them take on active reality and be found wanting.

Problems of routinisation

The reflexivity of this logic of autonomy is the product of a historical situation: the unusually sharp break with existing social formations, pushing attention towards the forms of socialisation, desocialisation and resocialisation; but also the lack of readily available models and institutions of "how to do it": no readily available "red subculture" or fully assimilated history of style, but the difficult process of self-creation. The principle of reflexive autonomy further implies that all activity, not only work processes or political organisation, requires clear reasons and articulate decisions. Giddens (1994) has recently explored the pathological effects of the impact of reflexivity "from outside" on lifeworld contexts in the generation of compulsive and obsessive activity. Here, however, is a lifeworld where the demand for reflexivity comes very much "from within."

This entails, then, not a substitution of one set of routines, one taken-for-granted *habitus* for another, but the attempt at a break with routinisation as such: the creative

stress on self-development and the reflexive rejection of labels, habits, identities and so on, and a critique of those who have got caught up in the labels:

> "[The neo-pagans] were into it as a religion, rather than a vehicle for expression of what was happening to them in terms of development. It was an alternative comforting belief system which incorporated matriarchal principles, a connection with a more, deeper motivation in Ireland than the Catholic church could give them, but once they seemed to have got that far they're content to explore its paradigms rather than continuing to expand an understanding of things." (Mark)

However, it is a sociological commonplace (Berger and Luckmann 1967) that routine, convention, tradition and ritual are enabling mechanisms: they enable the regular and unproblematic (re)production of action without much need for prior thought and discussion, they enable a sedimentation of "how-to-do-it" knowledge and skill, while the "symbolic universe" of a dominant culture provides ready-made reasons for action.

For the same reason, they privilege means rather than ends, exclude the operation of reason, reinforce local power structures, and prevent the exploration of new possibilities. The implication of this is that to undermine routinisation and "ideologies" as such is to make the production of action extremely challenging, as both the "how" (routine) and the "why" (ideology) are placed in question:

> "There's a component in social interaction, there's a component of trust and openness, but you have the added problem of being able to articulate anything beyond the sort of cocktail party level of interaction or the soap opera level of interaction. But given that, that there's a potential conversation on that level, one has to establish trust and openness, and it's not habitual in most people. You will find lots and lots of people who're unaware, or not desirous of this level of interaction. Myself, I suppose, it's all kinds of fear neuroses around it. But even then, I find it hard to imagine what one might talk about once one dispenses with the lack of trust and openness, like is there at heart anything to say about anything, really?" (Mark)

If a reflexive orientation to the lifeworld demands a focus on ends and the elaboration and coordination of reasons for action, democratic agreement on the forms of activity, and the exploration of all the possibilities that can be imagined or read about, this makes activity of any kind an extremely demanding business. The stakes

are particularly high when neither the nature of the self, nor its goals, can be taken for granted, and the prices paid include criminalisation, homelessness, academic failure, loss of employment, emigration and so on. Where reflexivity widens the range of *actual* options to include all *possible* choices, with no fixed yardstick to evaluate these possibilities and their consequences, choice becomes difficult, if not impossible. Choosing itself becomes and almost impossibly high barrier:

> "If you do have that amount of choice, if you sit down, like for instance, at the moment I'm in completely the ideal situation, because [...] I've got no ties whatsoever, I don't have to be back in Dublin for anything, I don't have to come back for a course, I don't have to come back for a job, I've got a job where I don't have a contract. I could leave tomorrow [...] my only limitations are money, that's the only thing. There's nothing else. Which is great. But it also means 'Oh no, what should I do next?' Cause if you can do anything at all, it's difficult to narrow it down." (Ruth)

Creativity and stagnation

By retaining the commitment to self-development and the prioritisation of autonomy, their stable institutionalisation becomes deeply problematic. Thus it is not surprising if activity in this network consists of short bursts of collective energy and enthusiasm, around some shared project or mobilisation[87], and long periods of "downtime" - an opposition characterised by participants as one between "creativity" and "stagnation".

The alternation between the two corresponds more to Thompson's (1993) account of the rhythms of agricultural work life than to those of paid and domestic labour. Indeed, paid labour can become attractive partly as a way out of this situation, an effective means of mobilising energies which does not face the conflict between efficiency and legitimacy that will arise "internally". Corresponding to this

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[87] As Josh puts it,

> "Togetherness is almost an infectious quality, when people around you get their shit together, you tend to be dragged along by the coat-tails, as it were on the shirt-tails of it."

alternation are then periods of elation and depression, of togetherness and isolation, which participants counter inter alia through emigration:

> "[By emigrating] I get a chance to reinvent myself to new people, which should be fun, and I think I'm more or less aware of most of the psychological baggage I'm dragging around with me, so the reality is that changing, moving around, not putting down roots, one avoids confronting the difficulties one has with the social game. But at the same time, doing that allows you to explore other parts of yourself, it's a compromise." (Mark)

Alternatively, participation in paid labour can be a way of breaking out of stagnation, by drawing on the skills sedimented in dominant rationalities:

> "At the moment he's still officially temporarily employed by [a removals firm], which he has said himself is doing him an absolute world of good in that there is a degree of externally imposed discipline which has a knock-on effect in that he's able to achieve whatever the hell he wants to do, he values his spare time, he uses it efficiently, he gets things done, whereas previously he had so much bloody spare time to do anything he achieved nothing." (Josh)

Simply reverting to such logics wholesale is not a solution, however:

> LC: What would the kind of job be that you want, or what would getting it together mean?
>
> Tina: Well, if I knew the kind of job I wanted, Laurence! [laughs] I'd be fine! And I would be doing it!
>
> LC: What would you want it to do for you?
>
> Tina: I'd want to do something that's not a nine to five job, that allows me to change countries every now and then, and see a bit of the world, and that it's working with people rather than with computers or things. You know, face to face, like.

This problem goes beyond the question of work satisfaction to place the general project of "getting it together" within the terms of reflexive autonomy in question:

> LC: Are people do you think doing what they want to do?
>
> Steve: Ultimately no, not many anyway, but it's more a question of trying to set yourself short term goals and try to realise some of them. You know you have to get

> hassled, obviously, and do things seriously, get hassled by the fact that you're not actually getting anywhere really close to your ultimate goal, but you look at it.
>
> LC: What are people's ultimate goals?
>
> Steve: [....] I suppose I kind of want the feeling of being useful, this kind of thing, I can attain this particular goal, and that I'll actually do something.

To this extent this network must be seen as ultimately unable to satisfy participants' needs: it facilitates becoming autonomous, but not doing anything with that autonomy; prizes self-development, but cannot provide the internal resources to make it possible. What is lacking, to cite Raschke (1993), is a way of combining legitimacy with efficiency - of connecting the legitimate desire for self-development and the production of an alternative lifeworld with equally legitimate forms of institutionalisation, routinisation and shared ideas. As it stands, the reflexive attitude is highly legitimate but not particularly efficient; goal-rational behaviour is illegitimate in terms of both reflexivity and autonomy.

Participants who see the need for goal-rational behaviour commonly suffer from a lack of identification with the way in which they need to behave in order to achieve their aims: an acute form of the Weberian paradox. They have set themselves as individuals off from oppressive social structures - and partly because of this history have trouble finding ways of structuring life that could enable further development - or, to put it another way, cannot produce a developed form of interdependence that would not seem a form of dependence for the individual.

This is in part at least the effect of being the first generation of members of the counter culture: brought up to be subordinate, the self-confidence that would be needed to collectively take control of their shared existence is lacking. While basic solidarity and cooperation are very strong, this is in support of apparently isolated individual directions. An *active* sense of collectivity, or an effective form of democratic decision-making, are lacking and not particularly missed. But at the same time this inability to "hang together" risks leaving them "hanging separately", as Benjamin Franklin put it - or, in less dramatic terms, it reproduces their peripherality and dependence on the rest of the counter culture for inspiration and on dominant structures for everyday activity.

Despite its weaknesses, however, the relatively simple language and weak institutions of this network express a movement rationality which is developing what in this context are new - and hence relatively vague and inarticulated - ways of doing things out of a context of existing conflict between movements and on the basis of the legacy - good and bad - of existing movements. In this fairly ordinary network of fairly ordinary movement participants, then, we have one aspect of the slow development of a counter culture.

Chapter six: radicalising reflexivity

Chapter five identified important contradictions within the possibilities for creativity of the movement rationality of reflexive autonomy: the same reflexive critique of routine, the same autonomist critique of commitment, can enable the creation of free spaces but also disable any attempt to do anything with them. Choice can be paralysing; freedom can turn to stuckness; the dull compulsion of physical labour in the black economy can be necessary to wind up the springs of action. If, as I have suggested, movements are learning processes, we should be able to identify attempts at resolving this problem within movement contexts such as the network studied here.

Reflexive resolutions

In this chapter, I will argue that two kinds of resolution of the "problem of reflexivity" are possible; a contemplative reflexivity, which dominates in social theory as in everyday life, and an active or radicalised reflexivity, which (as I shall show) requires practical techniques to become possible. The conventional meaning of reflexivity - often identified with reflexivity *tout court* - can best be described as contemplative, in the sense that the knowledge interests that structure its production require that it can be held *without making any difference* to social practice.

By contrast, implementing the project of autonomous self-development sketched in the previous chapter necessarily implies a reflexive attitude to social relations, of an *active* kind, in the sense of the creation of meanings and practices which not only defend the "free space" necessary for the project but directly enable this self-development, and develop the projects of the self as they move from the theoretical to the practical.

Movement milieux, then, are reflexive milieux, and we can speak with Lash (1994a) of a *life-world* reflexivity along with self-reflexivity or institutional reflexivity, and attempt to locate movement activities within this logic. In particular, if "self-development" is to have any social reality, it must mean a change of the social

relations within which people experience themselves and are confirmed in their identity. This implies a questioning of given social relations and a distancing from them; a search for alternative possibilities; and an exploration or experimentation with projects, including movement activities, which might enable the realisation of new "identities" or a longer-lasting project of self-development. This move away from unreflexive lifeworlds is immediately political, in the sense of raising questions of power and control, but not necessarily in the sense of an engagement with the institutions of political intermediation (Melucci 1992).

This is not, however, what is always or even normally meant by the concept and "figure of thought" of reflexivity, which contemporary social thought deploys in a wide variety of often unclarified meanings. There are at least two important ways in which social phenomena can be described as reflexive (leaving aside usages in relation to social research and the activity of theorising).

Reflexivity as universal human condition

This points to a micro-social condition of monitoring one's own actions, enabling the maintenance (sometimes the transformation) of social relations. This is a very old position in social thought; it is implicit in Weber's (1984) emphasis on the meaning of action, as well as in Freud's (1975) analysis of the superego as in a sense the internalisation of other people's perspectives on our action. Symbolic interactionism (Becker 1973) and Goffman's (1975) work develop the sense of distancing from and monitoring of the social self. More recent work in ethnomethodology and the philosophy of language has refined these positions, and works such as Giddens (1993a) and Habermas (1984) draw on this work to canonise this reflexive condition as fundamental to any social activity.

Reflexivity as a specifically modern phenomenon

At the same time, critical modernists from Marx to Weber claim that modernity sets free the potential of reflexivity in historically specific ways. In particular, "society" becomes both the (legitimate) subject and the (thinkable) object of rational (systematic and explicit) intervention, whether this operates through work or legal relations. Reflexivity in this sense, then, is a (specifically modern) macro-social activity of

intervention into what Touraine (1981) calls "historicity" (the self-production of society), enabling in particular the transformation (sometimes the maintenance) of social relations. The institutions of modernity, in particular those of capital and the state, then represent the institutionalisation of modernity (Giddens 1990), however partial and restricted (Habermas 1985). In a sense, then, reflexivity in modernity can be identified with "social movements from above", and their colonisation of the lifeworld.

Social movements and the roots of lifeworld reflexivity

Yet there is also a reflexivity from below, and of course social movements from below have themselves represented important interventions into society, as well as developing major bodies of theoretical knowledge of society. They have also been reflexive in other sense, if we consider the characteristic importance of organisational issues, theoretical disputes and (self)-education within social movements; Eyerman and Jamison's (1991) analysis of the "three dimensions" of movements' cognitive praxis reflects precisely this.

Bagguley (1996) elaborates an interesting analysis of the relationship between reflexivity and social movements. If I understand him correctly, he argues that Giddens' concept of self-reflexivity, a reflexive approach to one's own activity, applies "to those who are relatively high in a hierarchy of power", such as senior managers restructuring a company (1996: 11). Now while self-reflexivity may of course be restricted by direct domination - he considers "the example of the working class" - *movements* from below may aim precisely to gain some control over their conditions of existence (for example, through industrial conflict) at the same time as attempting to develop an understanding of those conditions (for example, through socialist thinking or informal discussion). It is also unclear how far Offe's "decommodification" (1984) would affect the argument.

It is also unclear that this example refers to *self*-reflexivity. It might, if the acting "self" were the company, and not the senior managers (who as individuals are presumably largely rearranging the activity of other individuals). Or, perhaps, if managerial or professional staff were restructuring, not the activities of the firm as a whole, but the way in which they work and communicate together. This would then not be a

reflexivity of individual selves, or indeed of a company, but rather the operations of a (partially) reflexive lifeworld (we can be sure that reflexivity would not be pushed to the point of raising questions about profit and power).

Such a *lifeworld* reflexivity has also been attributed to movements from below by a number of theorists. Lash and Urry identified a relationship between the "radical-democratic ethos [...] shared by the various new social movements", the "destructured habitus" of the new middle classes and receptivity to postmodernist cultural phenomena (1987: 285 - 300). More recently, Lash has used the concept of a "reflexive community" to describe, among other things, the core of the ecological movement. He writes:

> "These communities are reflexive in that; first, one is not born or 'thrown', but 'throws oneself' into them; second, they may be widely stretched over 'abstract' space, and also perhaps over time; third, they consciously pose themselves the problem of their own creation, and constant re-invention, far more than do traditional communities; fourth, their 'tools' and products tend to be not material ones but abstract and cultural." (Lash 1994a: 161)

Similarly, German research into "movement milieux" has as we have seen brought out the development of an "alternative" lifeworld, within which

> "[T]o the manifold strivings for autonomy of the younger generation correspond for example extended demands for self-realisation at work, hedonistic leisure practices or new models of division of roles between partners. Noticeable is also their greater self-reflexivity, which enables conscious distancings from the 'incorporated' schemas of the habitus [of their parents' generation]." (Vester et al. 1993: 204)

We have seen in chapter five something of how this "distancing" works. The reflexive autonomy of the network I have researched is not that of the powerful, applied to others; it is one of withdrawal and challenge, applied to the self and one's own social relations.

Ironic reflexivity

To theorise one's own identity and culture without wanting to challenge it practically is, by contrast, to produce a particular form of knowledge - a contemplative reflexivity that at its most critical is "ironic": "I do this because of the kind of culture

I'm from and you do that because you're that kind of person". Its most obvious active purpose is to accumulate cultural capital within academia and certain kinds of markets of cultural sophistication[88]. What it lacks is any real sense of critique, whether immanent or transcendental; any serious questioning of *why* these particular forms of socialisation should come to be; any serious interest in fashioning the kind of knowledge that could change the situation. Under these circumstances, even the most complete distancing becomes simply a form of alienation - an "inner exile" which does not seek any changes in how we act.

This form of consciousness has historical precedents, in particular on the part of colonial intellectuals, where there is a long tradition of precisely this ironic recognition of cultural difference and refusal to do anything about it. Thus, for example, Kipling, in works like *Kim* (1908) and *Plain tales from the hills* (1907), has a lively awareness not only of the variety of relationships of class, caste and culture in Southern Asia, but also of the peculiarities of British colonial culture, the out-of-placeness and lack of understanding of the Empire's officers and civil servants, of the relationships of power and money underlying the interactions he chronicles - and there it stops:

> "The boy resented his silence and lack of interest by beating him, as was only natural. He did not care for any of the bazars which were in bounds. He styled all natives 'niggers'; yet servants and sweepers called him abominable names to his face, and, misled by their deferential attitude, he never understood. This somewhat consoled Kim for the beatings." (1908: 150)

People are like this - have always been like this - in their different ways; it is funny, ironic or tragic, and that is all that can be said about it. There is no hint here of the new relationships being forged, not only between Indians, but, in the person of a socialist like Annie Besant, between Indians and Europeans in the attempt at new kinds of solidarity, new political relationships and a new form of communication.

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[88] As Nelson et al. (1992) have noted, the migration of cultural studies has also meant a loss of its starting-points as an attempt to produce a knowledge adequate to enable a connection between movements and popular culture (cf. chapter two) and a tendency for it to adopt the purely contemplative role of cultural capital, not the active purpose of political theory as in Gramsci, Williams or Hall (Grossberg 1993).

Instead, as the retired Indian officer (who owes his gift of land to his refusal to join in the 1857 Mutiny) rhapsodises:

> " 'All castes and kinds of men move here. Look! Brahmins and chumars, bankers and tinkers, barbers and bunnias, pilgrims and potters - all the world going and coming. It is to me as a river from which I am withdrawn like a log after a flood.'
>
> And truly the Grand Trunk Road is a wonderful spectacle. It runs straight, bearing without crowding India's traffic for fifteen hundred miles - such a river of life as nowhere else exists in the world. They looked at the green-arched, shade-flecked length of it, the white breadth speckled with slow-pacing folk; and the two-roomed police station opposite." (1908: 81)

Caste, inequality, police, soldiers and development make up the backdrop of this kind of reflexivity. Similarly with Yeats: there is nothing inherently radical about the recognition of difference and awareness of one's own status and culture; indeed, the latter becomes sharper as he became older and moved further right in his rejection of democracy, writing in his own epitaph:

> "Irish poets, learn your trade,
> Sing whatever is well made,
> Scorn the sort now growing up
> All out of shape from toe to top,
> Their unremembering hearts and heads
> Base-born products of base beds.
> Sing the peasantry, and then
> Hard-riding country gentlemen,
> The holiness of monks, and after
> Porter-drinkers' randy laughter;
> Sing the lords and ladies gay
> That were beaten into the clay
> Through seven heroic centuries;
> Cast your mind on other days
> That we in coming days may be
> Still the indomitable Irishry." (1989 [1938-9]: 451)

The postmodernist cliché which presents a reflexive awareness of difference as the radical opposition to liberal universalism is short on historical perspective, then.

What it misses out is the recollection that the "universalist" French Revolution was *defeated* - internally by Napoleon and externally by the Holy Alliance, or that the majority of the European population (and the vast majority of the American) retain their allegiance to the religion that the Enlightenment supposedly overthrew. In other words, Habermas (1985, 1987b) is right to object that modernity and enlightenment are "unfinished projects"; alongside the ideology of the universalistic liberal Enlightenment is a straightforward conservatism (embedded, incidentally, in many modern states: Esping-Andersen 1990) which sees a differentiated status order as the natural order of things. Such a conservatism can be reflexive about its own place within this differentiated order because it does not claim to be acting for a universally valued goal (and so stresses the importance of *Christian* democracy, *western* culture, *Irish* solutions and so on) - and is not located within the kind of political movement where the relationship between rational understanding and practical action might make such ideas problematic.

A third example of this, located within a more explicitly political context, is TE Lawrence. In his *Seven pillars of wisdom* (1973) what enables him to foment nationalist revolt for the benefit of the British General Staff is precisely his in-depth knowledge of Arab cultures and the differences between them - differences which he moulds and manipulates in the creation of a proto-nationalism. At the same time, Lawrence is fully aware of the manipulative part he is playing and of the lack of any intention on the part of his superiors to fulfil the commitments he is making. As Williams (1985: 261) has put it, "even the self becomes raw material" as Lawrence deploys his personal integrity - and the honour awarded him by the people he is working with - in an essentially manipulative strategy whose value he does not even believe in himself. The "reflexive imagination" carries no guarantees of making any difference to social practice; hence the need to draw distinctions.

Radicalising reflexivity

By contrast with this ironic reflexivity, a radicalised reflexivity - to stay for a moment with Habermas - is one which intends to redeem its speech claims. Insofar as the act of distancing draws on a communicative rationality which makes implicit claims about truth, ethics and sincerity, radicalised reflexivity attempts to redeem these; in

other words, it is serious about the *practical* social implications of its "suspension of assent".

To return to Lash, this works within reflexive *lifeworlds* - where new kinds of social relations are produced - it is chosen, not given; and, crucially, it is active, not contemplative. What redeems its claims to truth, authenticity and ethics, in other words, is not the *idea* of reflexivity; it is its use as an *active* part of a process of social change, as opposed to a contemplative location, within social relations which - if not taken for granted - are nonetheless ("ironically") accepted, as in the examples above. To quote Offe,

> "[T]he values on which new social movements are based must be understood as a *selective radicalization of 'modern' values*, rather than a comprehensive rejection of these values" (1985: 853-4).

The apparently ungrounded relativism of contemplative reflexivity, then, is in practice deeply rooted in a practical acceptance of what Hakamaya (1997), following Vico, calls the *topos* of given social relations. An effective orientation of *critica*, in this same terminology, is ultimately not a relativist one because it refers, not to an affirmative norm, but to commitments implied in the act of critique[89]. In this sense the "cultural populism" (McGuigan 1994) of much contemporary academic writing acts as a sophisticated means of reconciling erstwhile critics with the *topos* - and converting *critica* into cultural capital.

A distinction that may help here is that between orthodoxy (normative belief) and orthopraxy (normative practice). Within the deeply idealist modes of writing that identify symbolic activity as the only kind there is, the practical hegemony of market and state over the "diverse" lifeworlds that are "celebrated" - not to mention the intellectuals who do the celebrating - goes unnoticed. The diversity of *what* is bought masks the common dependence on buying and selling (Storey 1994).

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[89] This has been a frequent route for intellectuals such as Lukács or Williams from critique to commitment: observing the cognitive fallacies, the aesthetic inadequacies, the emotional inauthenticity, the ethical abominations of everyday life in capitalism, they have found a commitment to working for a situation where those claims - still implicit or "immanent" in everyday speech acts - can be redeemed.

By contrast, then, radicalised reflexivity attempts not only an act of intellectual distancing but the much harder tasks of bringing emotion (social identity) and action (social relations) into line with the implications of this critique - and thus refashioning the critique itself as active rather than contemplative knowledge. In the terms of critical theory, this is radical not because it introduces some new idea which is not present in modernity, but because it attempts to realise the potential for reflexivity which modernity makes available but which is normally unfulfilled. How can this be done?

Techniques of the self

It is one thing to want to move from cognitive reflexivity to emotional and practical change, another thing to be able to do it. As we have seen, the activity of distancing and of reorienting priorities can be a challenging and long-drawn-out process, drawing on the skilled knowledge of the counter culture. It is also, though, a process of personal re-creation, as the formulation of "autonomous self-development" suggests: as well as cognitive critiques and the acquisition of practical skills, success requires emotional or identitarian resources: people have to be able to abandon deeply-socialised orientations, find new forms of motivation, and perhaps above all - in an open-ended process of change - "stick it out".

A key element of radicalised reflexivity, then, is "techniques of the self": institutionalised practices that produce (ideally, at least) a supportive solidarity within which participants can combine an individualising exploration of "self-development" with a group context where this is defined positively, rather than seen as a threat. If positive institutional creation is a difficult achievement under conditions of reflexive autonomy, these "techniques of the self" and the interactive contexts in which they are embedded, provide at least a bottom line of solidarity and commitment to reflexive autonomy itself.

Tools for change

The phrase "techniques of the self" comes from the third volume of Foucault's *History of sexuality* (1988), in which (by contrast with the later Christian focus on

specific acts) he notes that Greek and Roman ideals of sexuality were predominantly ideals of *orientations* - temperance and self-mastery, for example - rather than of specific acts - abstention from sex, avoidance of particular kinds of sexual act etc. The concept itself, however, derives from Hadot's (1995) analysis of the "spiritual exercises" recommended to followers of the classical "ethical philosophies" (Stoics, Epicureans etc.) to bring their volitions into line with the life of the sage or lover of wisdom recommended by the school in question (a key example for Hadot is Aurelius' (1964) *Meditations*, which he interprets as the author's reflections and exhortations to himself designed to enable him to live the kind of life he felt appropriate to a Stoic)[90].

In other words, the problems tackled by such techniques is not that of what to believe, what to do, or even of what orientation to hold while doing it - it is that of producing the kind of emotional self for whom such behaviour comes naturally:

> "Since then, over the last year and a half, I've been kind of digesting that, coming to know and come to terms with everything inside me that holds me back, all the little valves and barriers within, that stop me doing what it is I think I should be doing." (Mark)

It is in the nature of things that movements from below, trying to change existing social relations, will need to produce new forms of (self-)socialisation to enable their participants to act in accordance with their counter-hegemonic project: as Gramsci says, politics consists of "a conception of the world and a corresponding norm of conduct" (1975 (1932-33): 1378). In counter cultural movements, as we saw in chapter five, this moment has been particularly problematic, since the power relations and the convergence of behaviour implied by such processes is in tension with some elements of autonomy, such as the distancing skills needed to create free spaces in the first place. It has thus been fairly common for an opposition between "intensive" and "extensive" forms of organisation to develop, with the former making great efforts in small-group contexts to bring about the new orientation, and the latter adopting a rhetoric of distancing (refusing the concreteness of "labels", "providing information"

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[90] Although I did not ask directly about it in interviews, at least six of the interviewees have practiced some form of either meditation or yoga.

as a substitute for communication and persuasion, or in the original sense of "New Age" as expecting change to come about automatically). The gap between the two, enabling some transformation of social relations along with some distancing from actual commitment, has then largely been met in other areas: in the movement media, in explicitly cultural groups; and, as here, "underground" in non-formalised practices seen by participants themselves as periods of inertia.

Thinking stuckness

As we have seen, there is an alternation between periods of collective enthusiasm, action and "creativity" and periods of apparent inertia, non-participation and "stagnation". I stress the "apparent" here because I want to argue that where people spend large amounts of time together, even if no visible activity results, something may still be happening. One way of theorising this is to say, with Gramsci (1991: 13), that practical logics are not yet ready to become explicit challenges to the official logics; or we could say that participants, following what Bagguley (1992) has called the logic of "informed fatalism", do not see a chance for success in such a challenge. Melucci's (1989) dialectic between movement mobilisation and latent networks, or that between utopianism and quietism in religious sects (Hill 1975), are other variants of this argument that in "downtimes" movements turn their energies inwards, productively or otherwise.

An alternative way of theorising this is Lynch and MacLaughlin's (1995) analysis of "love labour" as that which is geared to creating solidary bonds between people, and "caring labour" as that whose product is people rather than services or things. Both of these concepts - designed as part of a feminist critique of patriarchal models of "work" - can be fruitfully deployed to see elements of movement activity that do not produce immediately visible results in power terms as nevertheless real and necessary work in any long-term perspective. If, as I suggested in chapter four, what movements ultimately deal in is skills, these two approaches can be seen as simply different perspectives of the same process: developing and transmitting skills (not just the technical skills of "how to" do something but also the techniques of the self involved in "becoming the kind of person who can" do something). How does this work?

The importance of doing nothing

One feature of participants' narratives that is immediately striking is the central place various kinds of "doing nothing" play within it - but also the intensity of this "nothing":

> "There were a lot of people who were getting buzzes out of various different things and kind of running around the place, and that was fun, you'd have people kind of getting freaked out, and people not getting freaked out, and sometimes it was a hassle and sometimes it wasn't. Sometimes it was a lot of fun." (Steve)

Immense amounts of time and energy are devoted to it; stories are told and retold about particular episodes; strong feeling for (and, on occasion, against) are raised; it gets in the way of economic success. "Nothing", then, is "done" very actively; it is a social institution in its own right; and as such it deserves our attention:

> "I just loved it, I had a great time [laughter], I wasn't really thinking about it, I just enjoyed it, it was fun, it was great, and it felt really good. As I say, we felt really, you know, I went this night, and we walked all the way, myself and Rossa walked all the way to Sandycove, wherever, to see the sun coming up. That's one of the typical things we'd get up to, and just sit round and say 'Isn't the world beautiful, and we're not going to get corrupted and spend our days in offices', kind of stuff [laughs]" (Tina).

What is happening, I want to argue, is that periods of apparent inactivity are periods in which participants engage in collective practices that offer a context of supportive solidarity for individualising creativity; that enable the exploration of new possibilities while minimising the practical costs of this exploration; and that enable the negotiation of the dialectic between "creative" and "stagnant" periods. I will discuss each of these in turn, then give specific examples.

The social production of "individuality"

Firstly, it will come as no surprise to sociologists to find that "individuality", of any kind, is a social product: a practice, an ideology or a rationality, but centrally an *achievement*:

> "This liberation [from quasi-natural identity formation] is in a sense a precondition for approaching real individual autonomy as the right and ability to choose the

> others one wants to associate with as well as the substantive and procedural terms of association [....] While this sounds like the best of all possible worlds, it is marked by at least three fundamental problems. The first relates to the socially uneven availability of the material, intellectual and cultural means that modernity provides. In a social world that refuses to provide other collective identifications, distributive justice acquires increasing importance as a provider of access to the material of autonomous identity formation. Second, even if that were the case, such a modernity may demand more in terms of autonomous identity formation than many individuals would want to choose, if the choice of restricting one's choices were still perceivable [....] Third, a great variety of offers will decrease the likelihood for coming to collective arrangements with high substantive implications." (Wagner 1994: 183 - 187)

So too with the individualising creativity discussed in chapter five: to practice it effectively requires, among other things, a context which offers the necessary material resources and skills and where one's own changes are recognised and validated by peers without undermining their development in turn. There are limits to this process as well, and as we have seen participants stress the need at a certain point to gain distance from the network in order to continue changing. Nevertheless, the basic figure of speech is one which identifies *both* "strong individuality" *and* close group links - practical support, emotional solidarity, intellectual resources - as characteristic of the network. "Self-development", then, is anything other than isolating or privatising.

Free spaces and movement rationalities

The rationalities I am discussing here were initially formed in the specific contexts of movement milieux. Thus one participant comments of a student occupation that it set

> "a framework of the way in which the social interactions that that particular group of people have subsequently continued to use: a lot of music, people sitting round playing music, talking, often about trivia, but there have often been, you know, *good* serious discussions as well." (Josh)

These "*good* serious discussions" are of course fundamental technologies for the institutionalisation of a reflexive attitude towards the self and the lifeworld, and more indirect forms are possible. Another participant in the same occupation says:

> "I got into tarot cards and palmreading and stuff like that, you know, just kind of basic psychology sessions, like sitting down and just trying to sort each other's problems out, that kind of thing." (Steve)

The resources for the development of autonomy and reflexivity, such as books or music are then made available through the networks of these milieux:

> "There's a very laid back attitude to property. People are not particularly possessive or protective of what is their property, you know, people borrow things from, there's an awful lot of kipple that transfers and ends up in various flats. It's not uncommon to arrive in somebody's flat, 'Oh, can I have a look through your tapes?' - 'Yeah, sure, go for it.' - 'Oh fuck, that's mine, where'd you get that?' - 'I dunno, oh, take it back.' - 'Oh yeah, well, haven't seen that in years.' You know, people don't get wound up about it, they just 'Ah shit, I haven't seen that, I was wondering where it went.'" (Josh)

The extent of this exchange was sometimes quite dramatic:

> Das: [There were] the people who were kinda like the book exchange, would be say you two, Ciarán, Leonard, Ian for certain stuff, myself on the receiving end [laughs], someday I must give everyone their books back [laughter]
>
> Jim: Seriously, he has fucking *cases* of books
>
> LC: I know [laughs]
>
> Das: [...] I mean, I have in the house apparently belonging to me something in the region of about thirteen hundred books of which ones I owe to other people that I know are probably about a hundred and fifty.

Basic material requirements for the development of reflexive rationalities of this kind, then, include free spaces, with strongly communicative forms of interaction, in which the resources for change circulate relatively freely.

Reflexive lifeworlds and autonomous reflexivity

This entails a particular kind of social relationship within such milieux, as Ruth's account stresses:

> "The only philosophy I thought that was behind all that group of people was, you know this thing, 'What goes around comes around', you know, the idea of like, at a simple level, somebody bums a cigarette off you, you bum a cigarette off somebody

> else? This kind of thing, at a really low level, but it's true, what goes around comes around. You do things for people, the idea is, instead of, I was brought up with a favours system, you know, I do this for you therefore you have to do this for me. Somebody gives you a Christmas present, you're morally obliged to give them one, this kind of thing. Whereas I just liked that, you know, that people would do things for other people for no apparent reason. It's like, I have something that I don't need. You need it, take it." (Ruth)

It is not that the relationship in itself enables the kinds of reflexivity that are sought after; autonomy, self-development, reflexivity are not the automatic products of particular kinds of relationship but in a sense represent a particular orientation *to* such relationships. Hence there is a distinction between a (provisionally) given milieu and the response to those conditions:

> "Well, ultimately you have to do it yourself. You know, people can sit you down and say 'you're this sort of person and that means this is what you should be doing.' You'll say 'yeah, yeah, I know, you're absolutely right' but till you get to that point you're still not going to do it. But yeah, people can help people. To a certain extent, you can say, you can help them along." (Ruth)

Nevertheless, this is a collective achievement, albeit (as Josh's account in chapter five stresses) one achieved by tolerance of and cooperation with each other's projects of autonomy. Hence the building of a reflexive lifeworld is not incompatible with strong personal links:

> "I think it was like a support group. It was one of the closest groups of people I ever came across. I hadn't come across groups of people who knew each other that well and were that close, which was really nice. Knew everything about each other, had been through lots together." (Ruth)

Even in cases of strong disagreement there is an attempt to bridge this gap:

> LC: You don't actually tell people to get out of your life?
>
> Ciarán: No, but I've seen it happen. I've seen it happen, like. Say, twelve or thirteen people sat around with somebody and told him what he was doing was pissing them off. That was extremely heavy at the time. But it did him a world of good. And he said, yeah, he really appreciated it. Like sentence was being passed going all around, there was a few people saying 'you know, at times I thought I don't ever want to see you again.' But what really came out was 'look, if we didn't think you were worth it

> we really wouldn't bother.' He took it very well. But I suppose that's a very unique occurrence.

More commonly, however, the collective response is to maintain the attitude of tolerance, even when it gets too much for some individuals:

> Josh: Dan had been winding me up, not intentionally of course [....] I just told him at Pat's twenty-first, I got very very drunk, and that was quite a momentous evening actually, whole bloody thing, but I told him that I basically couldn't fucking stand him and would he ever [laughs] fuck off and leave me in peace [laughter]. I can't remember exactly what I said, but it wasn't very nice. It *was* interesting though, in that whilst I knew what I said was not exclusive to the way *I* felt about him, there were an awful lot of other people felt something very very similar, there was a serious breach of etiquette on my part, in that I actually said it [....]
>
> LC: When you say it was a breach of etiquette, do you mean other people came and told you that you shouldn't have said that, or
>
> Josh: They didn't have to fucking tell me.
>
> LC: You felt that yourself?
>
> Josh: Oh, bloody right. There was a roomful of people sitting there in [laughs] stunned silence [laughter] because I'd just let rip at Dan [laughter] and it was like 'What?' [laughter]

Such socially organised practices enable an apparently individualistic mode of life to maintain its separate identity; as far as participants can manage it, they tolerate and support each others' attempts at development, and such incidents as the two discussed above are identified as being extremely unusual. There is naturally a close relationship in this context between an individual's continued participation in such practices and the networks that sustain them, and their continued development of personal and lifeworld reflexivity. It is then unsurprising that participants make a great effort to stay in touch:

> Das: [A]lthough there was never anything specifically said, everybody
>
> Jim: "We'll see you in Dublin at Christmas" [laughs]
>
> Das: -everybody has, I think that
>
> Jim: -is a rough rule

Das: even if it's

Jim: [laughs] in the Hangman at 9 pm [....]

Das: because people know that you're on the lookout for information about everyone else, because you're staying in contact, it's more accessible. I mean, even me, I have no email, I'm far away from everybody, and news *still* gets across to me.

LC: With the same intention of keeping things together?

Das: Keeping in contact, we're good friends, -I'd find

Jim: -It's always nice to know what somebody's up to.

Das: I find it important to stay in contact.

Jim: Er, yeah, you know?

Das: I find, I phone from Brussels to find out what's happening to everyone. I'm fairly much on a news hunt, find out that Jim's doing all right, find out whether he's any news from anyone else of what they're doing, or if this or that was all right. I really enjoy that, I mean, I don't watch TV, I don't follow political news too much, to me it's kind of like my particular community of people are what's important to me, the same as I'm going to be phoning back tomorrow to Brussels.

At the same time, these local practices support rationalities that are potentially capable of abstraction and generalisation far beyond these contexts. I have suggested in chapter three that a concept of local rationality can bridge the gap between the sociocultural basis of contemporary movements, their characteristic modes of formation, and their impact on the wider society. The implication is that we could consider individualisation and the development of reflexivity (Giddens 1990; Beck et al. 1994) not as a structural feature of high modernity *reflected* in contemporary movements, but as a rationality formed *within* movement milieux. The suggestion that contemporary social movement milieux are a key source of cultural change (Lash and Urry, 1987; Lash 1994a, b; Sulkunen, 1992) would then be directly analogous to Weber's (1958) arguments about the cultural roots of instrumental rationality: starting from attempts to articulate new forms of tacit knowledge within culturally particular contexts, such local rationalities can become abstracted and travel far beyond their original locations.

Fun and games

Exploring new possibilities is, however, a challenging business. This is not only because of the difficulties of choice faced within an autonomous milieu. It is also because the goals being pursued are held only provisionally, and the risks and costs incurred are great. Participants have run the risks and at times incurred the costs of educational failure, unemployment, criminalisation, homelessness, emigration and poverty. Given all of this - and the general uncertainty of a reflexive lifeworld - it makes sound sense to explore new possibilities through talk and play as extensively as possible before making decisive commitments, and this is a noticeable feature of this milieu.

"Stagnation", then, can pave the way for "creativity", but it also offers a useful position to return to *after* "creativity", which would be difficult to sustain indefinitely:

> "That flat was lived in by various buskers and musicians for about a year and a half, always maybe one or two rooms changing at a time, it was three bedrooms. That's another thing that ends up happening with busking, is that the address of a house tends to become extremely well known and it tends to be pretty heavy for the people living in it. They really really enjoy it for the first month or two, up all the time, people arriving back with dutyfree from places, and whatever else might have come in. Loads of music, loads of crack. And loads of people. Loads of mess. There tend to be always a lot of people around. Very much twenty-four hour existence. Very little organised sleep, it's just, you crash out when you can't keep your eyes open any longer. And that tends to happen for months on end." (Ciarán).

If "stagnation" was purely inertia, non-participation and inactivity, it would be a resource-low period of depression: a post-action hangover. As it is, though, even recognising its practical limits, participants appreciate it and find it rewarding personally, which is perhaps unsurprising given the instrumental "moment" of action and the communicative "moment" of "doing nothing": the latter is likely to seem a more authentic form of self-expression if nothing else. From a political point of view, this might suggest that social movement organisations could profitably devote *fewer* energies to "resource mobilisation" and *more* to "identity maintenance" - and some reasons for declining levels of participation in overly-instrumental social movements:

> "I think that's one of the gains that people feel, that a compensation is the kind of social circle you kind of [laughs] you've a lot of friends with all these, among all these people, doing all these things. It's a very sociable sort of thing, because there's a lot of networking goes on mainly. And I don't know where it comes from, but I think a lot of people have this feeling 'yeah, we want to do things for the common good' and with that goes this 'we want to, or we enjoy being with people and working in groups and networking, or what have you.'" (Frank)

The meanings of music

A range of methods of "doing nothing" can be identified, including "techie trips", specific kinds of music making and drug use, "mind games", talking about projects and reading. This starts from a straightforward sharing of interests in activities that can enable an exploration, not just of form, but also of interaction and inner experience:

> "A lot of them have a background in either computers or roleplaying games, fantasy novels, science fiction, music, they all play guitar, and they listen to the same kind of music, maybe books as well." (Josh)

This involves a shift from Wagner's quasi-natural identities to Lash's communities of choice:

> Steve: [My friends from my college course] are all very nice people, but they've got their own world, they focus on their own thing. They're not focussed in the middle of what's happening with you. Which is different with this group, everyone is focussed on more or less the same things to a certain extent. Not everyone, but if you know what I mean, in general.
>
> LC: Are focussed on what? On what's happening to each other, or?
>
> Steve: Good one, good one, yeah. Yeah, to a large extent people kind of sit there and watch what's happening to everyone else, kind of like 'Ooh, yeah, did you hear this, and ooh, mm'.

One such shared interest is the practice and consumption of music:

> "Music is definitely a very strong, it's a binding force among everybody. Those that don't actually play themselves are certainly into hearing it [....] So the fact that

> certain people are musicians after a fashion and others aren't isn't exclusive. The music thing is not exclusive to those that do actually perform." (Josh)

So music is used to structure interaction, and in specific forms: the emphasis is on "sessions" of creation, improvisation and interactivity:

> "Especially during the summer months when buskers are playing together more, most nights after people have been out playing, they go back to the house and have a few drinks, a few smokes, and play music all night. Unless you're really into hearing spontaneous music just happening, you tend to get browned off. Ah, it's an amazing feeling, when there's about twelve or thirteen musicians, most of whom know each other, have played with a few of those people before. It's great when that many people just get something out of it." (Ciarán)

Such sessions are of course themselves a form of reflexive interaction, recalling Melucci's (1989) claim that the organisational features of social movements are messages developed in submerged networks; but they are also organised around a particular type of music:

> "It was a lot of the kind of music I liked, I mean, there's a lot of sort of ballady stuff and folk stuff, and then there was your kind of John Martyn, Tom Waites, that kind of thing [....] But that is always all part of it, I mean, the music is very much part of it." (Ruth)

The type of music involved - apart from technically lending itself to impromptu sessions - is relatively verbal, often quasi-literary, music, focussed primarily on exploring the subtleties and uncertainties of personal interaction and inner experience. This is also true to a large extent for the music written by participants themselves.

The use of drugs

Something similar appears in the case of drug use: the drugs preferred are themselves suited to a reflexive approach to interaction and to the self, and they are taken with very specific orientations:

> "The people over there do smoke, as much as people over here [in Dublin], and yet the attitude and the lifestyle is quite different. They are still a very tolerant group of people, but the attitude is quite different, so I would definitely refute the idea that

> the use of drugs is a significant factor for the way in which these people behave." (Josh)

More specifically:

> "It felt as if a cartoon changed into reality, there was a shift of perception there. I don't do a lot of acid on my own, other people [in London] would go on doing acid and going to raves, and sort of going out into the city at night, but I tended to do it on my own, all night and watch the dawn. And I continued on going into myself until I kind of got to the point of ego death and rebirth [....] The first thing was the failure of language to express, to verbalise what was happening with the experience, and this led straight away to symbolic expression." (Mark)

Everyday social routines and discourses, then, can be practically undermined with drugs, which in appropriate contexts can enable the kind of insight discussed by Mark. In other contexts, for the same reason, it can be difficult to sustain normal social performances:

> "I was in Montague St. most of the time, yeah. Used to spend days on end, you've heard of the legendary quarter [ounce] that we bought and that wasn't really a quarter, it was a quarter that thought it was a half, and we spent about five days in Montague St. just constantly smoking and at the end of the fifth day Jim's mother actually called out to collect him and he had just gone upstairs to shave off his beard with a blunt razor [laughs]. Came down with his face pouring blood, and his mother was at the door." (Steve)

Apparently isolating activities, such as taking acid, in fact imply a whole social context. In each case a social body of knowledge is entailed: chords for songs are exchanged, and shared books and "folk science" discussions orient expectations and techniques in drug use. Stories are also told about drug sessions in particular[91]:

> "This guy wrote his first trip ever, he's up in Merrion Park, and he's with this bunch of hippies [laughter] and he's tripped off his bin, and he suddenly finds himself looking at the tulips and freaking out that they've, how many different colours they all have and how weird it is [laughter] and suddenly he stands up and he's blabbing

[91] Such stories tend to fall within Fine's (1995: 136) categories of "war stories", tales of tough times for participants, or of "happy endings", tales in which participation brings its own benefits.

about this for ages, and he stands up and goes 'Oh fuck, I'm a scumpunk!' [laughter] He starts ripping up the tulips." (Jim)

Music is created in sessions, and drugs are usually if not always taken together. Similarly, books are borrowed, tapes copied, and drugs circulated through the network. The apparently individual technologies of the self, then, exist within a very specific mode of network organisation:

Das: It got to be an awful lot like I mean, say I bought a book by Ken Kesey, say I was sitting in there reading a copy of *One flew over the cuckoo's nest*, someone'd go 'Oh wow! Em, I haven't read that. But I have read *this* book about Kesey', and they'd easily give you the name of it, which meant you'd fuck off to the library and read it, or they'd have it, which meant like

Jim: True, it used to be a book exchange to a large extent, because an awful lot of people would be up there stoned reading a book

Das: Or even if you weren't stoned an awful lot of the time.

Playing with form

Two features are worth highlighting here in view of what has already been said: the importance of creative and formal elements in play, and the solidaristic and cooperative underpinning of activity. A fascination with form is of course a very visible feature of contemporary social movements, where the effort devoted to formulating and implementing an organisational form will often exceed the effort devoted to its ostensible purpose. Melucci comments that

"The *self-reflective form of action* is another specific feature of the emerging collective phenomena. Action is a message sent to the rest of society, which speaks through its own forms and with a high degree of self-reflexivity. Organisational forms, patterns of inter-personal relationships and decision-making processes are themselves meaningful signs addressed to the society as a whole. But they are also a goal in themselves: actors consciously practice in the present the objective they pursue." (1995: 113 - 114)

I am less convinced by the argument that this is something new (consider for example the importance of disputes over organisation within the traditional workers' movement), but it is certainly an important feature of movement activity. Apart from

its external purposes, though, what of its internal point? I have already mentioned the variety of projects developed within this milieu. Some of these projects are relatively successful, for a variety of internal and external reasons; others are stillborn or die rapidly. I am interested here in the cultural *habitus*, in the sense of a general orientation to the world, that enables this experimentation, that makes it possible to "try out" the implications of reflexivity. The best way of summarising this seems to be in terms of a general valuation of creativity and "makeability" (Berger, Berger and Kellner 1974), which as we have seen applies to the self as well as to the external world.

Castles in the air

One manifestation of this reflexivity is the large amount of time is devoted to playing around with form - looking for elegant or baroque technical solutions to problems, or complicated games with communication and understanding, or, in the case of one participant in particular, planning elaborate castles in the air:

> "Das had this plan, where you know he wanted to do this, set up a retirement fund, basically, which would pay for a retirement home for old drug [laughter] free, basically, to all of the people we know, for your dopeheads, who'd like to be wrecked off their heads for their latter days, when they can't move any more, and they're bed-ridden, so [laughter] I think if Victor makes a million he's probably gonna build that, you know." (Steve)

Rarely is there much immediately practical purpose to this: the castles in the air are so infrequently built that it was an effective practical joke to take such a project seriously:

> Das: I was never particularly bothered with the getting it done or not, I've always been a sucker for the idea
>
> Jim: Well, the one and only time somebody tried to get something off the ground [....] One night he was mouthing off up on Galway St. going, 'And this would be fucking brilliant, you know, if somebody did it in the next couple of weeks, they'd make a fuck-' 'Right Das, you're on, I'll meet you tomorrow.' And [laughs]"

The technical problems are normally taken on for their own sake and not because there is a pressing need; and communication is made deliberately complex and "layered". The enjoyment is simply in the playing with form and ideas:

> "[I liked] anything that would just stimulate your brain a little. I mean, even if you just sit down and plan something completely bizarre, plan it from start to finish, even if you never do it, if you plan it flawlessly, it's like Das used to do. Das would plan something through flawlessly, and it would never happen. And then he'd plan something else flawlessly. And after you knew him for a while you'd think 'Well, it doesn't matter that he doesn't do it, cause that's not what he wants, he gets a kick out of just planning it.'" (Ruth)

Form and mind games

Something similar is expressed in the enjoyment of formalistic "mind games" - the interest in things such as the nature of consciousness and artificial intelligence, theoretical physics and mathematics, the more elaborate brand of conspiracy theory and alternate reality books and the psychological "mind games" of e.g. Zen and Sufi stories.

> "What I was interested in was ideas [....] And I was reading about a lot of different ways of viewing the world, the different ways of viewing the inside of your own head." (Ruth)

Another participant said:

> "I was going a little crazy one afternoon and wrote a long, very rambling email to somebody and got a mail back, 'Oh, I see you're pretending you're mad just in case people realise that if you don't pretend you're mad, you might actually *be* mad!' [laughter] Yeah, there is an element of that. There's certainly an awful lot of mind games go on, but everybody does it for fun." (Josh)

In his last writings, Williams stressed the extent to which an engagement with form was a response to a break from the taken-for-granted:

> "Liberated or breaking from their national or provincial cultures, placed in quite new relations to those other native languages or native visual traditions, encountering meanwhile a novel and dynamic common environment from which many of the older forms were obviously distant, the artists and writers and thinkers of this phase

> found the only community available to them: a community of the medium; of their own practices [....] Thus language was perceived quite differently. It was no longer, in the old sense, customary and naturalized, but in many ways arbitrary and conventional. To the immigrants especially, with their new second common language, language was more evident as a medium – a medium that could be shaped and reshaped – than as a social custom [....] At the same time, within the very openness and complexity of the metropolis, there was no formed and settled society to which the new kinds of work could be related. The relationships were to the open and complex and dynamic social process itself, and the only accessible form of this practice was an emphasis on the medium" (1989a: 44 – 47).

By extension, some of this is also true for the formation of new kinds of rationality, new sorts of meaning, across the different ranges of inherited "language", as new modes of social interaction are formed in movement milieux. Thus, in the heart of the occupation discussed earlier, people developed a

> "kind of party game where you sort of impose confidentiality on everyone and you go round in a circle and people ask each other questions and you've got to answer them truthfully, which kind of caught on, it became, it stopped becoming a game, and it became a session every night where people, and of course there's no way of proving this, but I think on certain issues, anyway, people were fairly open and honest, and they just became open honest semi-public conversations where you'd have a group of from five to fifteen people. And I think the topics tended to be, it was probably about fifty percent sex, thirty percent politics and twenty percent miscellaneous. But I think there were certain, there *were* times when people were fairly frank and there were discussions then about that, and, yeah, I think there was a way of talking that doesn't happen enough." (Frank)

Techie trips

The exploration with form, then, was at one point also a way of making connections and finding new ways to relate. A final symbolisation of this valuation of creativity is the fascination with elegant and baroque technical solutions to what are very often non-problems. If play is a means of flexing particular kinds of muscles, this is another way of maintaining a creative orientation to the world. This "techie trip" is an attitude of play and appreciation rather than of immediate usefulness:

> "With me it's just a fascination with anything clever. Somebody comes up with a solution to a problem that is clever, I will admire it." (Josh)

Clever solutions and creative play with forms: these are modes of leisure of a reflexive lifeworld that enable non-instrumental approaches to movement activity. They are also, however, resources for practical action - and sources for stories:

> Jim: An *awful* lot of people we know are people who would have something useful to provide, are involved in areas where [...] and I'll take Ciarán as an example here, are people who, if they were stuck somewhere, and they had two sticks and a piece of string, they probably could get a fire together [laughs]
>
> Das: Yeah, cause they'd know what type of wood [...]
>
> LC: And a lot of you've been doing that quite literally in squats, or camping sometimes
>
> Jim: Squatting, camping, whatever, then from that you also have, I dunno, the guerrilla electricians [laughs] I mean, like, for example, actually, a classic example is the time Ken Grogan was on his first trip, and he came back, and there was only one working light in the squat. And he was sitting there, and there was only like one light working in the squat, in the middle of my living room, cause I was the only person who bothered to do any electricity work, and he was really freaked out, and he's like 'People do this for fun' and freaked out of his brain, so myself and Victor, 'Look, Ken, take off, we'll get the lights together, just relax' and we're like tripped off our bin completely, but at the same time all we had to do was connect through the fuseboard, work out where the wires were going, basically break all the connections and remake them, so 'that fuse there comes out this way, kill it, take the wire out, that's the fuse that controls all the plugs in this room. Now [laughs] plugs, room, front, right.' Did the whole fuseboard that way. We did this at two in the morning while we were tripped, and this is the kind of thing that, like for example Jonathan's story of repairing the phone exchange in Sarajevo
>
> LC: Jonathan repaired the? Nah.
>
> Jim: Well, apparently in order to get a phone connection through, in order to mail some project or other that he had to have in back to the college he repaired the local exchange in the University in Sarajevo, or was involved therein [laughs]
>
> LC: yeah, the time he hitchhiked through

> Jim: Yeah, but whatever about the veracity of this tale [laughs] the fact is that most of the people that we hang around with would in that situation, were they there and would actually have the technical competence to be useful.
>
> LC: I think it goes a bit beyond that, I mean
>
> Jim: It does go beyond that, I mean, it's not just technical competence, an awful lot of people are researching how society should be built privately, in their own minds.

Play and practice, then, are not ultimately separate from mobilisation. It can, of course, become the case that form takes over completely from content, or means from ends; this is undoubtedly part of the reason for the inordinate focus on rules and procedures that paradoxically plagues many movement institutions:

> "The organisational forms of movements are not just 'instrumental' for their goals, they are a goal in themselves. Since collective action is focussed on cultural codes, the *form* of the movement is itself a message, a symbolic challenge to the dominant codes." (Melucci 1989: 60)

If I am right, however, this is a necessary price if movements are to operate on the basis of a reflexive rationality.

Collective explorations of form

What is important, then, is the explorative moment of creativity, imagination and play, which in turn helps to explain the element of delight in "pure form": if we think of play as a non-committal or metaphorical engagement with problems that one faces practically in other contexts, what is transferrable is precisely the formal shape of particular ideas or solutions, not their actual content.

This sense of a collective exploration of form is of course heightened in the *production* of music, reading and drug use. We are used to categorising these as forms of *consumption*, displaying particular features of cultural capital, but this explanation tells us little about the active and solidaristic elements involved. Thus, for example, much effort may be put into *concealing* the fact of drug use rather than displaying it; drugs are acquired privately and often on a non-commercial basis (i.e. as an expression of solidarity); and as we have seen the drugs preferred in this network tend more to

weaken competences for playing public roles while enhancing inner experience (hash, mushrooms, acid), with exceptions such as speed and alcohol.

Similarly, music is *made* rather than consumed, in participative sessions rather than centred around solo exhibitions, and privileging the reflective and communicative (e.g. John Martyn, Bob Dylan, Neil Young) rather than acoustic wall-paper to enhance other activities. Reading, too, is highly solidaristic: books are lent and borrowed rather than bought, and the emphasis is on providing valuable resources rather than claiming cultural capital from consumption. Thus, in various ways, "doing nothing" provides resources for movement activity, enabling collective exploration of possibilities and mustering solidarity to enable individual development.

Even the physical living space of participants, and their time structures, play their part in this, as one participant notices discussing the decline of some kinds of socialising:

> Tina: Part of it is just there's no big houses any more, everybody's in flats and three beds in a flat, but that's a symptom as well as a cause. Nobody wants to live together, and now you live with the boyfriend or you live on your own [....]
>
> LC: There's just sort of that much less willingness to go somewhere half across the city and stay up till four or five am
>
> Tina: Yeah, there is a bit of that, I think, because the people you mention are people that are getting something together, and so probably the following morning will have to wake up at a certain hour. [laughs] Also I think it's a geographical thing, in like, say even two years ago, when we were living in Rathmines, there were about, I don't know, five people you could reach with ten minutes walk, I mean, there's three of us in Beech Lane, there was that big house in Ranelagh, we knew somebody else around, and possibly living in Rathmines is getting too expensive and people are moving out, so people are actually farther away than they used to be. It's not as easy to sort of say 'Well, I have an hour, I'll drop into somebody.' Cause it takes an hour to get there." (Tina)

As this suggests, such situations are achievements, and achievements that can be eroded. To return to Wagner's argument, critical and practical thought and activity has material preconditions: solidarity, communicative and cooperative competencies,

flexible and explorative modes of thought and action, and the collective production of these necessary resources:

> "Political would be Kenner and Muireann through Das a bit, Ciarán a bit, but probably yourself, Frank [....] Book exchange, myself and Bob Gaskin had a lot, Josh as well a bit, and a total musical exchange between myself and Jim [...] and actually, because we used to wander up different groups, say, the groups that really wanted to do things, like go for a walk in the mountains, it'd be yourself and myself, Josh, Das and Ciarán not so much, Jonathon, don't know whether I already mentioned him [...] you'd have people that hung around as friends [...] then there's like the people who used to go off to Merrion Park and get pissed was a larger group." (Das)

Although in the Irish case weak and restricted in scope, such reflexive lifeworlds of ordinary movement participants may go some way towards redeeming the promise of a critical modernity. Dominated neither by state or market, they are "free spaces" in the sense discussed in chapter five, within which creative activity, driven by modes of substantive rationality (e.g. communicative) can take place. If they are a long way short of being ideal speech situations, they are nevertheless considerable achievements on the part of ordinary people inhabiting class societies.

Reflexive lifeworlds and intellectual activity

In particular, they are *skilled* achievements, they cannot be taken for granted. They depend, for example, on developing appropriate means for communication within a very transient population and a city of a million people:

> "I think we're quite a communicative group [laughs] in a lot of ways, and, you know, non-communicative in other ways. The ways in which we communicate, I think [are different]." (Steve)

This communication has to do particularly with the creation and sharing of skills and knowledge:

> "I think it was like a mutual support group, cause if you are a certain kind of person and you meet other kinds of people like you, you go 'Great, there are other people in the world like me' and you can discuss the things together and come to conclusions that you mightn't have otherwise, and somebody will know something

> you don't, and you'll know something they don't, and you can exchange information and stuff." (Ruth)

The intellectual organisation of social movement milieux is discussed in similar terms by Eyerman and Jamison:

> "A social movement is not one organisation or one special interest group. It is more like a cognitive territory, a new conceptual space that is filled by a dynamic interaction between different groups and organisations [....] It is precisely in the creation, articulation, formulation of new thoughts and ideas - new knowledge - that a social movement defines itself in society." (1991: 55)

This grassroots intellectual activity of rethinking and reorganising everyday life links, as Wainwright writes for the women's movement, "transformation of self and transformation of social structures" (1994: 79). In her argument, it forms a fundamental resource for social change. Certainly, it has remained a staple feature of participation:

> "[I was living] the way I'm living now, pretty much, I wasn't too fussy about the actual physical details of my living space, I tended to spend an enormous amount of time with *people*, whether we were doing something or not, even if we were all just sitting there being bored, you would spend time with them [....] I spent a lot of time with people, spending a lot of time in pubs or people's places getting stoned, chatting, seeing what everybody's up to, basically living on a diet of gossip." (Jim)

That participants are apparently doing "nothing special", then, does not mean that nothing is going on. People are practicing living in different ways, they are developing the skills appropriate to new kinds of rationality; in other words, they are recreating themselves in ways which challenge dominant everyday routines.

Radicalised reflexivity

I have called the kind of reflexivity discussed in this chapter radicalised; it is so firstly because it breaks with the hegemonic acceptance of given social relations and draws on experience and needs from below, and because it does so in relatively communicative contexts where its reflexive critique is held to be not simply cognitively true, but also normatively justified and emotionally sincere - in other words, a practical proposition and not simply an elegant idea. Given this, it is radical

because it tends to go beyond a purely particularistic ("negotiated") solution and follow the logic of its critique of the taken-for-granted (everyday routines) and of its articulation of needs and desires (challenging social structures) to the level of the movement project of the counter culture.

Hegemonic activity from above may be simply a matter of encouraging different groups to fall in line with existing social relationships under the leadership of a particular group, but (as Singh 1999 has shown) it nevertheless involves the transformation of that leading group, and history is littered with the corpses of formerly hegemonic groups which failed to grasp this point. Counter-hegemonic rationalities, similarly, need to be elaborated in contexts which are capable of self-transformation as they both engage with and develop needs expressed from below. The image of a fully-prepared "alternative elite" simply waiting in the wings is a myth, because under routine circumstances the only group engaging with and leading a broad range of social groups is the ruling class. It follows that transformative hegemonic activity depends on contexts which are practically open to self-transformation on the basis of communication. Given this, the appearance of reflexive lifeworlds in non-elite contexts, however undeveloped, is a significant change within disorganised capitalism:

> "[T]here are a lot of people trying to construct alternatives and defend those, and I think why it's worth trying to make people aware of that and making the links is to defend them and to push them out more." (Frank)

The radicalised reflexivity I have been discussing uses the movement legacy of decommodified "free spaces", and the reorganisation of power and culture within disorganised capitalism, to advantage to enable just such an openness, and participants are capable of seeing themselves within these terms, at least to some extent.

> LC: Would you be happy to see CAT [Centre for Alternative Technology] and *Common Ground* and so on as all sort of moving within some common space? [...]
>
> Jim: That space is somewhere that an awful lot of people are thinking about, because I think everybody recognises to some extent or other that things *are* changing, and are going to change very fast, and people actually define where people themselves stand, you know, as groups of people, and as more and more people realise that to one degree or another you're going to get fringe interest areas whereby people are

> capable of self-sufficiency and are capable of small successful local groupings, people are going to get more into the security that offers."

I am not arguing that the network of ordinary participants I have been discussing is capable of leading a revolution; the limits mentioned in this and the previous chapter testify how much further the counter culture's learning process has to go before it can produce a coherent and sustainable counter-hegemony. But I do want to suggest that it is from the kinds of rationality discussed here - reflexive autonomy and radicalised reflexivity - that a genuinely counter-hegemonic rationality can be developed and communicated. Vester et al. (1993) link the openness of such rationalities to substantive political effects, noting that his comparable categories

> "show the highest support for the right to vote for foreigners, and the highest or a very high social and political engagement [....] If we attempt to understand the social-political habitus that expresses itself in the readiness to give non-Germans the vote or in a high level of social activity, we find in both cases a *disposition to encounter without reservations the unfamiliar, the experiences that lie outside the narrower social context*. It is clear that such a disposition is more markedly present in the open-multiple, non-conventional, if also ambivalent socialising behaviour of the [seekers] than in styles which point to a more closed, more conventional or even an explicitly restrictive socialisation behaviour [....] This relationship [between socialising style and politics] becomes visible above all in relation to those who think and live differently and 'strangers'." (1993: 384 – 387)

Something of this openness comes across in the experience of a late-comer to the network:

> LC: Did you find it intimidating, coming into that group with all those people who already knew each other [...]?
>
> Ruth: Well, that's what was very strange about it. There are people you just click with, you just meet them and you just sort of click with them immediately. I did click in very fast, cause I just thought 'Yes, I like these people, these are the kind of people I want to hang out with, they're fun, and they're nice, and they're smart, and they're interesting', and no, I thought I was accepted in very quickly, cause it can be a lot harder to get to know people, and that mostly people were just like 'Oh, OK, whatever, come along'."

Whatever about the limits of this particular network, something of this orientation of openness and engagement is a basic precondition of the kinds of political strategy discussed in chapter seven. Counter-hegemony is not achieved by the imposition of a single way of being; but rather, as Gramsci (1975) stressed in his discussion of organic intellectuals, by an willingness on the part of the movement to talk the language of other social groups, albeit with a determinate content[92].

The limits of the lifeworld

How far can this analysis be taken? To attempt the construction of a milieu organised around the movement rationality of reflexive autonomy is certainly to *resist* everyday routines and dominant rationalities; in a lifeworld perspective what stands out is the dismantling and reconstruction of everyday routines (and, as we have seen, of routinisation itself); in a system perspective this appears as the "war of position" between dominant and movement rationalities. As we have seen, the potential for the development of this kind of movement rationality derives from the break-up of organised capitalist relations; its concrete content comes from a move beyond the limited response of particularist privatism, a move made possible in part by the decommodifying results of earlier struggles and the possibilities opened up by direct and mediated contacts with other counter cultural contexts.

So far so good, one might say; but this kind of movement rationality also seems to be self-undermining: on the one hand, reflexive autonomy enables the freedom *from* structural power relations and habitual routines that is needed for the creation of new projects; on the other, it is potentially destructive of such projects, making the freedom *to* create a precarious and contested achievement and blocking in particular the transition from a practical and informal logic of action to an explicit, institutionalised and theorised approach. In this, of course, the participants in this particular network mirror not only the weaknesses of the Irish counter culture discussed in chapter six but the more general difficulties outlined in chapter four.

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[92] At this kind of level of development it makes little sense to tax this network with failing to supply the determinate content, since few if any of its members aspire to lead others. As we shall see in the next section, however, an immanent critique is entirely possible.

Collective learning processes

I think it can be helpful to see this, with Eyerman and Jamison (1991) and Vester (1975), as part of a collective learning process developing coordinated skilled activity. The counter culture, in its first formations as the New Left of the 1950s and 1960s, challenged the substitution of means for end characteristic of the highly regimented movements of the middle years of this century, which evolved in symbiosis or as mirror-images of militaristic and authoritarian nation-states. To say that commitment should be earned, not had as a gift, is a salutary rejection of top-down organising; to challenge the taken-for-granted routines which encode structural power relations in everyday life is a necessary reaction to the instrumentalism of Stalinism and social democracy. Raschke may be right to argue that

> "[I]f an internal solution of socio-cultural problems is only possible to a limited degree, the question raises itself of how a transformation of the whole society can come about with the means of a movement whose motivation orients it towards the cultural. How can a movement geared to communication and understanding enter into strategies of the conquest of power and the reorganisation of the economic and political systems, without being defeated by internal contradictions?" (1988: 436)

The answer, however, can hardly be found by strategies of straightforward instrumentalisation. North (1996) has tellingly compared LETS systems to the "exemplary" strategies of early nineteenth century utopian socialists; in similar vein Touraine (1981) has argued for a developmental (rather than cyclical) approach to movements in which the moment of revolt is not a static "thing" to be analysed in isolation, but in effect a response to an earlier situation. In the Irish case, with only a fragmentary relationship to the *longue durée* of movement learning processes and negotiating the difficult experience of "liberation" from organised capitalism, it is not surprising that if we freeze the picture we are not satisfied with what we see. But in the longer term of people's lives and movement development we can not only hope, but also argue, for change.

As Habermas (1984) reminds us, rationality is not a given "thing", but (as in his discussion of e.g. aesthetic, legal or scientific rationality) takes times to acquire institutional shape, its own "intellectual" form, and reach its own maturity. Sociology, with access to the learning processes of other movements and an

articulated sensitivity to the strategic and theoretical issues raised by movements, can at times come to believe (like a bored teacher) that the only question is how long movements will take to discover the "right" answer. What this impatience forgets is the twin fact of the changing history of movement struggles - earlier answers do not seem to be socially "workable" in their original form - and the new needs present in the practical logic of movements, but which may not yet have reached the exalted heights of social theory. A better kind of "teaching" role here is to help movements bring out the specificity of the experiences to which they respond and the newness of their answer, and to follow that with questions that can help the movement identify and resolve its internal problems.

Limits and possibilities

Such questions are raised by participants themselves, and their expressions of dissatisfaction can be read as a thoroughly immanent critique of the network. Here I want to look at three themes in particular, which recur in interviews. One issue, already touched on, is how the autonomist orientation of this milieu undermines the ability to "get things together". This is a problem for participation in counter-cultural institutions of a formal kind:

> "The wanting to be a free spirit was really hippyish days, the [refuge] came from the women's studies, and basically they came over for a lunch talk, and that's the way I got interested, and you actually couldn't really be such a noncon-, you have to commit yourself to do your shift, for example, you can't say 'But I'm a free spirit and if next Monday something happens and I want to go [laughs], I'm not coming in to do my shift', you know." (Tina)

As yet, counter-cultural rationalities have not developed to the point where participants can find the resources for participation of this kind within internally legitimate techniques of the self, nor have counter cultural institutions been able to resist the adoption of instrumental techniques of labour discipline, even in voluntary work. This situation is also problematic for the development of the project of the self beyond a certain point:

> "I don't know if it's age or what, but just more, not very focussed, but I've definitely more of an idea of what to do. I think it's a sense of time going by, and deciding that

> you would like to actually do something with your time. It's not a question of saying 'Oh, I have to do something just because I haven't really done very much', but more trying to get an overall perspective of things. Everything that you want to do, not just careerwise, not just like studying, further postgraduate study, or getting a job, or anything like that, but a lot kind of wider spheres of what you want to do with your time, with all your time, being more creative, being more productive, or whatever." (Mark)

Facing limits like this, inaction is not so much a solution as a sign of the general difficulty in orientation and direction-finding:

> Steve: We're not a group that is tied together by anything, like a one kind of a career choice or something like that, we're not all tied together just by, like we're kind of random, well not
>
> Tina: We're not random [...] we are looking for alternative
>
> Steve: we're all kind of pissing around the place for instance
>
> Tine: We're looking for alternative careers or ways of life, that's what we have together, and I'd say an engineer won't have that
>
> Steve: People aren't, really!
>
> Tina: Most are, though
>
> LC: What sort of things d'you mean?
>
> Tina: OK, we don't all want to go and work in a 9 to 5 job.
>
> Steve: Yeah, majority didn't want to work at all [...]

The project of autonomous self-development, then, runs into difficulties in prolonging itself beyond a certain point, and this is also reflected in a greater tendency for "getting things together" to be a privatised and fragmented affair than in the past:

> Tina: The whole crowd has sort of crumbled [laughs] and loads of people are not round, if they're round they don't talk to each other, if they went doing different things, got their lives together [....] It's just people are getting involved in other things. Like college, or work, or something.

Under such conditions, the current limits of counter cultural rationalities are found where participants resort to dominant rationalities or emigration to further their own projects, emptying the network of its creativity:

> "People would still meet, but it wasn't the same, and there wasn't the same sort of spirit of wonder and [laughs] you know, 'everything is beautiful' sort of stuff that you get in the very early times. People were doing their own things, they were going, staying, starting college, finishing college." (Tina)

The *good* life

Another way of coming at this problem is to ask after participants' sense of what would be a good way to live:

> Mark: The most interesting guy is probably Graham. A friend of Tadhg, who's a friend of, it's a tenuous link [...] And he's into things like permaculture and weed filtering of the water supply, and all kind of groovy things, and he's so focussed and centred, and bang in this whole thing, he's really doing something with this, and he's got what he wants.
>
> LC: He's sorted it.
>
> Mark: Yeah. It's fascinating, you know, he's really, really good to talk to [....] Myself and Ciarán met him in Sarah's flat one night. And we both picked up straight away that here is somebody doing exactly what they wanted to do, and they're really happy doing exactly what they wanted to do, and is prepared to enthuse at length all night about it and it was great to hear him.

Similarly, Steve identified this "creative" sense of being heavily involved in things that are personally worthwhile as important:

> "It's like this guy, a friend in Milan, this couple that we know, like Dave and Mary, Dave is working with, he's what, 22 I think, 23, and he's not really together as such, but he's living in Milan, because he kind of gets a buzz out of it and he likes to write, and he's got an English degree, and he is writing his second book, and probably, I haven't read his first one, but probably as far as a lot of people would think, a complete load of crap, but for him it's something, it's him doing something creative, and he writes a lot of poetry, etcetera, and he works TEFLing, like teaching English a few hours a day, spends the rest of the day writing and doing whatever. And that's

> what he does, that's what he wants to get done, and in a couple of years he'll go and live somewhere else. He just kinds of gets a buzz out of it."

The difficulties in commitment identified above, however, have made this a far-away goal for many, confirming Wagner's pessimism:

> Tina: Some people ended up doing what they wanted, which was music. Some of the people changed very much, from travelling round the world to doing engineering [laughs]. But actually I think he's one of the most together persons, cause he's doing that with a view to travelling after he's got a degree in engineering, which is probably quite an easy thing to do. I don't think people would actually set up and think 'Oh right, OK, now I'm getting it together so then I can travel', they just say 'Well, I'm fed up with doing nothing with myself' [....]
>
> LC: Do you think many people are happy with what they're doing now?
>
> Tina: No, I think many aren't.

While it is probably true that Tina, Mark and Steve were particularly unhappy at the time of these interviews, both in relation to other participants and in relation to other periods in their own lives (at the time they were all planning emigration, and so perhaps tended to identify individual action with creativity and the network with stagnation), they are fairly accurate (to judge from other interviews) in identifying a general sense of stagnation within the network at that time, and an inability to enable participants to pursue the project of self-development beyond a certain point. This was probably more urgent a problem for some participants than for others: in the terms of chapter three, the pressure of tacit knowledge against existing forms can run from a feeling of vague unease or a desperation to escape.

Developments over the three to four years since these interviews have tended towards a lot of "getting it together" as individuals or couples, but (as far as I can judge, having spent the last three years working outside Dublin) rather than a thorough fragmentation this has worked itself out as a more distanced form of networking, and participants' involvement in articulated projects has tended more to take place within other contexts and less to grow out of network interaction. The absence of the buzz of creativity, I think, remains much of the time, resolved by some as depression or uncertainty and by others as resignation or acceptance. To this extent, I think, the limits of the network as developed to date can be said to have been reached; the

question is how participants attempt to move beyond this situation, and whether they use the network as a tool to continue developing reflexivity or rather "retraditionalise" it while turning their attention elsewhere.

Gender

A third limit, mentioned in chapter four, is that of gender relations within the network. Looked at through the eyes of two feminists and one non-feminist woman, this appears in different ways. For Tina, the problem is that few women count as full members:

> LC: You don't think it's a particularly laddish scene?
>
> Tina: Well, it is a bit, actually.
>
> LC: Is it?
>
> Tina: Mm. [laughs] Yeah, yeah it is. I think there's worse scenes, where this happens, but I think it is to a certain extent. And it's hard to say, because really there's always been more guys than girls, I think I'm the oldest, you know, oldest apart from the fact of age, but actually longest staying in the group women, you know, myself and Maria and Emer, and kind of Ruth arrived quite a bit later, and that's it, really, it's us.
>
> LC: And a lot of people who were there earlier and left one way or the other.
>
> Tina: But I mean that were there and are still there, it's only us, as far as women are concerned.
>
> LC: Why is that?
>
> Tina: Well, I don't know. [laughs] Ask the guys. Well, some of the women left, as you said, like Melanie. I don't know, maybe other girlfriends were never really part of the group, but girlfriends of somebody [....] So they actually were never themselves part of the group but they were sort of appendages to whomever they were going out with.

Ruth, however, was defensive on this point at first, perhaps because she saw it as a challenge to her position:

> LC: There's quite often been a thing where a woman has come in as somebody's partner...

> Ruth: Didn't happen in my case. I know it happened a lot [....] That didn't happen in my case, really, for the first year that I knew all of you, maybe more, the first year and a half, more even, that I knew everybody I wasn't going out with any one of them.

At another point, though, Ruth did see this as a more structural feature of the network:

> "You get a lot of women hanging out, but how many of them are what you'd say totally part of it, and how many of them are either just hanging out because it's fun or because they're going out with somebody who, yeah, that's true. You get reasonable numbers of female buskers at the moment, but who just hang out."

At the same time, this is not a universal rule:

> "Emer and myself, with or without boyfriends, we're part of it, you know. But for loads of people it is not, I dunno, and I dunno why we are, I think because we are such a pain in the arse anyhow [laughs] that we stay there, you know?" (Tina)

The difference between Ruth and Tina on this issue seems to have to do with a more general confidence in the extent to which participants are committed to the project of autonomy:

> Ruth: I don't think that very many people would be contented, of our generation, would be content to live the kind of lives their parents did, who would be content to just have a 9 to 5 job and not do very much. I mean, for instance, my mother went to meet some people she hadn't seen since '69 [....] And when you say to them what are they doing, they tell you what their husband is doing now, or what their children are doing now, and I don't expect that will happen with the people I know now, I don't ever expect that to happen, that when I meet them I'll say 'What are you doing?'and they're not going to say 'Well, I've got three kids'.
>
> LC: Yeah, I remember you having an argument with Joanna about that actually, she was saying 'Well, women get oppressed, and they get pushed into these conventional boxes', and you were saying 'That's not going to happen to me.'
>
> Ruth: Yeah, exactly. I was surprised that she would say that. I mean, yes I know that there are things like, it depends what country you're in, and yet women still get paid less [....] That all still happens, but it's people's expectations that are higher. The ideal of happiness is not a house and a job that pays, all this.

Frank shared something of Ruth's analysis of expectations, but felt that these higher expectations might express themselves differently depending on gender:

> "A point that a friend of mine made to me was that while she could see that happening, that you have the ones who don't go on into kind of approved society from Belvedere, and from a couple of those other middle-class Dublin schools, she says it seems to be the men who get involved in solidarity work and all that sort of stuff. The women, she reckons, are more likely to maybe go into education or something like that, or to go into business or whatever, but not to go into that kind of stirring up trouble, changing the world."

Tina's analysis of the problem focusses more on issues internal to the network:

> "I think there's a bit of this laddish thing say when people get together now, which I find very annoying, and Emer finds very annoying too, and I think Dizzy as well, there's another woman that finds it very annoying, when all these guys get together and start recounting for about the hundredth time their great stories of drinking and smoking, stories that you heard already, and you were there, and you *knew*, like, you know [laughter] they weren't! They weren't like that!"

There are areas of interaction, then, which have become retraditionalised, and are (no longer) subject to any kind of reflexive attention. Similarly, Frank, looking at more political groups, felt that a lack of explicit attention to the issue exacerbated the problem:

> "I think it's easier for women to get on in the kind of structured groups [....] I think now, in some of the smaller groups, like the more informal, spare-time groups, there's still very little conscious planning, in the mixed gender groups, like, outside of women's groups, to looking at the way the genders interact, or looking at the way people interact on a gender basis. That doesn't just go for men, you know, not thinking about the mechanics of it, it goes for women as well in terms of thinking about quotas or whatever [....] There's much more equality in the newer groups."

As we saw in the last chapter, participation in the network was initially part of a process of liberation from traditional expectations, for women at least (consider also Mark's comments on *Stepford Wives*), and a certain amount of critique and exploration of relationships and sexuality was part of its early development. One possible reading would be to say that processes of retraditionalisation are overtaking processes of reflexivity. A shake-up in relationships since these interviews, with the

development of what (from the outside at least) seem more egalitarian relationships for a significant number of participants, suggest that these issues may now be being played out within couples, in which case gender relations across the network may be being left to one side[93]. It seems likely, then, that the project of radicalised reflexivity is finding important limits in and around the gendered features of its internal interactions.

The war of position

The situation I have been describing is in some ways extremely specific to Dublin during the last ten years, in other ways very general. In this section I want to attempt to relocate this movement milieu within the context of global modernity. If organised capitalism was predominantly national in scope (Lash and Urry 1987), and geared towards the intensification of one type of domination and exploitation within the confines of the national territory of core societies and another type within their overseas dependencies, then disorganised capitalism, by globalising the scope of its activities, abandons large areas of the core societies as it shifts its attention elsewhere. Within the welfare-state context inherited from organised capitalism, groups such as the unemployed or students are "decommodified" (Offe 1985); that is, they are marginal to the production process and of interest primarily as consumers. From Berger et al. (1974) to Bey (1991), this situation of marginalisation - which is at the same time a marginalisation from the associated structures of intensive domination and exploitation - has been identified as an important site for the generation of the cultural resources for challenges to the dominant forms of global modernity. Participants in this network, whether unemployed or studying, in seasonal or temporary employment (teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL), kitchen

[93] An alternative reading, consistent with Waite (1999), would be to suggest that the network has to an extent been overtaken by the wider shift from private to public patriarchy (Walby 1990) in Irish society over the decade and a half since its formation (Mahon 1995). If so, this would explain some of the difference between this and subsequent generations, noted here in Frank's interview and in chapter four.

porter (KP)), or as subcontracting technicians and translators, have tended to inhabit this space as far as possible.

This marginality is felt in specific ways in Dublin. Ireland's traditional economic semi-peripherality, coupled with its involvement in the European state-formation process and Dublin's role as an educational and administrative centre, has given rise to large numbers of skilled and mobile individuals. At the same time, its de facto political and economic dependency on the centres of European and American capital has placed the Irish left in a similar situation to trade unionists in a subcontracting firm: global capitalism is ever-present as a structuring element of Dublin's economy, yet it is not made physically present as a target. Unlike the British or German states, the Irish state does not act as an explicit representative of the interests of global capital, and it tends to avoid set-piece repression of protest activity. The historical role played by nationalism as an official state ideology and its current meanings in Northern Ireland make it largely unavailable as a potential mobilising ideology for anti-systemic protest. And in the "flat-land" areas of Dublin, the traditional relationships of clientelism and faction are mostly absent as instantiations of power in daily life. Thus the scope for reflexivity and self-development is that much greater than, for example, in the far more heavily politicised situation of the German state and economy. Yet the appearance of related lifeworlds and movements across the core capitalist countries suggest that similar rationalities can develop in a variety of related contexts: as we have seen, this network is anything other than isolated from the wider world, and participants often find friendly spaces abroad.

Such lifeworlds, then, are neither simply passive victims of radical modernity (Giddens 1994), nor locations of purely defensive struggles against colonisation by the logics of instrumental rationality (Offe 1985). They are also, and crucially, a source of new rationalities. Under appropriate circumstances, the communicative rationalisation of such local rationalities can proceed to a point where they are capable of breaking the bounds of the lifeworld and spreading to other lifeworlds. Whether they succeed in this is of course a question of the politics of culture.

The stakes of conflict

Within the cultural politics of post-1968 western states, the challenge to the previous "taken-for-granted" modes of cultural domination has provoked cultural and political responses which make "business as usual" possible once again. If Touraine (1981) is right that the struggle between social actors is what constructs the stakes of "historicity", then there has been a shift from a "hegemony of closure" (within which the centrality of the conflict between the dominant "old right" and the subordinate "old left" enabled a marginalisation of other actors) to what can provisionally be defined as a "hegemony of openness" (in which the conflict between the dominant forces of disorganised capitalism and those of the subordinate "new left", or the counter culture, over the question of *just how far* openness and reflexivity are to be taken, defines the new stakes at issue, and marginalises other forces.)

In this chapter, we have seen that reflexivity tends to mean a situation where social relations are "consumed" reflexively, but "produced" unreflexively; in other words, a situation of a diversity of "negotiated" readings, which represents a *precondition* for effective cultural hegemony - the ability of the dominated to find their own value in the cultural construction of their own domination (Gramsci 1991 (1932 - 33): 12 - 14). Similarly, the dominant meanings of autonomy in affirmative modernisms involve a situation of atomisation, possessive individualism and goal-rational action. The local rationalities of the counter culture are capable of radicalising both towards an active life-world reflexivity which applies to the actual production of social relations as much as to the attitudes adopted towards them, and towards a reflexive autonomy which does not restrict itself to the pursuit of given goals.

McKay (1996) repeatedly asks why the Thatcher and Major regimes adopted such a brutal strategy to destroy the free festival scene, the New Traveller lifestyle, rave culture and so on, pointing out the paradox that these groups are among the most "enterprising" representatives of "personal initiative" and "individual freedom". In other words, one of the key issues at stake in contemporary conflicts is precisely over the meanings of reflexivity and autonomy, and over whether they can form part of a new hegemony containing social conflict or whether they can be radicalised to the point of rupture. The conflicting meanings that can be attributed to "autonomy" and "reflexivity" (and to "change", as "modernisation" and "rationalisation" imposed from

above or as the micro-politics of social transformation from below) are then key stakes in the politics of hegemony and counter-hegemony.

Alternative modernities, then, remain a present option within what is ultimately a "war of position" between different movement projects, different ways of making and remaking the social world. Both the initial development of this network, and its current tendencies to fragmentation or retraditionalisation, need to be seen in this context: rather than reifying "networks" as self-producing "levels" of movement activity, they can then be seen as a stage in a particular process of the struggle to develop local rationalities. In the next chapter I will attempt to relocate this analysis within a wider understanding of the problems and choices facing the counter culture.

Chapter seven: choices for the counter culture

Introduction

In chapter six I suggested that the development of local rationalities within the network might be running into limits which could be best understood and overcome by relocating it within a broader picture of the conflicts and choices facing the counter culture at present. In doing this, I hope to avoid the danger of much contemporary writing on social movements, which - tied to a static analysis that in effect rejects the possibility that movements can *move* and change - often concludes with an uncritical celebration or an a priori condemnation of what is taken to be an essentially fixed object.

If we refuse to reify "movement" as essentially one kind of thing, whether protest, SMOs, or networks, and focus rather on the question of how particular local rationalities are developed in struggles - that is, of the changing and developing skills which movement participants bring to their participation - then it may be possible to identify the limits entailed by particular forms at the same time as naming possibilities for overcoming those forms; in other words, to ask after the adequacy of particular versions of a movement project to the local rationalities out of which it grows.

Open theorising and social movements

In this thesis I have argued for a social movement theory grounded in theories from and for social movements; that such theories need to account for their own situatedness rather than claim universality for their statements; and for the production of concepts which are praxis-oriented, that is, historical and open, and hence able to engage with the problems faced by movement participants rather than simply condemning or approving their existence in general. This chapter attempts to redeem some of the implications of these claims. Marx argued that

> "[t]he question of whether there is objective truth to human thought is no theoretical question, but a *practical* question. In practice human beings must show the truth,

> that is the reality and power, this-worldliness, of their thought. The argument about the reality or unreality of thinking that is isolated from praxis is a purely *scholastic* question." (n.d. (1845): 113 - 114)

Within the scholastic bounds of an academic thesis, I would make a weaker claim. That knowledge is political, that is, has implications for power relations, is an explicit claim of Marxist and feminist thought on the subject, and one that is widely accepted in, for example, Foucauldian and postmodernist writing. While there remain "scientistic" conceptions of sociology that deny this, it would be odd for even the most scientistic observer of social movements to deny that research on *social movements* potentially has implications for the practice of those movements, and of course it is precisely within such "enlightenment" modes of thought that the utilitarian nature of scientific knowledge is most commonly stressed, notably when making applications for research funding. As Giddens has observed, sociological knowledge spirals in and out of the social world (1993b: 150), and it is not unusual for academic writing to be noticed by drawn on in various ways by activists.

The strategy of this chapter

It is appropriate, then, for a theory of social movements to ask after its implications. Within the framework of the argument I have developed in this thesis, other questions also arise, such as the question of the usefulness of its concepts to movement practitioners and the question of where the analysis is situated. This chapter tries to use the perspective I have developed to think about the options of contemporary social movements from my own viewpoint, that of a long-term participant with an interest in theory, in other words to ask questions like "what are we up to?", "where are we trying to get to?" and "how are we trying to do that?" – to demonstrate, that is, the appropriateness of the perspective developed in this thesis for the kind of open theorising it argues for. Since, as we shall see, these questions are also raised *within* counter cultural contexts, it is not a question of moving from the lifeworld perspective of chapters five and six to a supposedly disembodied "system" perspective, but rather one of moving from the perspective of the network participants discussed there back to my own as a participant more deeply involved in the political side of counter cultural processes.

One of the difficulties with these kinds of question is that there are many different possible *kinds* of answer we can give as activists, ranging from the intensely specific and task-oriented ("we're trying to prevent this particular incinerator proposal from going through") to the grandly general and utopian ("we have lost our inner connection to nature, and we need to find it"), not forgetting tangential answers which refuse the question ("I think we need to do more dancing and less committee meetings"). It isn't a rejection of these kinds of answers to suggest that there are also spaces in which the more movement-theoretical questions are useful; and perhaps to identify those spaces is also to identify how we can go about answering the question, or under what circumstances and for what purposes this kind of question and answer might be useful.

Within this chapter, then, I start from my own activist situation as a theorist *within* movements, to think about what theory is doing there; considering existing conflicts within the movements I am involved with to think about where we might go from here, and using my own experience of those movements and understanding of their possibilities to give provisional answers to that. I try to do this within the terms developed in this book: in other words, to show that this offers an effective language for movement theorising.

An important claim of chapter one was that historical concepts offered the possibility of open thinking, that is, thinking about the future and thinking about a range of possibilities within the present. To show that this is the case for one particular set of answers is not to demonstrate that it is possible for all such answers, but it does demonstrate the basic possibility of linking theory and practice, and beyond this the initial "usability" of the concepts developed in this thesis. The particular answers that I give, finally, are *situated* as far as possible; in other words, they do not claim universality. In terms of Hakamaya's reading of Vico (1997), they do not situated themselves within the universal terrain of claims to absolute truth, the *logos*, but rather within the local terrain of claims to plausibility, the *topos*.

How can a movement understand itself?

Talking in terms of social movements makes it possible to say "these questions are ways of clarifying the self-understanding of a movement". This is a line of thought

associated particularly with Touraine (1981), though of course it goes back before him to thinkers like Lukács (1971) and Gramsci (1991), and before them again to Marx (e.g. 1967). Within this perspective, it is often read "how can we know what the self-understanding of a movement is?" Lots of different ideas are voiced in movements, after all, for lots of different purposes and by lots of different actors. When we research or take part in movements, though, we find that to have a self-understanding, to have a view on the movement *as a movement*, rather than simply having a view on particular issues, on organisational goals, on personal ideals and so on, is not always something people do. In other words, it's an achievement of quite a particular kind, and movements don't always seem to have this kind of capacity for self-awareness. Quite extensive movements, and quite powerful ones, can exist without talking in these terms (except perhaps in pep talks at annual conferences or in the pub after the fifth pint). So when do movements think in these terms?

When can a movement understand itself?

An obvious kind of answer, drawing on the sociology of knowledge (Goldmann 1969, Mannheim 1960) and the arguments made in chapters three and four, is to say that ideas are systematically produced around a subject when it plays some role in the purposes the actors want to achieve[94]. So there are likely to be ideas around the nature and purposes of the movement as a whole (a) when one of the things people are doing is trying to build connections across the movement, whether for strategic reasons ("how do we win?") or for identity reasons ("how do we survive?").

These ideas need to become clearer and more specific (b) when the goals of the movement are both large-scale (going beyond e.g. getting a specific law repealed) and within reach (not a matter of the far-off future but a question of massive social changes happening within the next few years); and when the movement is internally pretty complex (so that it becomes important to find common denominators) and has had a significant effect on the surrounding society (so that there's a need to make distinctions). If so, a movement's capacity for self-awareness is at its height when a

[94] This is not of course to say that the subject need itself be real: much energy can be expended on discussing the moment at which the soul enters the foetus, for example.

wide-ranging and radical movement is in a position where it can realistically look at remaking society in its own image; in other words, as it develops from a local rationality towards a fully-developed and counter-hegemonic movement project. Obviously this isn't something that happens every day, but within the Marxist tradition it's illustrated by (say) the blossoming of a whole range of movement theorists – Gramsci, Lukács, Luxemburg, Lenin and so on – around precisely such a situation.

Conversely, we'd expect that movements with limited goals, or movements with little hope for the future, talk in mostly organisational or utopian terms respectively; and movements which have actually taken state power are liable to identify the movement with what is likely to become its major instrument, and so in a sense see themselves through that particular glass, darkly. So (c) a third point is that of autonomy: a movement dependent on "traditional" intellectual structures, whether the state bureaucracy, a commercial media or a professional academia, will be harder put to it to "see the wood for the trees" than one which has "organic" decision-making structures, communications organs and spaces for theorising of its own. As we shall see, these conditions are problematic in the Irish context.

Situating the questions

In this context I'm falling rather uncomfortably between the two stools of organic and traditional activity. With one hat I've been involved in alternative politics of different kinds in Ireland and elsewhere for the last 15 years or so; more particularly I've been involved in different kinds of political project, different attempts at creating an alternative media and different spaces for networking. With the other hat on I've followed the kinds of questions this experience brought up into a research project which has been over ten years in the making, and which has had me involved in the different worlds of "reading the literature", teaching students, administering academia and trying to build links between (some) activists and (some) academics. This puts me to an extent in the situation described by McRobbie:

> "As part of the '68-educated radical professionals, our everyday lives at work, especially in teaching and in education, but also at home and in the community, comprise endless political interventions conducted at every level, from simple acts of

> communication and pedagogy to high-level policy-making decisions. Postmodernity has not stopped us functioning in this hyperactive way." (1994: 47)

"Traditional" intellectual activity expresses itself most pressingly, as far as my thinking about movements goes, in an activity of "defensive translation" - firstly, within research contexts, translating ideas developing from my own engagement with movements into a language acceptable in academic contexts, notably by finding "accredited" intellectuals who could act as spokespersons for this perspective[95]. Secondly, in more general teaching and "collegial" environments, the problem is normally to avoid the general ridicule and trivialisation levelled at movement activities and participant understanding by students, colleagues and superiors. This is unsurprising, given the subject of the research, but tends to divert the project of understanding into one of defending; this "identitarian" concern is common to movement intellectuals in Ireland (for example in the women's and community development movements) insofar as they are likely to have a foot in both worlds.

"Organic" intellectual activity, by contrast, expresses itself mostly practically, in trying to find a form of understanding adequate to the project at hand, whether that means trying to find a workable formula to bring social movements activists together, writing a leaflet against a proposed incinerator, or defending the policy interests of the Irish party within the European Federation of Green Parties. What derives from this experience, and what I recognise in the "movement theorists" I have discussed, is a characteristic *shape* of thinking, oriented towards relational thinking, an attempt to bring out the not-spoken, and an awareness of the "makeability" (Berger, Berger and Kellner 1974) of the social world; an orientation which offers a point of connection with the "open theorising" defended in chapter one.

The context of contemporary Irish movements

A constant question for any activist in a peripheral country like Ireland, where writing on contemporary movements is thin on the ground but vast waves of theory sweep the country from outside, is how to locate our local experience within some

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[95] At an early point in my research, one senior academic told me that they couldn't see why someone studying social movements should take any notice of theorists from inside movements!

coherent frame of understanding at the same time as finding some such frame that is validated by our local experience. The crucial questions involve the way social movements are going or might go, both within that peculiar (and rapidly changing) mix of semi-periphery and semi-core south of the Border and within that peculiar (and rapidly changing) mix of periphery-core relationships that make up the capitalist world-system towards the end of the "long twentieth century". Three central elements can be identified, corresponding to the action from above of capital and state and that of movements from below:

- Following dependent industrialisation in the 60s and 70s and deep industrial crisis in the late 70s and 80s, "modernising" strategies on the part of capitalist and state elites have entailed the reinvention of "Ireland" as a position within the world-economy through developing niches such as computer localisation and tourism and through a clientelistic relationship with the EU (MacLaughlin 1997, but see the qualifiers in O'Hearn 1997). This clearly entails the creation of new kinds of experience – of work relations, of ethnicity, of culture (Crowley and MacLaughlin 1997, Peillon and Slater 1998), which are as yet only partially understood, whether by those affected, by academics (see Torode 1999), or by activists trying to engage with these experiences.
- As part of this turn-around, the capacity for action (though not autonomy: Breen et al. 1990) of the Irish state has increased considerably, first with the expansion of its activities into new areas in the 1970s and more recently with a willingness, fueled by EU funding, to offer movement elites access to policy-making and support across a scope ranging from neo-corporatist arrangements at national level to local "partnership" arrangements and state funding for e.g. women's refuges. In terms of state strategy versus movements from below, this marks a shift from a policy of frontal opposition to a policy of incorporation, similar to that long followed in relation to the labour movement (Allen 1997).
- Movements from below, which had been very effectively suppressed by the nationalist movement they had helped to power in the 1920s, began to be able to reassert themselves from the 1970s on, with a flourishing of large-scale and often remarkably successful movements, such as the long-fought campaigns over contraception, divorce and abortion, the defeat of nuclear power, etc. (Yearley

1995). In the late 1980s and even more in the 1990s there has been an increasing divide between movement elites, oriented towards an apparently more open-minded state, and an increasingly disempowered grassroots, drifting into demobilisation or eccentricity. With the successful cooptation of the parliamentary Left, there is a widespread disorientation in movements from below, which is being experienced as a source both of creativity and of powerlessness.

Contested movement projects

In this context, movements from below are necessarily attempting to redefine the nature of their activities. On occasion, this amounts to a politics of developing individual campaigns; more commonly, it consists of proposing particular kinds of movement *project* – restating or rethinking existing projects, attempting to outline new ones. In terms of the conditions for movement reflexivity identified earlier, an intention to build connections is clearly present; as is a sense of widespread social change, although there are divided readings between a liberal reading which sees past changes as implying future ones and a radical reading which identifies this as a process of cooptation and demobilisation. Autonomy is more problematic: it is not that movements from below lack institutions of their own, but that they frequently assume (for liberal or nationalist reasons) that the state *should* be theirs to control, and thus have difficulty thinking separately about the movement (cf. Geoghegan 1999). What particularly heightens movement reflexivity, though, is the first condition: to build connections, it is necessary to identify (if only by default) who "we" are and what "we" are about. Melucci (1989, 1995b) has observed that movement identity is a construction; what he has not observed is that there are moments in which this construction is the straightforward reproduction of acquired ways of "doing" the movement, and moments in which it is a rebuilding from the ground up. The present moment is one of the latter[96].

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[96] I am indebted to Colin Barker for the observation that this is a frequent result of moments of defeat. In the Irish context, this defeat is marked most strongly by the ability of movements from above to contain challenges from below during the 1980s and early 1990s; a situation which has forced a great deal of rethinking, even where the defeat has not been recognised as such.

My own perspective, then, is shaped by my participation in particular attempts on the part of the counter culture to rethink itself and tackle the question of direction, and this chapter in particular is an attempt to contribute to these discussions, which include:

- Strategy sessions and policies within political parties and formal organisations which might have the capacity to structure and lead movements from below (in my case as secretary for the Green Party's strategy development process in the mid-1990s and later as the party's delegate to the European Federation of Green Parties (see Cox 1998b));
- The development and transformation of an extensive alternative press with left, feminist, environmental and development themes and attempts at networking within this, which I have helped support and organise as editor of *An Caorthann* (see Cox 1996a, b, MacBain 1996, and the January 1999 special issue of Community Media Network's *Tracking* on alternative media (see Cox 1999a));
- The "Sustainable Earth fairs": fairs with extensive workshop space using the framing device of sustainable development - hence environment, global economics and development issues - at which I've run workshops on the alternative press, social movements and anti-incinerator campaigning (cf. Sustainable Ireland Project 1999);
- Meetings of "elders" of the "alternative movement" (see the comments in Cox 1998c and Brennan et al. 1998) with a view to creating new organisational forms to meet new needs;
- Formal conferences around "environmental" themes with speakers representing different kinds of organisational form within the movement, such as the UCG conference "The future of the Irish environmental movement" (UCG EcoSoc 1997; see my paper to that conference at Cox 1997);
- The "unidentified political object:": get-togethers of small groups of activists in party-like organisations which I co-organised in a fairly discursive and unspecified "political" space (hence left / feminist in orientation);

- My own current project, "Ireland from below", bringing together theoretically-minded movement participants with politically-minded academics in workshops under the general rubric of "social movements".

This should be enough to give an indication of the kinds of problems that have shaped my thinking in this thesis: trying to define an adequate direction for movements facing major problems of reorientation (Cox 1998d), exploring various possible organisational forms, and trying (necessarily) to move beyond purely particularist stances that would undermine both projects. It is in this context in particular that the concept of counter culture offers a useful means of understanding and organising particular movement developments[97]. Alternative ways of doing this – and hence alternative movement projects - have involved:

- Left academic conferences ("Red Stripe"[98], "Understanding Class in Ireland") around classic themes of economics and politics, but remaining within a purely academic context (dictated among other things by the massive gravitational pull exerted by the possibility or actuality of left participation in government on conservative terms, and more recently by the rightwards move of the parliamentary left);
- Feminist conferences ("Women's Studies", "Women and Social Exclusion") trying with more or less success to span the range of academic, community and artistic

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[97] As Jenson (1995) observes, "decisions about self-naming affect social movements' strategies" in various ways:

> "First, a name generates strategic resources. Drawing boundaries around a community makes the resources of that community available to the movement as well as generating the solidarity necessary for successful action. Second, selecting one name over another sets discursive boundaries such that some claims become meaningful and others are less relevant. Third, any definition of one's own community locates it in relationship to others. Therefore, it presents possibilities for alliances as well as for identifying opponents. Likely conflicts and patterns of cooperation follow the borders delimiting the community. Fourth, any name has consequences for the routing of claims through state institutions. Routes to representation become available in accordance with the name selected." (1995: 116)

[98] The limits of this particular project were also marked by the fact that speakers were by invitation and the thematic was the viewpoint on Irish politics held by the *British* left....

interests, but in practice caught by the continuing divide between academic and community feminism (the "Women and Social Exclusion" conference, which set out explicitly to remedy this, has had no follow-up);

- More institutionally focussed attempts to organise "NGOs", the "third sector" or the "voluntary sector", often with underlying charity or religious ideologies (e.g. "The Wheel") or around purely sectoral concerns (the Latin America Solidarity Centre, the project of a general Solidarity Centre).

Beyond these specifically Irish projects, there is considerable interest in the Zapatista-sponsored Encuentro process and more recently in the "People's Global Action" (June 18th) projects: in dependent societies, movement actors cannot be and never have been parochial in their orientation. The problem, in fact, is often the reverse, that it is too easy to build external links and too difficult to forge local networks. Movements from below in Ireland, then, are certainly capable of posing themselves questions about direction, whatever about their capacity to answer them coherently and practically, the problem to which I now turn.

Tensions within movement projects

As we have seen, there a wide range of current attempts to put some shape on movements from below. Three fields of tension can be identified from this experience, which I will use to structure this chapter and incidentally move beyond specifically Irish concerns. Table 1 illustrates this:

Table 1: Strategic issues facing Irish movement projects

Field of tension	Movement projects
Interaction with state structures	From clientelism via mainstreaming to ghettoising
Relation to cultural orientations	From consensual via educative to disruptive
Self-construction in terms of class and power	From populist via mass organisations to elitist

1. The first issue is how movements are to grasp their interaction with the state. *Clientelist* orientations aim to act as specific advocates for a particular set of

clients, ideally in a policy community with the relevant departments; this has been particularly attractive for welfare-oriented movements (such as community development) and for professionals within them (Geoghegan 1998b). *Mainstreaming* orientations aim to generalise their themes to all areas of the state; this has been the dominant theme of the Irish feminist movement, which has been notably generous and ambitious in this respect (Mahon 1995, Connolly 1998). *Ghettoising* orientations expect opposition from the state; perhaps the best example is the republican movement. As chapter four notes, this is a particular dilemma for movements in dependent societies, where movements have to enter into structuring relationships with the state at a very early point. Current state strategies of "partnershipping" make this problem a central one for movements, and one with important organisational consequences.

2. The second question is how movements should see their relationship to existing cultural orientations. One theme, attractive to rural community movements (Curtin and Varley 1995), has been to stress community *consensus* above all, and this of course has specific meanings in the nationalism of a post-colonial state. A second is to think in terms of *educating* the population, in other words challenging cultural orientations from above in line with an emerging cultural hegemony, often backed up by a rhetoric of modernisation; "official environmentalism" (Tovey 1993) has often found this strategy particularly attractive. A third is to be explicitly and deliberately *disruptive* of existing cultural modes in the name of an alternative and subordinate culture; much modern Celticism falls into this camp (Hardman and Harvey 1996[99]). The success of earlier movements from below organised around themes of nationhood and community puts massive pressure on Irish movements around this point.

3. The third tension is around the area of how movements construct themselves in terms of where they recruit, how they operate, and so on. One approach is the predictable *populist* one of status-conscious groups led by charismatic figures or

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[99] This simplifies a more complex situation, where e.g. "Celtic Christianity" attempts to recuperate critiques of the Church, while what could be described as "acid Celticism" presents the Celts-as-wished-for (Piggott 1974) in essentially *liberatory* terms.

focussed on the symbolic leadership of celebrity; new religious movements (Robbins 1988) may come closest to the classical model of this. A second is that of *mass organisations* with a stable bureaucratic structure, of which Irish farmers' organisations offer a good model (cf. Tovey 1996 on this development in an unexpected context). Thirdly, there are *elitist* orientations which work towards a small group of full-time (paid or unpaid) activists interacting with dominant elites in the state, the legal system, the media etc.; professional environmentalists may be the best example of this (see the critique in Cox 1998b). As changing capital investment strategies change the everyday experience of participants, this conditions movement projects deeply.

Obviously these typologies aren't exhaustive, and many movements contain internal tensions around these issues. But it's precisely these tensions that I want to start from, because they highlight key problems facing the attempt to rethink Irish movement projects: how do we challenge social structures, how do we handle our interaction with everyday routines, and how do we relate to each other within the movement?

Local rationalities and movement projects

As chapter three and the examples I've given suggest, the kinds of answers we give to these start from our local rationalities as movement actors, in other words the way we make sense of our situation and respond to it, which is a matter *both* of the situated experience we have of the social world generally - and our movement location in particular - *and* of the way we understand and pursue our interests and purposes. In Table 2 I have tried to outline this as far as can be done without direct research on local rationalities, by identifying the experiential contexts likely to mediate the formation of local rationalities and hence also of more elaborated responses (campaigns, movement projects).

Table 2: Strategic issues and the formation of movement rationalities

Field of tension	Movement rationalities influenced by
Interaction with state structures	Centrality of state involvement to movement structure and participants' occupations; scope of movement goals (perceived acceptability to power structure)
Relation to cultural orientations	Cultural orientations of participant groups (mainstream versus marginalised groups and internal dissidents) and framing of movement goals (instrumental versus communicative forms of rationality)
Self-construction in terms of class and power	Class basis of most committed participants and points of reference for action (status claims, mass movements, elite intervention)

The left and right columns here are of course alternative ways of saying the same thing (logical arguments consist of elaborate truisms), but hopefully the right-hand column makes some of the underlying issues a bit clearer:

1. The *structural situation* of participants, and the movement as a whole, vis-à-vis state institutions - whether it and they exist within the "soft fringes" of the welfare state, for example, or are private-sector employees or self-employed, is likely to have a major impact on what the movement as a whole thinks it can or should do with the state: is it the normal mechanism for processing everyday demands, something on which one projects hopes for wider change, or only a source of harassment? Inseparable from this kind of mental processing is *how the movement understands and constructs its own goals*: as already bearing the form of specific administrative or legislative measures, as a demand for the state as a whole to act in certain ways, or as an autonomous attempt to change society and culture without or against the state.

2. The *life experience of participants* in relation to the dominant everyday routines of the society they are living within is obviously crucial to their cultural strategies

and to how they construct the goals of their movement. Willing participants in dominant cultural groups (elite or popular) are likely to want to frame issues in instrumental terms, as a matter of the most practical way to achieve goals that can be taken for granted within those cultures, and will devote much effort to making this link and in effect showing how non-threatening the issue is. Members of excluded cultures (eg ethnic minorities or alternative elites) or dissidents from within the dominant groups (eg feminists, gays etc.) are more likely to be attracted either to educative strategies if capturing the relevant institutions seems plausible, or to disruptive strategies if it does not, in both cases privileging the communicative over the instrumental insofar as they are arguing for replacing one way of framing the world with another on the grounds of its intellectual, emotional or aesthetic superiority[100].

3. Thirdly, movement participants try to create and reproduce particular kinds of movements in ways which are tied both to their own *class experience* (in the sense defended in chapter three), as marginalised and fragmented, as members of coherent and highly structured social groups, or as elite members, and to their *reference points* in terms of action and interaction: public spaces owned by other people, participation in large-scale organisations, or a belief in the key importance of "insider" decision-making processes for determining outcomes.

Thus key tensions within movements in terms of strategy have to do with participants' situation in relation to social structure and everyday routines, and with the way in which they understand the structure and routines the movement is directed towards or against. But this is not the full story, or there would be little to say. Obviously the internal structure and culture of a movement is not a given, but is itself a site of struggle and conflict, in which (counter-) hegemony is an achievement. Less obviously, the situation of participants is also contested, in that participation in social movements can entail radicalisation and personal transformation (Dix 1998) as well as the better-known effects in terms of the formation of alternative elites,

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[100] This obviously depends on a distinction between "communicative" and "instrumental", as general *categories* of rationality, and "local rationalities" as *actual* ways of thinking and acting; see chapter three.

downward social mobility and on occasion the transformation of the situation of a whole social group. So the questions I am interested in, of the shape and direction of movement projects, are not neatly given by their starting point, any more than there are infinite possible outcomes. This is of course what makes thinking about them both difficult and necessary.

Immanent critiques of strategic choices

Social movements, then, have genuine choices to make about their directions, although they do not make them "under circumstances of their own choosing"; their capacity for the kind of self-awareness which can think about direction and choices arises because movements are in a situation where participants need to do so, in other words where they are already making these choices consciously and actively and have some capacity for organisational reflexivity (the ability both to act on oneself and to think about oneself). How can a historical sociology contribute to this process?

How do we think about our choices?

A starting point is to ask how we can justify making one kind of choice as against another. I want to suggest that it's possible to develop an immanent critique, by which I mean a line of argument which does not reach outside the movement for intellectual resources. In other words, we can accept that knowledge is socially grounded *and* that there are frequently contradictions between our understanding and our action, and use this situation to clarify the way the movement thinks about itself within its own terms. So we are not importing an answer from outside, but trying to clarify what is already there. This depends on chapter four's assumption, central to any emancipatory strategy, that there is something for people to emancipate themselves from: in other words, that there is a gap between the explicit organisational forms and ideologies that participants *verbally* subscribe to and the creative ways of doing things and thinking that they engage in *tacitly*. This is then the gap between what is and what could be, which is precisely where movements find something to do.

Practically, this means identifying two terms (experience and response) and asking how adequate one is to the other. Thus, framing the question in cognitive terms, we can ask whether and how far the movement's strategy is adequate to its purpose: "is method X the best way to achieve goal Y?" or "is purpose Y compatible with the interests of the institution Z we are trying to use to achieve it?" Now this is a fairly straightforward approach, and many movement-internal debates are cast in precisely these lines. The immanent critique of a movement's strategy has more depth than this, though, and for two reasons.

Fitting project to rationality

Firstly, as I've said, knowledge interests are tied to social action. So this narrowly cognitive approach runs into difficulties when *other* people refuse to follow through what seem to *us* like perfectly logical arguments. At that point, if we've done things by the book, we might reasonably suspect that we're in the presence of ideology - ours and theirs - and abandon the fiction that what we are dealing with is pure and innocent knowledge of the world as it is[101].

Thus we can reframe the question as one of the adequacy of a particular version of a movement project - the way it constructs itself, the way it engages with the world, the directions in which it hopes to transform the world - to the local rationalities at the base of the movement, in other words to the socially-grounded ways in which movement participants make sense of their own lifeworld. This process is a "critique of ideology" of a specific kind, in which as activists and as theorists we encourage others and ourselves to abandon received orientations (practical as well as intellectual) which tie us into accepting the hegemony of traditional organising and intellectual structures and to develop practices and ideas which come closer to expressing and developing our own motivating orientations, in other words to develop organic structures of organisation and thinking. Clearly only some movements are capable of acting in these ways, but equally clearly movements which set themselves sufficiently

[101] If we were, this kind of discrepancy between purpose and strategy would be both considerably rarer and considerably easier to overcome.

ambitious goals and come sufficiently close to realising them need to be able to do so, and frequently enough are.

Measuring up to the whole movement

Secondly, there is typically not a total community either of explicit views and organisational structures or of underlying local rationalities: activists think and do different things, and if we get them individually to clarify their own needs, ideas and motivations we will not arrive at the same result in every case. So this project depends on rejecting a methodological individualism and stressing both the ways in which the existing social totality structures received ideas and ways of doing things and the ways in which social movements are transformative processes.

This is very well known in community development and feminist activism, and receives back-handed recognition in e.g. alternative and environmental movements through the discussion of the virtues of "community"; but in some senses I think it has to be central to any concept of movement as movement: to participate in a movement which is challenging social structures and everyday routines (Lichterman 1996) is both to transform those (if successful) and to enter into new kinds of relationships, with other participants, with those whose cooperation and support we are seeking, and with opponents. So to the extent that there is a movement, there is a "movement totality" which is not simply the sum of the individuals involved; but to the extent that there is also a "movement process" of recruitment, mobilisation, change, advance and retreat, there will always be a gap between the existing understanding and orientations of participants and this process or totality. Movements from below also face the specific problem that, as movements from below, they are always by necessity struggling against an organisational and ideological hegemony which is not theirs.

Changing heart and hand

This understanding is of course at the basis of Touraine's (1981) methodology, as it is of Gramsci's (1975); and in both cases the link between changing understanding and changing action is explicit. It isn't, and can't be, purely a matter of changing how we

think or purely a matter of changing how we act. The two are intimately connected; and any movement capable of organisational reflexivity has already got this far.

As a realism, this perspective recognises the existence of totalities and processes operating to some extent behind the back of the actors; as a *critical* realism, it recognises that these totalities and processes are the results of situated social action and nothing else. Given this, it is not an unreasonable goal to work towards a greater self-awareness on the part of movements as a whole. To do this, as Touraine in particular stresses, we need to engage with actors in contexts which approximate the movement rather than those which reproduce traditional intellectual structures[102].

Rather than meeting them (say) as market researchers speaking to isolated consumers, or as traditional intellectuals translating the orientations of groups into the language of existing power relations, this strategy of immanent critique needs precisely to be immanent: to take place within movement structures and as part of movement processes. In other words, it can only work in and as part of autonomous movement relationships which enable the movement to experience and transform itself as a movement: whether this means party-like organisations, collective decision-making situations, the alternative media, festivals and get-togethers, or whatever[103]. As in chapters five and six, this can also mean the attempt to engage with the way participants remake their world at the basic level of local rationalities and movement milieux.

Given this, however, such a strategy is possible, and then becomes not so much an isolated and external exercise in polemic as an organic and shared process of interaction and development - which is not to say, of course, that it is conflict-free, steered by communicative rationality alone, or devoid of power relations; simply that the power and conflict are necessary rather than extraneous.

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[102] A similar thought is entailed by Melucci's (1989) methodology, despite his rejection of the unitary conception of movement.

[103] Or, as with Touraine and Melucci, research processes which *simulate* these relationships.

How are we doing?

There are a few yardsticks that can effectively be used to evaluate how close any actual process comes to this ideal and to see how far the communicative, as opposed to instrumental, rationality reaches within it (a similar thought underlies Touraine's (1985) arguments about "virtual" social movements). These follow from the concept of movement self-awareness developed above:

1. *Comprehensiveness rather than one-sidedness.* If a movement is in some sense a totality, then the process of developing its self-awareness will be more adequate to this totality the more it is comprehensive; conversely, the fewer aspects of the movement and forces within it that are taken into account the less adequate it is likely to be. This is then a processual version of chapter one's criterion for an adequate *theory* that it engage with the whole range of activities involved.

2. *Scope rather than limits.* By the same token, a static movement analysis, which fails to see the movement as a process and takes existing limits for granted, is unable to develop a picture of the movement of sufficient scope to be adequate to future possibilities. This is so almost by definition, at least for movements from below: insofar as they are attempting to change some aspect of the way things are and are still in existence as movements, this implies that they have not yet achieved that goal, and thus that they aim to reach a scope which they have not yet reached. A failure to try and think "forwards" limits movements to where they are, which is precisely not where they want to be. Movement self-awareness thus needs to try to take on board questions like the known shape of successful movements in the past, the knowledge that is available of social groups that the movement hopes to include but has not yet been able to, and the scope of sister movements in other contexts. This parallels chapter one's requirement for concepts which enable movement participants to engage effectively with the problems entailed by their own purposes and activities.

3. *Compatibilities rather than exclusions.* Movements proceed from campaigns to projects, or from fragmentation to synthesis, by overcoming the starting-points of particularism, sectoralism, status politics and so on. In other words, participants come to find that they have compatible interests with one another not as the

result of an abstract analysis on the basis of given interests, but through a struggle in which to a greater or lesser extent their given interests (given by the existing state of affairs) and the mutual exclusions these produce become relocated in terms of a possible state of affairs, in which (on terms other than those produced by the status quo) they can find an emancipatory compatibility rather than a particularist exclusion. This parallels chapter one's criterion of a convincing engagement with the experience and understandings of participants.

I think it is these kinds of question that need to be asked of specific direction-giving processes: how far are the processes in question geared towards producing one-sided, limited and exclusivist directions and how far do they move in the direction of comprehensiveness, breadth of scope and the search for compatibilities?

Provisional answers

In this section, I want to offer one set of possible outcomes of this direction-finding process. In particular, I hope to show the possibility of using the criteria outlined above (and thus processual rather than static categories) to develop answers to this kind of question; as well as this, I hope to identify what might be involved in such an outcome; to specify, that is, the actual workability as well as the immanent desirability of such a result.

My aim, however, is not so much to argue for this particular analysis as to show the possibility and pointfulness of theorising in these terms: in other words, to attempt to demonstrate the usefulness of situated, "open" theorising and the ability of the perspective developed in this thesis to enable such theorising.

What follows is then a possible answer which, from the research presented in chapters five and six and my own participation in the decision-making processes mentioned above, seems to come closest to adequacy (under the criteria outlined in the previous section) to the movement totality, the local rationalities and the explicit purposes of the counter cultural project in Ireland at least. Table 3 shows the shape of this:

Table 3: A possible strategy for the counter culture

Field of tension	Strategic direction
Interaction with state structures	Counter-hegemonic
Relation to cultural orientations	Conflictual
Self-construction in terms of class and power	Popular

1. Not only are contemporary movements from below in Ireland considerably broader than those organisations within them which are devoted to interacting with the state, but those organisations are notably unsuccessful at acquiring an organisational hegemony over the movements which would structure the movements as a whole in terms of a particular relationship to the state. (As we have seen, this is a problem for the contemporary counter culture more generally.) The local rationalities of ordinary participants are considerably broader in scope than their public mobilisations, and they typically relativise their involvement with "politics" (see the discussion in chapter four). Lastly, the contradiction between the explicit purposes of social movements and the power relations upheld by the existing state is and remains wide in most cases, giving rise among other things to the conflict of legitimacy and efficiency identified in chapter five. In other words, the state-fixated orientation described earlier exists *faute de mieux* and not as an organic expression of the structure of Irish movements. Given this, *comprehensive* long-term perspectives have to place the development of counter-hegemony, the restructuring of social relationships along alternative lines and towards different purposes, as an important aim[104].

2. One of the major problems facing movement culture in Ireland is the extent to which existing social institutions (small proprietorship, religion, sports, literature, the pub as well as the major political and representative organisations) are the products of the late 19th century and early 20th century revolution. This has been a key sticking point in Irish movement politics since the 1920s: the domination of the central term of cultural community by an increasingly conservative

[104] This has been a major theme of community development rhetoric, but in practice the movement has accepted clientelistic relationships - and hence a self-limiting strategy - rather too easily.

movement from above. Given this, attempts at joining this consensus, transforming it from above or disrupting it from outside have little purchase, and the key question becomes one of how conflicts within that community - of class and gender, since it is defined precisely in ethnic terms - can be brought to life. Women's movements have made some steps in this direction, but for reasons which Coulter (1993) outlines, they have tended themselves to be split by this division between anti-Catholic and liberal women's movements and community women's groups. Without the *scope* offered by a conflictual orientation, movements will remain trapped within narrow limits. As we have seen in chapter five, the first step counter cultural participants take is precisely to step outside these limits.

3. The central weakness of movements which accept existing social divisions and relationships is that they reduce movement politics to a politics of identity where what is at stake is issues of status within existing social relationships rather than any attempt to challenge such relationships. Movements that construct themselves in this way can tackle issues of distribution and of who holds power, but not the organisation of exploitation and domination, as the history of the nationalist revolution itself makes clear (Lee 1989): would-be emancipatory movements that simply reproduce existing social relationships, whether populist, elitist or mass-organisational, will not achieve emancipation. Restructuring social relationships within the movement then becomes an important part of the work of the movement, for which "popular" (as opposed to populist) seems as good a name as any. As chapter six suggests, the counter culture has some way to go in this respect. Without this focus on *compatibilities*, however, movements will remain trapped in the zero-sum game of playing off given interests against one another.

This is of course only one possible set of solutions to the strategic tensions I identified earlier, and it is entirely possible that the movement processes of self-reflection will revise this dramatically or make much of it appear as wishful thinking, although the "stalling" of movements from below in the current era of partnership all round and *trasformismo* suggests that these are at least the right kinds of questions. For the moment, this placeholder response makes it possible to develop the question of *how* movements produce a direction for themselves, and to show the usefulness of the

perspective I am arguing for in thinking about that. The "maximalist" scenario implied by these three orientations - counter-hegemonic, conflictual and popular - is sufficiently different from the existing orientations of movements from below to highlight the scope of the consequences, and hence to think about the general value and importance, of pursuing this kind of line of critique. My aim is thus analogous to that of the Latin American participatory action research discussed by Borda:

> "to examine and test, in a comparative and critical manner, the idea that it was possible to produce a serious analytical work, based on practical knowledge of the reality of both the ordinary population and of the activists, that would enrich not only the general fund of science but also the people's own knowledge and wisdom. Our idea was to take grassroots knowledge as a starting point and then to systematize and amplify it through action in collaboration with external agents [of] change - such as ourselves - in order to build and strengthen the power of formal and informal rural workers'organizations." (1993: 197 - 198)

The social construction of movement strategies

It is one thing for a direction-finding process to come up with a possible solution that is more or less adequate to the nature of a movement, and another thing for it to actually happen and to work. In this section of the paper I explore the questions of what the kind of strategy I have just outlined might entail internally, mention some points of reference, and think about its chances of winning internally: these being the kinds of questions that would need to be asked of any strategy. They are also, in part at least, a response to the problems identified in chapter six, and a suggestion as to what might be involved in "moving on" from the current situation.

Historicising the problem

In looking at the first question - the internal implications of picking a particular strategy, I think three kinds of practices need to be highlighted: organisational frameworks, communicative structures, and techniques of the self, roughly how movements structure themselves, how they talk to themselves and how activists think about themselves. This can be made a bit more concrete by illustrating it briefly with three different examples from recent history, as follows (Table 4):

Table 4: Historical illustrations of movement practices

Movement	Organisational frameworks	Communicative structures	Techniques of the self
"1968" in the States	Central national organisations	Large numbers of similar publication, linked by news service	Lack of boundaries, permanent pressure, hedonist / puritan conflicts
1980s NSMs in West Germany	Deep local networks of organisations and projects	Differentiated, primarily national publication; "alternative public sphere"	Good life; "sustaining the tensions"; moral purity
Contemporary counter culture in ROI	Significant but vague support; few and particularist projects	Organisational press strong, independent press in tatters	Submerged in alternative urban or rural lifestyles

To elucidate these:

1. The key organisational situation in the American 1968 was that of a number of large-scale national organisations, notably SDS (Gitlin 1987) but also e.g. the black and anti-war groups. There was a massive alternative press, which consisted primarily of large numbers of alternative publications following a limited number of models - a sort of media Fordism - deriving as much as anything from this organisational situation and dependence on centralised sources of information (Mungo 1990). With the exception of long-term activists who had learnt their trade five or fifteen years previously, techniques of the self seem largely to have been determined by circumstances - the lack of boundaries entailed by participation in a massive and radical movement wave; the high-pressure operating circumstances (Gitlin 1980); and internal conflicts between puritan and hedonist ways of life. Clearly such a situation could not be sustainable indefinitely, but neither would it need to be.

2. In the "alternative scenes" of West Germany in the 1980s, by contrast, centralised national organisations played a more modest role by comparison with the

importance of local (in particular metropolitan) networks of movements and organisations: Frankfurt, Hamburg, Berlin and so on (Vester 1993). The bulk of the alternative press attempted at least to locate itself at a national level (albeit normally proceeding from a single urban base), and entailed a "flexible specialisation" rather than Fordism, with different publications being strongly distinguished in terms of content, format, audience etc. (ID-Archiv 1991). The same long-term internal differentiation was also reflected in the techniques of the self that activists disposed of: different variants of the "good life" (notably those of urban intellectuals and those of rural romantics) for the more stable parts of the movement, strategies of "sustaining the tensions" (or *Kontradiktionen aushalten*, "withstanding the contradictions") for those more on the edge of project, political or personal survival, and a concern with moral purity as a means of group defence for the most marginalised groupings (see Horx 1985, 1989 for literary portrayals).

3. In the contemporary counter culture in Ireland, including the network studied in this thesis, there is quite a large amount of rather vague support, sympathy and identification, with relatively few active projects in existence at any one time, and those often deeply particularist due to their primary relationships with state or supporters rather than with other projects. Consistent with this, there is a respectable alternative press in the shape of the in-house organs of movement organisations, but the independent alternative press has had to struggle to survive, particularly in recent years as the few committed volunteers have found it easier to find employment; migration (see chapter five) is an ongoing problem. Techniques of the self tend to be submerged within wider alternative ways of life - urban or rural - which, as we have seen in chapter six, are good for sustaining commitment and solidarity but weak on the production of action.

What does a strategy need to work?

It need hardly be said that the examples given above are very sketchy, but they should suffice as examples, to show what the different areas I'm trying to thematise mean, since in the direction-finding mode the kinds of answers that can be given will necessarily be more abstract (Table 5):

Table 5: Possible movement practices for the counter culture

Movement orientation	Organisational frameworks	Communicative structures	Techniques of the self
Counter-hegemonic	Autonomous network of cooperative relationships	Integrated system of communications	Means of emotional sustainability
Conflictual	Shared cultural orientations	Ability to talk in "internal" language	Ability to maintain autonomous sense of reality
Popular	Attempts to challenge dominant class / gender / ethnic relationships	Thematising and questioning nature of existing speech situations	Skills for handling permanently unsettling modes of interaction

Organisational frameworks

The most obvious feature of the organisation of a **counter-hegemonic** movement has to be the existence not simply of autonomous projects and organisations, but of an autonomous network of relationships between those projects, in other words one which is not mediated through joint participation in a commodified market, in state-structured activity, or in a shared space within the commercial media. These relationships do not need to be all-encompassing, and given that the welfare state and commodified popular culture have long since penetrated the spaces within which earlier movements were able to articulate themselves more fully (consider 19th century working-class self-provision of welfare (Pierson 1991) or mid-20th century underground culture (Fountain 1988)), it would be remarkable if they could be so for any other than a very small number of "conscientious non-participators", who are likely to find the effort needed for survival in the long term outweighing the demanding process of network-building. Nevertheless, *some* level of autonomous cooperation for practical purposes is fundamental to developing movements as movements, and a key part of the generation of trust, solidarity and interaction between their different parts. One of the greatest weaknesses of contemporary movements from below lies precisely in this area: how can we find reasons to

cooperate which make sense across the movement (in other words, beyond the bounds of an individual movement milieu) and do not feed right back into state and market?

For a movement to be capable of **conflictual** intervention in everyday routines, these networking relationships need to be constitutive of a shared rationality which is distinctly other than that of the dominant cultural orientations. Autonomous interaction is not enough, in other words; it needs to be placed on a footing which does not simply reproduce the orientations which are taken as instrumental in dominant contexts. They may be instrumental in their own terms, that is geared to the achievement of goals which make sense to participants but not within the terms of the dominant ideology, and of course this alternative "common sense" is necessary to sustaining the sociological "reality" of a movement (Buckner 1971).

Thirdly, for a movement to be **popular**, these relationships need to avoid simply reproducing existing class, gender and ethnic patterns of interaction, familiar relationships of domination and exploitation. This is not to say that a movement can (or necessarily should) try to create a full-blown sphere of freedom within itself; rather that at least the germ of transformation needs to be present within its internal interactions.

This of course still does not tell us what those interactions should be about, and of course this is one of the crucial questions facing both the Irish processes I've been talking about and global attempts at interaction: given the failure of attempts to impose a single structure on such movements and the strength of dominant institutions, this is probably the most serious stumbling-block facing movement activists at the end of the century. While at times the network I studied could achieve some of these conditions within the practices of the lifeworld, and something of this carries over into more formalised movement organisations, their sustainability as "official knowledge" and articulated structures is a continual problem for counter cultural institutions.

Communicative structures

How do communicative structures fit into this? Thompson (1997) suggests that in the rubble of Stalinist and Social Democratic attempts to impose a coercive hegemony on

movements from below, the starting point should instead be attempts to reach a communicative hegemony. I would have said that he's right in this in so far as it is obviously easier to make a fair stab at saying something that will be widely acceptable than it is to find a form within which people are happy to cooperate. But communication which simply consists of the distribution of "information" in the abstract is no communication at all, and more importantly leaves a movement at the level of a preference for consuming one kind of "information" over another.

For a communicative **counter-hegemony** to exist, there must be a communicative *structure* which enables the "theoretical leadership" Gramsci spoke of: a neat separation between ideas and organisation is illusionary. Since we are talking about movements which do not exercise such a hegemony over society as a whole, this imposes severe problems, the more so since areas in which movements from below have been able to develop their own institutions in the past - internal media, educational institutions, cultural facilities and so on - have now been extensively colonised by capital and the state. They are still of course areas that movements (have to) invest in, but the movement media of the end of the 20th century is far weaker in numbers, frequency and distribution than (say) the socialist press at the end of the 19th century, and more generally the cultural structures of contemporary movements from below are more marginal and very often also more dependent on state support or commodification than those of their counterparts a century or even fifty years ago (Williams 1965, cf. Consorzio Aaster et al. 1996 on the changing face of Italian socio-cultural centres).

So once again there is a problem of "where and what?", which goes beyond the scope of this chapter. Something can be said, however, about the nature of the communicative structures that would have to exist for a movement to take this kind of strategic direction. As with organisational frameworks, and for the same reasons, a counter-hegemonic movement needs an autonomous network of communicative institutions: an integrated alternative press rather than a particularist one, self-controlled cultural centres which relate primarily to one another rather than to the world of commercial culture, spaces for discussion which are designed as that rather than as recruiting points or academic exercises, and so on.

This offers the chance to act **conflictually**, which is something other than simply taking up a position within the existing cultural field of the dominant society. By analogy with ethnicity, it entails being able to talk internally, the existence of a more or less coherent structure of feeling and way of making sense, and not simply being able to represent externally. The two communicative exercises - speaking your own language, and talking the language of the wider society in a distinctive way - are not identical activities. This is made possible to the extent that the movement's cultural activities have something to say *to the movement*, and not simply to the outside world, in other words to the extent that there is an internal communicative structure and people are trying to communicate with one another inside the movement. Without this, there is no scope for conflict with dominant cultural routines, because there are no alternative routines to offer, simply an alternative set of choices within an existing system.

This is then the field where a movement has the chance to become **popular** by creating an alternative kind of communicative relation, by (to fall into utopianism for a minute) enabling forms of communication across class, gender and ethnic divisions which do not simply reaffirm those divisions but seek to understand them, thematise them and ultimately overcome them.

Again, something of this can, as we have seen, be sustained with the development of movement rationalities. My own experience is that the ability to communicate in this way is more widely distributed across movement milieux, and as individual skills, than it is manifested in the "public" modes of communication of movement organisations. This points to a certain scope for development, but also to currently existing limits which cannot easily be overcome.

Techniques of the self

Although "techniques of the self" (see chapter six) can usually be taken for granted in many fields, one area where they cannot is clearly social movement activity, which of its nature is creative and when successful (when movements are "advancing") involves learning not merely *how to* do things people have not done before (write a leaflet, speak in public, occupy a building, set up a government) but also how to become the *kind of person* for whom such things are easily produced in terms of motivation,

interaction with others, and (perhaps most importantly) maintaining the effort over time - "burnout" and erratic behaviour have always been problems in sustained social movement activity.

It is, I think, harder to say much about this area than about the others, partly because relatively little sustained thought has gone into it. But it is clear that setting oneself in opposition to dominant institutions has particular implications for social recognition and everyday interaction: how do activists sustain their sense of reality and purpose when institutions central to the societies they live in act as if they did not exist or consistently misrepresent them? Building **counter-hegemony** is a long and weary activity, in which our own resources of energy, emotion, friendship, obligation and so on are constantly being used up: how are activists to find ways of sustaining themselves emotionally in the long run? Similarly, how do activists negotiate the "moving boundary" of cultural **conflict** that seeks not simply to "agree to differ" on everyday social routines but to challenge the routines that others identify with while retaining some sense of reality and validity for their own routines? Internally, to generate movements which are **popular** in my sense, activists must learn to live with one another in new and unsettling ways, which can neither entail a wholesale acceptance of existing status positions nor a denial of their existence.

Counter cultural networks such as the one discussed in this thesis certainly show the ability to develop such techniques within lifeworld contexts, but difficulties appear in developing them beyond that point. The kind of project identified in this section, then, entails a qualitative shift, albeit one which develops existing orientations rather than starting from scratch.

The internal politics of movement organisation

As well as the social construction of movement strategy, any reality-oriented thinking also needs to be clear about the internal politics of this construction: what is entailed, who it might be attractive to and what its chances of internal success are. The maximalising project sketched here is clearly quite a long way off in terms of what the movement can achieve in and of itself. During "wars of position", however, the most committed movement activists are not in the business of storming the Winter Palace, but of creating the orientations which may eventually make it possible for the

movement to do so rather than to present a petition for an audience with the Tsar. Which activists are likely to find this perspective attractive?

In the context of the Irish discussions mentioned earlier, three features of situated experience seem to encourage participants to be more ambitious along these kinds of lines. One is their straightforward employment situation, in the sense of the extent to which activists are dependent on the movement for their means of existence or are employed in conventional situations. Against the self-images of many participants, but in line with libertarian critiques of bureaucratic socialism, my own experience is that those who are trying to make a living from activism are typically under such pressure to ensure the survival of their institutions in the short-run - securing state funding, reliance on marketing etc. - that it is hard for them to think in terms of restructuring the movement for any longer-term (see also Tovey 1996 on institutionalisation). Autonomy, in other words, is paradoxically least valued by those who think of themselves as most autonomous - but who in their movement activities are most dependent on the processes of commodification and political exchange. For similar reasons, tendencies to organisational patriotism, particularism and parochialism are particularly strong among this elite.

A second and related theme is movement situation, in that for similar reasons those who do not form a central part of the major formal structures of the movement are in a better position to rethink the nature of movement activities: creative initiatives are much more the property of organisational dissidents rather than apparatchiks, independent activists rather than organisation people, communicators rather than power wielders.

A third and (to me at least) unexpected discovery has also been the gender and ethnic relations involved: that those who do not find their vision of the movement encapsulated by existing organisations are to a high proportion women and people from ethnic minorities. Thus there is a clear divide between meetings of movement notables, organisation spokespeople and so on with agendas tightly related to developing the interests of existing organisations (which tend to be dominated by men and by Catholics), and meetings of dissatisfied activists in communicative or exploratory spaces: at the *Ireland from Below* event, for example, the ratios of women to men and of Southern Catholics to others were fifty-fifty. There are other possible

reasons for this, of course, but in retrospect (this was a welcome, but unexpected, result) it should not be very surprising to find that in non-revolutionary moments movement organisations tend to reproduce rather too much of the relations that characterise the dominant social institutions, and that the push to broaden this is likely to come in a sense from "outside" that provisionally stabilised core.

How can the chances of success be identified?

This brings me to the question of the chances of internal success, and to the banal observation that radicalising a movement in this way also entails making it over; under current conditions, with relatively low participation rates in formal movement organisations, this means less a struggle for the "commanding heights" of existing movement institutions than an effort to mobilise outside them and in new ways[105].

The success of such an approach depends on two things. One, the ability of such activists to mobilise effectively outside existing institutions, is only partly within their control, and depends not just on finding forms that are adequate to popular needs but also of course on the direction and shape of those needs themselves. The other factor, though, is within the control of such activists, at least to a limited extent, which is to remain in contact with one another, to develop their thinking together, and to support each other's attempts at creative responses. So solidary rather than destructive interaction, holding non-routine kinds of communicative spaces open, and creative rather than conservative techniques of the self are all useful in this approach: building on existing movement milieux, but also moving beyond them.

Historical context

So far this chapter has tried to identify some tensions within movement strategies in the counter culture, asked how we can argue for resolving them in one way rather than another, and looked at the kinds of things that are entailed by such a choice of

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[105] Having spent several years trying to move the Green Party to the left, this wasn't a very comforting conclusion personally, but again once reached it isn't particularly surprising.

direction. In this section I want to step back from this internalist view to ask about the general situation within which movements from below find themselves at the end of the century and how movements respond to these general situations, so moving from what is still the partial totality of a movement project in a particular place to the totality of a society.

Both kinds of movements

Movements from below, after all, are always faced with (usually more powerful) movements from above (see chapters two and three), so that their activity does not take place in isolation. And although I have been mostly talking about the Irish situation, social movements in modernity are pre-eminently international (Tarrow 1998 is one of the few works of social movement theory in which this is thematised in any useful way). Table 6 tries to give an overview of this for the recent history of capitalism (the dates are obviously pretty nominal, since the processes in question are neither perfectly aligned to each other nor entirely synchronous internationally):

Table 6: Periodisation of movement struggles

Period	c. 1875 - c. 1923	c. 1923 - c. 1968	c. 1968 - present
Capitalist drive	Liberal / open	Organised / closed	Disorganised / opening
Movement orientation	Radical, broad left	Increasingly conservative, "narrowed left"	Radical questions, fragmentation
Movement dialectic	Upwards from 1880s to mid-1910s	Downwards to 1940s, upwards to 1960s	Downwards from mid-1970s, upwards from mid-1990s?

This analysis, which connects to the discussion of the counter culture in chapter three, involves three elements:

1. The cycles of capitalist action, understood as movement from above, the organising and reorganising of social life through the mechanisms of capital and the state. The three-part model I outline here, deriving from Offe (1984), Lash and

Urry (1987) and Wagner (1994), is useful descriptively and in terms of the local orientations of capital. As Arrighi (1994) has shown, though, it must be situated within a longer time-frame, as representing one of several "long centuries" of capitalist accumulation and reorganisation from the 15th century, each of them containing a movement "inwards" (and hence towards closure in Wagner's sense) in which capital is productively "commodified" in the long-term in particular systems of production and distribution, which then come to entail a particular stabilisation of inter-state relations and local cultural forms, and a movement "outwards" (towards opening in Wagner's terms), in which the "creative destruction" of these systems of commodity exchange for the purposes of expanding the financial circuits of capital entails precisely the kind of "disorganisation" of states and cultures discussed by Lash and Urry. So movements from below have to be situated within the context of these massive movements from above.

2. The "movement orientations" I suggest here are largely based on chapter three's premise that the original "New Left" analyses of the late 1950s and early 1960s had something to them (cf. Wainwright 1994), in identifying a break from the practices of Social Democracy and orthodox Communism, as they had developed in particular since the First World War and the Russian Revolution. The dates given are structured in particular by Katsiaficas' (1987) suggestion of a series of "world-revolutionary" moments, in other words that within the capitalist world system there are a series of high points of popular opposition to and attempts to overthrow the existing order, which are themselves as international in scope as the movements from above they are challenging. In this scheme of things, the new cycle of accumulation of the latter half of the 19th century comes after the defeat of the movements of 1848, which belong to the "long nineteenth century" in form and orientation. As is well known, workers', nationalist and feminist movements change shape dramatically in the second half of the nineteenth century (Arrighi, Hopkins and Wallerstein 1989), and the high point of these movements is expressed, under deeply unpropitious circumstances, from the middle of the First World War onwards, in mutinies and desertions, revolutionary socialist movements, and nationalist insurrections (Mitchell 1970). Following the defeat of

most of these movements and crucially the split between the Second and Third Internationals, there is a widespread reaction expressed in fascist movements, and it is the resistance against this which marks the first turnaround of the fortunes of the Left in many European countries at least, and which lays the foundations for independence movements in Asia. (Hobsbawm 1995, Thompson 1982). "1968" is the most recent of Katsiaficas' "world-revolutionary moments", and much of the history of the subsequent two decades has been taken up with the (still undigested) consequences of that event (Fink et al. 1998). Optimistically, I have suggested that in the latter half of the 1990s there are signs of a new upturn, in the appearance of new generations of activists for whom 1968 is ancient history, and a growing creativity in the form and structure of movement activity (Jordan and Lent 1999).

3. This second point (movement orientation) points towards a third, which is the internal dialectic of movements. Gramsci's aphorism can be used to suggest an alternation between "wars of movement" (direct, head-on challenges to the established order) which correspond at their height to Katsiaficas' world-revolutionary moments, and "wars of position", lower-level conflicts carried out for control of different fields of civil society. This needs to be qualified in two ways. One is to observe, with Hall (1988), that the "battle" does not always go in this direction, and as we know "movements from above" not only wage a steady war of position under ordinary circumstances, but are capable of unleashing aggressive "wars of movement", usually as part of a situation in which a major challenge from below has destabilised power relations to the point where a new system needs to be imposed from above. European fascism, and the New Right of the 1980s, both have important elements of this imposition of a new elite consensus following the breakdown of the old in the face of the movements of the 1916 - 1923 period and those of the 1965 - 1975 period. Secondly, this dialectic structures movements from below, in a spectrum varying from "flecks and carriers" (Waite 1997) to "moments of collective effervescence" (Barker 1997). In other words, "movement" by no means has the same referent at each of these points: at one time it may mean a handful of isolated activists surrounded by a hostile culture in which even the most limited acts of resistance are difficult; at

another, enormous popular movements that can perhaps be channelled by activists, but hardly controlled.

The changing face of movements

Within this long twentieth century, then, the face of movements has changed considerably, so that it is possible to speak of the "three lefts" of the twentieth century. This is obviously a massive subject, and this chapter cannot do more than raise a couple of issues whose main point is to ask, from the perspective of the Irish counter culture, "where are we now?" Table 7 illustrates the general proposition:

Table 7: The three lefts of the twentieth century

Period	c. 1875 - c. 1923	c. 1923 - c. 1968	c. 1968 - present
Shape of left	Radical left	Authoritarian left	Fragmented left

1. Movements from below up to the 1920s existed within a space where challenge on a very broad front - to capitalism, to the form of (usually deeply undemocratic) states, to patriarchy, to ethnically-based oppression, to religion and so on - was widely possible and frequently combined aspects of multiple such critiques, along with the persistence of particularistic and reformist orientations (Mills 1963, Rowbotham 1972). This challenge to structure was often combined, and not only among intellectuals, with a challenge to everyday social routines and a commitment to more emancipatory forms of culture, however conceived (Williams 1989a), which acted in direct competition with the encroaching generation of popular culture "from above" through nationalism, the development of state intervention, the re-formation of religious and status structures in the new industrial and urban contexts and the development of commercial mass media. Themes of self-education, sexual emancipation, cosmopolitanism and so on were widely possible within this movement, even in the most apparently unpropitious circumstances such as Irish nationalism (Kiberd 1996, Coulter 1993).
2. During the "mid-century closure" (see Wagner 1994), heralded by the defeat of many of these movements and aggressive "movements from above", not only in

explicitly fascist Europe but in weaker variants such as post-colonial nationalism in Ireland, movements from below found themselves increasingly contained (where they were able to exist at all). Crucially, there was an increasing collusion on the one hand with the state, whether (as in Social Democracy and dominant nationalisms) the existing state or (as in orthodox Communism) the Soviet state: libertarian left forces, of whatever shade, were increasingly marginalised (Thompson 1982, Thompson 1997). Along with this, there was an increasing taking-for-granted of the new "popular culture from above", marked by a widespread sympathy for dominant nationalisms and an increasing relegation of gender issues, resulting in the development of a left populism which depended on an increasingly narrow construction of popular interests and culture.

3. "1968", and the movements which preceded (civil rights, peace etc.) and succeeded (feminism, ecology etc.) it, transformed this situation, but in unforeseen ways. On the one hand, the increasingly narrow definition of "left" by comparison with the 1920s made the exercise of hegemony on anyone's part rather unlikely, and has I think to be seen as a major contributor to the rise of particularist identity politics (Rowbotham et al. 1979). On the other hand, the fact that actually existing states (capitalist, communist, post-colonial) rather than imagined future states became the primary point of reference had perhaps made thinking in terms of a total social order (in other words, mentally taking other movements from below on board and trying to project such a larger alternative totality into a possible future) difficult if not impossible, and hastened the fragmentation of movement thinking of this kind other than the formulaic or utopian (Liguori 1996). The radical push of 1968, then, has found it hard to develop a movement project adequate to its scope, with the consequence of a centrifugal fragmentation of movements from below at the end of the century.

The prospects at the end of the century

Something positive can perhaps be said about the prospects for the counter cultural project under these circumstances. Firstly, it is widely accepted that "disorganisation" produces rather weak states (Lash and Urry 1987), by comparison with those of organised capitalism. As I have argued in chapter three, disorganised capitalism

appears to be compatible with a wide range of local power arrangements and forms of social control. As Magnusson (1996) has argued, there may be advantages to movements from below from this sort of situation where their immediate target is not an all-powerful national state, but something perhaps in the long term more comparable to a city government in that it is neither self-sufficient in power terms nor possessed of effectively closed boundaries: disorganisation, in other words, may offer more *local* scope for transformation than organisation did, and enable a wider scope for movements' development of autonomous and reflexive modes of self-structuring.

Secondly, one of the most successful legacies of "1968" on most accounts (von Dirke 1997, Baier et al. 1988) has been the increasingly contested nature of everyday culture. Movements which are aiming to tackle not only structures, but also routines, clearly benefit from this situation, insofar as movement action is not marginalised as "deviance", but need to avoid such challenges being transformed wholly into the currency of identity politics and the "field of cultural conflict", which (in Touraine's (1985) terms) removes the reference to a socially identified opponent and the challenge for control of the social totality. The counter culture has this potential, but (for reasons identified in chapter six) has difficulty fulfilling it.

Thirdly, the "movement legacy" of earlier movements should not be underestimated. Offe (1985) has drawn attention to the role of "decommodified areas", generated by the welfare state and offering particular advantages to initial movement mobilisation and survival. By comparison with the authoritarian empires of the late 19th century or the fascist regimes of mid-century, such scope for popular movements as exists is greatly increased (Arrighi, Hopkins and Wallerstein 1989). In both cases, the situation is of course worse now than in the recent past, and perhaps in part at least this is the result of deliberate action. In this longer context, the near-total disappearance or *trasformismo* of genuinely Left forces from parliaments and governments, is not that

unusual[106]; and the grounding of movement projects in everyday life is a strength, not a weakness, even if it is not in itself sufficient to bring about change.

The "old Left" / "new Left" arguments, then, were not misplaced, though the "new Left", the shape of movements from below in our current period, proved to be very different from what was thought at the time. In a longer view, what has happened is that the libertarian left which was marginalised in the mid-century closure has returned, but in a fragmented context where "left" hegemony over movements from below is limited at best. To quote Offe:

> "[T]he issue areas from which working class organizations (unions, socialist, social democratic and communist parties) have largely withdrawn, and which they often *had* to abandon in the interest of their struggles for institutional recognition and the material improvement of the social and economic conditions of their core constituency, tend now to be occupied by middle class radicals who, again partly due to the accomplishments of the fully developed welfare state, are sufficiently numerous and economically secure to be able to afford to reemphasize some issues on the 'forgotten agenda' of the working class movement and to revitalize some of the noninstitutional forms of politics that were characteristic of earlier periods of the working class movement itself." [107] (1985: 836)

Hence the usefulness of the concept of counter culture to grasp the shared shape and direction of movements from below at the turn of the century: something which is visible more at the level of the everyday rationalities of participants and in the form of their projects than at the level of nation-state institutions. If there is such a shared shape and direction, though, the project of self-clarification and movement development I am arguing for here is not impossible, though it is certainly a long-term one. Along with the internalist questions discussed in the first three sections of this chapter, these externalist questions - which situate movements from below within a broader totality structured by their interaction with movements from above

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[106] It mirrors, for example, the role of liberal and republican forces in France and Italy at the end of the last century, or of Social Democratic politicians in Britain, Germany and France in the inter-war period.

[107] On the arguments made in chapter three, I do not share Offe's distinction here between "working class" and "middle class"; these are better seen as different fractions of the working class.

- are, I think, important elements in the attempt to think through such a project in any form.

Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to show the possibility of open theorising, as well as make a political contribution, by arguing for a particular movement strategy and showing what is involved, drawing from my own research and activity within the Irish counter culture, and situating this within the shape and direction of movements from below in disorganised capitalism. I want to conclude with a brief defence of the direction of this counter culture. I have suggested that contemporary movements from below tend to combine a critique of structural inequality and everyday routines. The suggestion that this is a good thing, however, is under attack from two directions simultaneously.

On the one hand, "postmodern" critics are frequently happy with the critique of everyday routine (albeit usually in the "contemplative" terms of an ironic reflexivity), but reject any attempts to link this critique to "grand narratives" which might suggest that such routines come from somewhere and reproduce nameable social structures (e.g. Laclau and Mouffe 1985, Hetherington 1997). On the other hand, there is a kind of Left neo-traditionalism which sees the challenge to everyday routine and the stress on the libertarian and the emancipatory as undermining the foundations of the instrumentalist building blocks on which that particular kind of Left project is apparently to be built (e.g. Schäfer 1983, Eagleton 1996).

I think this polarisation is simply mistaken. Without the challenge to social structures, the critique of everyday routines returns as status conflicts and identity politics. Without the challenge to everyday routines, the critique of social structure becomes a matter of interest group struggles and machine politics. In other words, the choice is between Weber and Marx, not as an argument over objective realities, but as an argument over objective *potential*, and hence over political choices. To take either social structure or everyday routines for granted, and attempt to operate within the context produced by this, is to foreclose the possibility of a genuinely revolutionary challenge, in the sense of one which does not take the social totality and its

constitutive relationships for granted and reduce the questions available for discussion to a matter of specific institutions or specific aspects of everyday life. We have to start from the latter, of course; but that does not mean we have to stop there.

This, I think, is why in Marx as in Morris, in Gramsci as in "1968", there is a stress and even a fascination with both - but also why it is precisely in and around the high points of radical movements that it is least difficult to think and act in this way. As Thompson put it at the end of *The making of the English working class*, the "romantic" and "revolutionary" tendencies have moved further and further apart since Blake's day:

> "After William Blake, no mind was at home in both cultures, or had the genius to interpret the two traditions to each other. It was a muddled Mr. Owen who offered to disclose the 'new moral world', while Wordsworth and Coleridge had withdrawn behind their own ramparts of disenchantment. Hence these years appear at times to display, not a revolutionary challenge, but a resistance movement, in which both the Romantics and the Radical craftsmen opposed the annunciation of Acquisitive Man. In the failure of the two traditions to come to a point of junction, something was lost. How much we cannot be sure, for we are among the losers." (1963: 832)

Bringing the two closer is always an effort, and always to an extent against the grain. It is also, though, a necessary and important part of any seriously transformative movement to start thinking and acting in this way before the moment in which it may be possible to put this fully into practice. The counter-hegemonic challenge to the structures of the social totality, the conflictual challenge to the taken-for-grantedness of everyday routines, and the attempt to build a popular movement which starts to do at least some of this internally are certainly a tall order, and not one which existing movement institutions are likely to find easy to undertake or sustain. But if the counter culture is to develop its full potential, it needs to find ways of creating a coherent and emancipatory alliance of these two elements: the critique of structure and the critique of routine.

Arguments of this kind must necessarily be contested. It is for this reason that I have chosen to present it as explicitly situated within a particular movement situation at a given point in time, and as understood from a particular kind of engagement. The point is to show that the kinds of concepts elaborated elsewhere in the thesis can be

used in this sort of open-ended fashion, to develop a particular situated argument about the development of the counter culture that might contribute to (some) participants' decisions, both political and personal. In other words, this chapter aims to relocate the themes of the thesis within a broader context; to quote Borda again:

> "we view PAR [participatory action research] as a methodology within a total experiential process [....] This total process simultaneously encompasses adult education, scientific research and political action in which critical theory, situation analyses and practices are seen as sources of knowledge." (1993: 196)

Chapter eight: conclusion

This chapter consists of a brief conclusion to the thesis. Firstly, I summarise the main arguments and propositions of the thesis. Secondly, I attempt to identify the intended contribution of this thesis to current thinking about its subject. Thirdly, I ask what areas of research are not covered in the thesis and might logically follow from this research. I close with a reflexive discussion of the "politics of knowledge" of this thesis.

Summarising the argument

The theoretical discussion which opened this thesis (chapters one to three) argued for a perspective on social movement derived from "movement theories" such as Western Marxism and socialist feminism, in which movements, from above or below, are the hegemonic or proto-hegemonic organisation of the skilled activities of a conflictual everyday life. Within this framework, I proposed "counter culture" as a historical concept to grasp the form and direction of struggle from below in disorganised capitalism.

In the methodological discussion which followed (chapter four), I argued that a research strategy which is sensitive to ordinary participants' skilled activity entails a particular politics of knowledge production. I tried to show the nature of this politics within the network I researched in terms of my own relationship to the network and the counter culture.

Thirdly, within the empirical chapters (five to seven) I examined the local rationalities of the counter culture, identifying logics of reflexive autonomy and radicalised reflexivity and showing their workings in everyday life. In examining the implications and weaknesses of these local rationalities, I also indicated ways in which such rationalities could, and arguably should, develop, suggesting a role for reflexive research as immanent critique and in enabling open theorising.

The intended contributions of this thesis

The most obvious contribution I would claim for this thesis is that of **counter culture as a historical concept**, meeting the criterion of an approach enabling engagement with a wide range of contemporary phenomena. Historical concepts are of course limited in their application, though if we live within the period they apply to this need not concern us so much. Within this context, they enable us (if they are effective) to think afresh, that is to reorganise our knowledge and understanding, reconsider the boundaries we draw between "fields" and "subjects", and identify new kinds of relationship and causality. Beyond this, they may sensitise us to what we might look for elsewhere as their counterparts, or indeed to the peculiarities of our local assumptions. I have suggested that conventional social movements writing has taken particular moments of movement development too much for granted; conversely, when looking at the counter culture our eye for the familiar has disabled our ability to ask "What is the form taken by the organisation, from above and below, of skilled social action within this period?"

A second contribution can, I think, best be described as **epistemological**. By this I do not so much mean bringing social movement research into the era of reflexivity, or recasting materialist theories of action as theories of social movements, as the attempt to show practically how knowledge and action, social theory and movement organisation, research and the micropolitics of knowledge production, local rationality and lived experience, emancipatory understanding and political project, are inseparable. This is not so much a formal proposition as it is a way of understanding or a cast of mind, expressed in the proposition that knowledge is a practical, active and conflictual relationship; not a "thing", an "idea" or a "discourse". In particular, I hope to have shown that every research strategy has an implicit politics – micro and macro – and an implicit standpoint; and that research needs to be sensitive to this dimension of cultural power. This orientation should go some ways towards meeting the criterion of thematising the possibility of cultural differences.

Thirdly, I hope to have made a political contribution (and thus fulfilled the third criterion) by offering **emancipatory knowledge** (cf. Collier 1994, Inglis 1998) - understanding which helps actors clarify the nature of their own action (by offering a

more adequate account) and consider appropriate strategies for developing this logic - within an "open framework" geared to possibilities and open situations rather than description, fatalism or prescription. Here I am thinking not only of ordinary participants in the network I researched, and people in similar counter cultural contexts; I am thinking also of those "full-time activists" who in my experience often have difficulty seeing how other participants locate *them* as well as understanding the whole historical field they are moving in; and of those academics who feel solidarity with movements from below but do not know how to do other than act within "traditional" intellectual relationships[108].

For all of us (and I find myself trapped within each of these situations at different times) to develop our own perspective, and to understand how others see us, are tasks that we ultimately have to do for ourselves; but other people's efforts at communication (such as this thesis) may prod us to do this or open up new areas we had previously taken for granted. Emancipatory knowledge "from outside", then, is useful insofar as it helps us *imagine* differently. Within this thesis an important mode of imagination has been metaphorical: the learning processes of a small network standing in for those of the counter culture; the conversations between ten friends standing in for the political conflicts across a movement; the "ordinary" specificity of these Dubliners for the alternative common sense of a movement project. As Thompson (1977a) put it, ultimately the only exact images for human affairs are human ones: if we cannot grasp imaginatively the historical processes of three decades of conflict on a planet of six billion people, perhaps a decade in the life of ten people can offer something of a "language" with which to start imagining that larger context.

Further research

This thesis points to a number of areas for research which, in the nature of things, it has not been able to pursue. One is that of a **comparative study of movement**

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[108] While completing this thesis, I was delighted to come across Liguori's definition of "the most alive part of Gramsci's legacy" as "the *objective* reading of modern social conflicts married to the assumption of a determinate and critical point of view and a praxis which follows from that" (1996: 230; italics in original).

milieux within the counter culture. In this thesis I have drawn essentially on my primary research within the Irish counter culture and existing literature on the German and British counter cultures. These are not strictly comparable, however, in that the kind of ethnographic research into local rationalities offered here is at best marginal elsewhere (its closest cousin is Lichterman 1996). Similarly, longitudinal studies are thin on the ground and rarely more than anecdotal; while to the best of my knowledge no systematic research on links between counter cultures in core and periphery exists. An extensive literature review could be written for all of these areas, but in terms of systematic research it would probably have relatively little to show for itself. By contrast, the scope for comparative ethnographic and oral history research (given the relatively recent periods involved) is by no means trivial.

A second area touched on only in passing in the thesis, is **the place of the counter culture in the polemic discourses of its opponents**. In this thesis I have deliberately avoided it, but "hippies", "68ers", "the 60s", "drugs" and so on play a role in much right-wing political discourse similar to that played by "Communards", "Bolsheviks", "Free Love" or "Atheism" in earlier decades (cf. Hilwig 1998 on student movements and right-wing media in 1968). An analysis of this imaginary - from serious New Right think tanks who saw the task of the 1980s as "rolling back the 1960s" to the modern-day equivalents of witchcraft panics - might shed important light on the workings of hegemony and conflict in disorganised capitalism.

Thirdly, the **problem of creativity** identified in chapters five and six - the contradictions of reflexive autonomy - have yet to be resolved, both on the micro-scale of this network and on the macro-scale of the counter culture as a whole. If research could offer some way forward it would clearly be of immense practical - personal and political - value. This could mean participatory action research of a Tourainean kind, recreating the counter culture in miniature to bring out and resolve such issues; or an examination of contexts where these problems seem to have been resolved.

Finally, two **smaller projects derived from this research** are already in existence. One is the annual *Ireland from below* workshop, bringing together activists from different movements from below to develop practical skills and theoretical understanding (see Cox 1999b; Heynen and O'Grady, in progress). The other is the

WIT Centre for Research on Environment and Community's MA programme, designed to encourage activists in social movements to carry out research developing issues of interest to the wider movements and feed it back in (see Geoghegan 1998, 1999 for the first products of this project).

The relationship between researchers and participants is often seen as one where the researcher offers knowledge and the participant offers access; yet in social movements generally, and the counter culture no less than others, participants are also intellectuals, they have their own theoretical understanding of their actions, and as we have seen academic theories are often parasitic on this. Academic social movement theories has considerably more to gain from engagement with the "indigenous" theorising of social movement activists than is usually recognised.

The micro-politics of reflexivity

This brings me to my final point: the relationship between the "traditional" intellectual's research process and the "organic" intellectual's political process.

The basic orientation of this thesis is towards solidarity in shared learning processes. The problems faced by other participants in developing reflexive autonomy are the same problems I face, and if my ability to interpret their statements is partly due to this common ground, I am learning as much or more from their attempts to deal with the problem. What this thesis hopes to offer is a mirror reflecting their own different understandings of the situation (as well as the missing interview - with myself - that one participant requested). I do not think the power relations between us are such that participants are likely to swallow what I say in this thesis simply because I say it; nor am I calling for any intervention into their lives on its basis.

What I do intend to do, when the thesis is completed, is gather as many participants as possible for a long and reasonably "natural" session to discuss it. Apart from making changes where necessary, I plan to include excerpts from that discussion as a "reply" in what I hope will be the published version of the thesis. That publication is then a second kind of feedback, and joins projects like those mentioned earlier in the attempt to bring these articulations of counter cultural rationalities back into the counter culture rather than simply converting them into academic capital.

One of the great weaknesses of contemporary social movements from below is the thinness of their autonomous institutions and - especially in a peripheral country like Ireland - the extent to which they are dependent on "traditional" intellectuals, and "organic" intellectuals in "traditional" situations, for particular kinds of resources. That being so, a central question for such intellectuals is where their priorities and solidarity really lie - with career and caste, or with the alternative priorities and movement rationalities of the counter culture?

In its origins, the problematic tackled by this thesis had its roots in my own counter cultural experiences. It drew on movement theories preserved in academia and on my continuing involvement with the counter culture to develop those experiences and understanding; as it stands, then, this theorising has more of the returning emigrant's perspective than that of the foreign anthropologist. Returning emigrants have a choice themselves as to whether they throw in their lot with the coloniser or with the colonised; and at bottom this comes down to their sense of who they are and what their priorities are. This theory comes from the counter culture; my hope is that it will return there.

If you want to help me
then I do not need you.
If your liberation is linked to my liberation
then let us sit down together and talk.