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Building counter culture:
the radical praxis of
social movement milieux

Volume 2 of 2

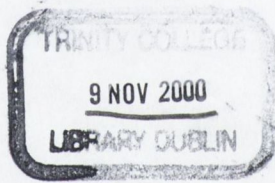
(appendices and bibliography)

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Appendix: voices from the counter culture

One of the best ways to get a sense of the lived reality of the counter culture is to listen to its participants tell their own stories. A wide variety of such literature is of course available, ranging from interview collections (Sebestyen 1988, Lowe and Shaw 1993, Green 1989), oral histories (Fraser 1988, Hamon and Rotman 1987, 1988) and (auto-) biographies (Mungo 1990, Alpert 1990, Miles 1990, Baumann 1979) via cartoons (Seyfried 1981, 1991, Loveday 1991, 1993) and story collections (Gaskin 1990, Horx 1985, 1989, Hunter Thompson 1980) to more synthetic self-presentations (Earle et al. 1994, Gold 1993, Vague 1992, Ferguson 1982), how-to guides serious and ironic (Jude et al. 1995, Rucker et al. 1992, Rainbow Family 1994, 1997) and group histories (Baier et al 1988, Gottlieb 1987, Perry 1990, Whitmer 1991) - keeping to the more reflexive and less external accounts. The "structure of feeling" and the way the counter culture represents itself (and its possible futures, wanted and unwanted) to itself is well represented in fantasy and science fiction (e.g. Starhawk 1997, Noon 1994, Robbins 1980, Farren 1973, LeGuin 1986, De Lint 1990, MacLeod 1995), again sticking to reflexive insider perspectives. The bulk of these come from the longer- and better-established counter cultures of (West) Germany, the USA, Britain and to an extent Italy: to the best of my knowledge no such literature exists from the Irish counter culture. This interview is included to help readers form their own image of the participants in the network I researched, though this will inevitably be a partial one, leaning as it does on the particular viewpoint of a participant who is no more typical than any other.

At the time of this interview, Josh was 23, and starting a postgraduate technical degree in Britain. The interview took place during a visit home for Christmas, in the course of which he was present at many get-togethers, concerts and parties. I had asked him earlier if he would be interested in doing an interview, and he contacted me later to suggest doing an interview that afternoon: he came round to my flat, which was on his way home from the house of some friends where he had spent the previous evening. My partner [Maria in transcript] was present for much of the interview, but (from the sounds on the tape) working on her computer and cooking. He was very familiar with the flat, having been there many times for different purposes.

I have chosen this interview for a number of reasons. Firstly, because Josh is a sharp observer with an ability to distance himself from the network, partly as a result of his “weekend hippie” orientation (to cite another participant’s self-description) and partly as a result of having moved to Britain. In other words, he was a good case of the marginal informant, and had a reputation within the network for being a cynic. Secondly, though, this was the first interview I carried out and thus in a sense the least polished and the least directed by my own orientation to the interviews. It is also marked by being closest in time to the initial foundation of the network, although this is a matter of the difference between ten years and fifteen for the longest-standing participants like Josh; as he indicates during the interview, it was also a time of transition in various ways.

Thirdly, and perhaps most importantly, the more “involved” interviews would be very difficult to reproduce without risk to the interviewees. It should therefore be remembered in what follows that this interview has been selected partly because of its relative “innocuousness” and peripherality in terms of participation.

The interview ran for about two hours; in this transcription I have of course anonymised all details, as well as removing my own noises of assent (“mm”, “mhm”, “yeah”, “right” etc.). I have not otherwise altered anything. My own questions and comments are in italics; the rest of the text is Josh and my partner (Maria). Text preceded by a -hyphen is spoken simultaneously.



OK, I mean, um, what I’m trying to do here is really get at two things, em, this is just say alking about the kind of people who were say down in that pub in [South Dublin], minus the Italians.

Right

Em, which I think is in some way a reasonable cross-section of -a

-a

a particular group of people

Right, right

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em and trying to get at things like sort of em how did they all get to know each other, em, what, what way are they connected, em, what's similar about them or whatever

Right.

em

You're looking for overall patterns -and

-yeah

common interests and

and things like that.

things like that.

Yeah.

The most obvious one that em springs to mind is music, which is I think is the the strongest common interest between everybody em, does exclude a few people like Chris Malone and that, but er

He used to write music, didn't he?

Oh he does actually, he plays bodhrán.

and he's written at least one song

That's true. Well, maybe it doesn't exclude him, so. Em, I can give you lots of [laughs] anecdotal incidents about how I er, how I met various people in as much as my memory allows me but em I think the Occie is probably the single em strongest sort of marker -for everybody getting together, which was *my* second year in College er

[inaudible]

I knew, the previous summer when everybody pissed off to er London and went to Montague Street. That was when I sort of really got to know the likes of er Dean and Pat and, and that but

You were in Montague Street as well, were you?

Yeah, I was. People like James and that, and Aoife, and Gibbo I got to know in Montague Street but Aoife I knew before I even went into College. [reflective] How

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the *hell* did I meet those people? [pause] Do you know the Science Week that the RDS used to run?

Yeah, the Young Scientist thing

Yeah. Well, I knew people who knew people who were involved in that and em I ended up crashing all the parties and got to know people like, I wasn't actually *on* Science Week, but em, yeah, top it up, thanks. Cheers.

But you were in the parties -[inaudible]

-I got to, I managed to em crash all the parties em. Did you ever meet Tadhg Condell?

Er, no. Heard a lot about him

Yeah, em, I met through somebody I was in school with, very, very tangentially, I met er Fergal and a few other people er and I think they knew people, I think Fergal knew a few people who were in Science Week and I ended up meeting Brendan Hill, Marina Wolfe, Denise Stewart. Actually, I think I knew Denise Stewart beforehand, em, I then sort of a lot of those people went into College as well when I went in and it was around that time that I sort of *then* got to know other people, like I met De-Pat and Dean and Fergal and -people like that

-They were all in College at that stage?

And Mick, and that, em, they were all in College, yeah, at that stage, em. Dean did first year science, Pat did, Pat started his degree then, Fergal started his degree then.

What was Fergal doing? Was he in computer science?

Fergal did computer science, yeah. Em like a lot of people he took the scenic route through it [laughter] but he did eventually get a degree out of it [laughter]. Em Dean did first year science and er he then took a, he finished that, he dropped out of that, and I think he took a year out and then he went and did, I think he started a degree in, in DCU

I think that's right, yeah

and he didn't, I don't think he even finished the first year of *that*, em and then em The Occie was second year, er my se-, I think it was, was it November? Of second year? -I think it was before Christmas.

-Something like that, yes, cause it cause it kind of died before Christmas. There was a notion about keeping it going over Christmas and then it didn't happen

[trying to remember] Yeah.

Something like that

Em

[inaudible]

I didn't spend an enormous amount of time around the Occie, em, I was trying to get some bloody work done at the time. I was in there a fair bit but em not an enormous amount

What did you see there, like, wh, which bits of it did you were you involved in?

Em I wasn't involved in breaking in and setting it up, er, the thing was already running by the time I sort of er got involved in. Which I think took a *very* short time, it was only you know, after the first day, security had given up trying to, they realised that it was bloody stupid to have people trying to climb up a, a drainpipe to get in, that somebody was going to get seriously hurt at some stage, so, sod it, let them in the door. Em, and I was around - Did it last two weeks? Ten days, two weeks, something like that?

Something like that.

Em I was in and out em a fair bit, I think I crashed there a couple of nights and was at some of the parties that happened in it and things -like that em, but er, if my memory serves me correctly, I think the em, it came to a head when the library and the finance office were occupied as well. Er, I wasn't involved in those occupations, but I was around at the time that was happening, and the whole thing just collapsed, College started you know, College realised that they had to stop this em and they started talking and compromise was reached, and the whole thing finished. It was, it was good fun basically, em, but em, I think it was Molotov said that em, about his time in the Sorbonne, that, em [laughter] "Wednesday, yes, well Wednesday we demonstrated. I can't remember what it was we demonstrated about, but Wednesday was the day you did that." [laughs] I think the Occie had a bit of that flavour about it as well

[laughs] But wh, what do you actually remember sort of em happening in the Occie, or doing in the Occie, cause there were an awful lot of things going on simultaneously. I mean you wouldn't have been in the sort of big meetings where everybody was talking about what are we doing next, or would you?

Em, I was, there were a lot of discussions going on em about what was happening and what were what people were trying to do and stuff. I wasn't really all that involved in, in many of those. And I don't think I was at any of the big sort of decision meetings, em. If anything, I was sort of a hanger-on rather than er seriously involved in it, em, I think I was sort of trying to get some bloody work done

But you, you were doing other things there, I mean you were in the sort of party end of it

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

Yeah, I mean this, this might sound like a, a slightly dim question, but what way did you experience the occupation yourself? Like, em the, the thing I can remember most strongly is sort of sitting up in the attic, em, various people playing guitars and sm- passing joints round and stuff like that

Em, yeah. That was em, the strongest single memory I have is em spending most of sort of an afternoon em sitting up on the roof, just you know, talking to people, playing music, em, probably smoking spliffs and watching, just watching College and the world go by down below and em. There was a, a fair bit of that. And sitting up in the attic rooms and the upstairs rooms, em. There was, there was a fair bit of smoking going on. I don't recall er a huge amount of drinking

Mm, there wasn't

Em I don't think so, I think people couldn't afford to drink, em. Yeah, my, as I say, I mean I was pretty peripheral to it, rather than heavily involved.

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Mm, yeah but I mean it, it was sort of from the point of view of actual occupying and negotiating with College or whatever, but I mean you were saying earlier that from the point of view of sort of that particular group of people it was something which, what? Brought them together or introduced them to each other, or?

I think it was em, it introduced people to each other, and, it sort of set a, a framework within which people interacted with each other. The idea of people, there were people like Hig, who I first met at the Occie, and I think *most* people. He just sort of was strolling past, oh, what's this, er, let's wander up and see what's happening kind of thing. "Oh, who are all these people?". Em I've an idea I met Fergal first there but I could, No, actually, no, that's not true, cause Fergal was in Montague Street as well.

Em, er, yeah, I think a framework of er the way in which the social interactions that er that that particular group of people have subsequently continued to use, em, a lot of music. People sitting round playing music. Talking, em, Often trivi- about trivia, but em there have often been, you know, *good* serious discussions as well, em and I 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 Street as well. If anything, for me, because of the level of my involvement with the two, I would say Montague Street was an awful lot more seminal than -the Occie

-Was an awful lot more?

Er, seminal. In terms of my interaction with those people and that kind of social er intercourse.

Right, what ha-, well what happened in Montague Street, I mean I wasn't there. I heard about all this at -second hand.

-Montague Street, -right

-mostly years later

Years later, from people with hazy memories for some odd reason

-Hazy memories and lots of nostalgia

-Em, and everybody you ask has a, a different idea of what -actually went on. Em, Montague Street started with em a crowd of people, Dean and Pat, and others, er

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going over to London for the summer after having finished first year in college. They arrived stayed in Tent City initially, out in em East Acton

Which was what, a field with

It's em it's on Wormwood Scrubs, the scrubland, just beside the prison basically, it's Somebody bought a, er I presume rented a, a plot of the land there em and bought a load of er ex-Army, you know these sort of te- big tents, this sort of small marquee-type things, put a load of bunkbeds into them, I think it's all ex-Army stuff, built a, a small building with showers and lockers and stuff and supplies very cheap accomodation, em. It still runs as far as I know

As a commercial setup so

It, oh it's a commercial setup, it's known as Tent City, it's commercial accomodation, em, and a lot of people use it in the way that em they use it. I wasn't there initially. Em they stayed there for a while, did the usual, you know, buy the paper, em, eventually found a house which was in Camden. The infamous 42 Montague Street in Camden [laughter] er and moved into the house and it just because *the* crashpad em. At one stage I think there was about twenty-five people living in a five-bedroom house, actually *resident* there, not, albeit for a short period of time

-Mostly Irish?

-There was an enormous throughput of people. A very large number of people from College who all knew each other em Like myself. I went over there afterwards em and er, knew where the house was, er

You'd heard about it in Dublin, like?

I knew about it in Dublin. One of those plugs has just come undone.

No [mumbles]

It's the control, is it?

No, there's like er, it's er depends on what size socket you -have which one you plug in [laughs]

-Oh, right [laughs]. Em, I went over to em to London a bit later than other people. Em, I went over, must have been the end of June, which was, the house had been sort of set up a, a couple of weeks at that stage and myself and Siobhán em went there and stayed, just sort of marked off a bit of floor and, and stayed there for the -summer. I was there for, for about three and a half months, I think. Em, there was a very large throughput of people. People who were intending to go on, some people came there - and made some money, went off Interrailing. There was a large contingent went to Paris for a while. Em

And did that make a difference to the atmosphere there?

-Em

-the number of people going in and out?

Yes, because it kept it extremely lively, em, the fact that there was a huge, there was always sort of fresh people around, em, it never had the opportunity to go stale, em, there was a *very* large amount of dope smoked in that house [laughter]

[ironic] Was there?

Yes, there was. Em, and a very large amount of booze as well. Most of the people who were there were working em for most of the time, I think, em, most people had jobs. I myself was working in a restaurant at the time, er I signed on for a couple of weeks until I got a job, I signed on from the house

Pretty casual jobs, though

Yeah, em, it was, you know, typical sort of summer jobs. Em, get a few quid together for the, the following year and have a good summer, basically. That type of job. Em, and most people sort of came back from work, hit the pub, came back the house, got trashed, em, crashed out somewhere got up, wandered into work, em Dean was, there was a lot fewer musicians in that house than there are now, em Dean played, Brendan spent an awful lot of time there, but wasn't actually resident -in the house, em Fergal, I mention these people cause they're, I'm thinking of the -musicians among them, em Fergal was staying elsewhere and even- and did move in in the end, em, who else was around that played? James passed through, em but only briefly, he was Interrailing or something, he was going -off to Germany or somewhere, I'm not sure em but he

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passed through for a wee while, em I think one of the high points actually was James's album arriving [laughs]

He brought it -with him, did he?

-It got played to death. He sent a copy over either with somebody or in the post, I don't know which em, but it got played to death, em

That was the, em,

The rise and fall of Zee the Gorilla [laughter]

[Goon Show voice] Dr Gonzo and His Intrepid, and His Intrepid Tripsters.

Just, just on the music thing, em, are you saying that people like Pat and so on, who don't play, are, or Elena, particularly sort of into hearing it

Yes.

Or like the atmosphere, -or what?

-Yes, yes. They are, definitely. Em

I mean I've never, I've never really lived with any of them

Right, em, music is definitely a very strong, it's a it's a binding force among the among everybody. Those that don't actually play themselves em are certainly into hearing it, and, em, no, I won't, thanks, em, they, such as the other night, I mean em Ciarán was, Ciarán was in the room, there was a guitar -in the room and there must have been about four people going "Go on, Ciarán, go on, play something"

Because you never hear him playing

Because we don't hear him play often. Yeah, that kind of thing, em. That happens a lot, from people who do play -as well as from people who don't play. Em, so the fact that certain people are em -musicians after a fashion and others aren't isn't exclusive. The music -thing is not exclusive to those that, that do actually perform

Is it, is it do you think em particular kinds of music, is it something about em what we use the music for, or

[considering] Mm, I never really thought about that. Em

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I mean, I know there are people like Dudley who just sort of listen to anything on principle, but I think that's

Dudley has a v- *quite* different musical background to -most of the

[inaudible]

people there in that Dudley is very em highly trained in a formal sense em I think he's up to, I think he went up to Grade 7 -on the piano and he spent a couple of years studying music *formally* in College as a degree course, em

He dropped out?

He did first year and second year twice and dropped out of it em, it wasn't through lack of ability, I think it -was em, he didn't like the very formal structure em and I remember having conversations with him about pieces that em er, he'd be -as an assignment asked to do a composition piece, which he would *do* and, because it wasn't formally within the framework he would sort of work around it, and and try to be a little more innovative than was expected of him. He'd find, you know, that it was rejected or -wasn't considered. You know, he'd get a low -grade for it and this, I think, he found very disheartening and eventually pissed him off enough not to er to continue. Dudley is also em not the world's hardest worker er which may have had something to do with it, but

But I mean, what what do you think the rest of us get out of the music?

I'm not really sure, em, it's definitely, as I said before, it's definitely a binding force. The question is why [reflecting] Em, the type of music, I don't know how relevant or important that is em, mainly folk and blues. I'm trying to think if I would be listening, if I hadn't got involved with those type of people, would I be listening to the type of music that I listen to now, em. I wouldn't be playing music, I suspect, if I -hadn't got involved with those people, -or or

-You just picked it up on your own, did you? The guitar.

Em, well yeah, but em influenced by people around me at the time. I started playing in -Montague Street and I bought a guitar when I was living in Montague Street, and brought it back with me. Em, and I, unless I'd got involved with a similar crowd of

musicians or musos or whatever you want to call them, I suspect that wouldn't have happened. Er

So what was this, sort of seeing Dean and people playing and saying

"I wanna do that." Yes, yes. Very much so. Em, Dean probably being the predominant influence, er what else?

But I mean, I think, I may have got this wrong, but I get the impression that em you do quite a lot, I mean, so- sometimes sort of when just the pair of us have been together you do various jazzy things which you don't actually play em sort of then when there are lots of people round? You do, you do something rather different on your own

Mm, possibly [considering]

or, or are you now doing mostly John Martyn and stuff on your own, em

Most of the stuff I would play would be John Martyn, em. I didn't actually find out about John Martyn, thanks, I didn't actually find out about John Martyn through any of those people. John Martyn is my *guru* at this stage, er, er, that type of music, that, I mean, John Martyn is, is really, has strong roots in folk, but is basically blues music, em. And that type of music I can remember Dean playing a lot of, em, Neil Young, em, and em, so- some blues songs I re- em, one of the songs that for some bizarre reason jumps out of my mind, fuck [keeps trying to light match unsuccessfully], jumps out in my mind em from Montague Street is em *In My Time of Dying* which is

Ciarán's version?

Ciarán wasn't around at that stage, Ciarán didn't turn up till quite a bit later, er, Ciarán didn't turn up till after the Occie, I think, he, the, when I would have been in third year I think Ciarán arrived in College, em, or I didn't meet him until then. Would Ciarán have been around in the One World thing? I'm not sure.

I think he might have been, but I, I wouldn't swear to it.

I don't remember being involved in the Occie, er, One World thing was more of the same. In a way I suppose to, thinking about it, what might well be a reasonable pattern of events, certainly chronologically, and I think it's reasonable to em, to take

inference from that, is that all of these, these people, most of them met each other in first year in college.

Em Brendan was still in school at that stage, em but I, myself and, I was going out with Aoife at that stage, and myself and Brendan and Aoife and Marina spent an awful lot of time together. Marina and Brendan both still being in school at that stage. Em Aoife had finished school but was doing a one-year course before starting college. She'd, I think she'd applied for a course, got the course and then deferred it for a year, and took er, I think she felt, or her parents felt, she was a bit young to be going straight into college, em. So she was living in Dublin, and the four of us used to spend a lot of time together, and myself and Brendan used to go lligging in College, em. Which is where I met a lot of people, em just basically crashing functions, getting to know people, crashing functions, and getting drunk free.

Montague Street was then for a lot of people like myself, who were living at home em, it was then a an opportunity to basically get out of home and to let rip, em. There was a huge number of people passing through and I mean, as I've already said em, and when people came back from that er they really wanted to try and continue that kind of, that kind of partying if not if not absolutely that kind of lifestyle, em for quite a few people I think that lifestyle has continued. The sort of living in, in the permanent crashpad type em lifestyle

So Aongus and Dudley and stuff?

Em, well Aongus wasn't, neither of those were Montague Street people at all, em, Aongus again I met in College, as I did with Dudley

Em who'd be living in the permanent crashpad from your point of view?

Those people are *now*. Er, after coming back, God, I'm trying to remember what year it was, there was a house on the South Circular

Drumcliffe Street?

Drumcliffe Street. That was sort of the crashpad house

That was kind of what? Dermot, Aoife, Ciarán

Dermot for a while, Ciarán, Aoife

-Maria

-Mick, Maria was there was she? Right, em, I was, during second year I was trying to get some bloody work done. Second year was a *bastard* of a year for me academically, em I think I'd twelve full courses and I'd something like thirty-eight hours of

Ouch

Yeah, labs, lectures and tutorials a week, em, so. Second year engineering is bloody hard work em. So I was trying to get some work done and em and trying to keep my head together and the sort of Montague Street style lifestyle was not compatible with actually achieving anything academically speaking, certainly not at that stage. Em so I, with an effort of will, tried to er distance myself somewhat from that yet I still valued those people and, and tried to keep in touch with them and em you know, I'd go and em have a few sessions and stuff but with an effort of will, tried to limit it somewhat.

What was the most important thing about that lifestyle from your point of view?

It was damn good fun [laughter] which is a very trivial answer to a really quite a complicated question, but er also a very honest one. I think the single most important feature of it is its tolerance which -sounds almost a cliché, em. Pretty much anything goes. I mean there is of course, and there will always be, a degree of formal etiquette, but it's relatively minimal and it's relatively em hidden, it's not obvious, em.

The, ironically it's also one of the reasons I subsequently left Dublin, but, among the those people there is, which I haven't experienced among other groups of people as much, there is em a sort of laid-back attitude which allows people to do their own thing and is very very tolerant of people's individuality em and people doing their own thing and coming and going as they please, em It's notable now, many years on, em, 1986 was when I went into college. So I know some of these people from em 1985 em and now, ten years on, em, when these people get together it's sort of "What have you been", you know, "How's it going, what you been doing. Want a pint", kind of thing, em. Almost as if people have always been around em and the the, you know, a, the attitude of em tolerance is I think epitomised by the, I write to Dean. Dean never bothers writing to me. But I don't get pissed off about it because I know

that's Dean em and I don't think that's peculiar to me being tolerant, that's just typical of the attitude that is around among those people, em.

The reason it sort of was also one of the reasons why I left, I had to leave Dublin, is because it was so stagnant in the sense that because people are so tolerant and leave you to do your own things so much, you're not really getting s- other external influences as much. There are, you can see what's going on but you don't really interact with other people's thing, they, they do their own thing in their own space and don't really, there's no, there's nobody forcing things on other people, so there isn't em a strong influence. It's just you take what you see as you find it as you like it, em. and I think that is, is what's most attractive of that lifestyle. Whether the people, I don't know whether it's chicken or egg in the sense that the people are drawn to that lifestyle or the lifestyle engenders that in the people. I really don't know, em. I would imagine a bit of both. Certainly it's one of the em well-documented em effects of long-term use of em cannabis resin is that [laughter] you tend to become indifferent [laughs] about things and certainly there is a lot of long-term use of cannabis resin among that group of people

[laughs] There is that.

There's rather a number of em habitual smokers, I think

[laughs] Does, does that tolerance contrast particularly, I mean, if [inaudible], OK, what's the flip side of, what, what would be the absolute opposite of that tolerance, in terms of things that you've experienced or things those other people have experienced? Like what would it stand as a

Stand as a marked contrast? Em, [pause] the only thing, the only really, it's a very difficult question to answer because to answer it would really, the easiest way to answer it for me is to point to, point to somebody that I know as being, somebody I get on very well with, a guy who is in my class in, in college, em, but, he really does not get on with, I'd go and meet him for a drink, but I'll go to a quiet pub where I know I won't run into other people because he doesn't get on, em, partly I think he's intimidated.

He's an extremely nice bloke em but em at the same time has very, quite conservative views on an -awful lot of things and will tend to em possibly through being

intimidated, will tend to reject people because of the front that, the, the face that they wear em without really giving them the benefit of the doubt and, and digging beyond the face, which I think is very characteristic of that group. There're a lot of people who are em, I wouldn't say social misfits, because that's, that's a very damning and strong term, but em, people who don't entirely fit in with conventional society em for whatever reason em and a, in spite of their faults and in spite of em a certain difficulty in getting on with people in a normal environment, this group of people tends to, I think, just accept them and and you know "Yeah, fine, join in, whatever, you know?" em Which I find an -extremely commendable attribute

What, what kind of things are we talking about here?

In what sense? I'm not -sure what you mean

-Well, in terms of the things that people put up with from other people or

Em, well, em,

The not quite social misfit part of it?

I'm trying to think of specific examples without being too specific. Something that's characteristic of that kind of thing, em [pause] Can't really think of an example. Em, [inaudible] People who just behave in a very odd way, em, er, er, I don't know if you were, no you weren't, er, we were in er Dudley's the other night, er, there's a couple of guys came in em who Dudley knows them vaguely. They were *extremely* drunk, em, and I think, well, they had other things in them, but I don't know what, em. They, the tension in the room was very significant, and they were on the, sort of, the mood they were in, and the sort of people they were, they, there was an air of extreme violence, the potential for extreme violence, em. A wrong word from somebody in the room and they could quite easily have taken, trashed the entire place em.

Which I think there are very few social groups who will tolerate that kind of -thing. I mean, these people were, it was a very tense atmosphere because er, well, they'd gone out on a binge and got absolutely pissed, em a friend of theirs had died em recently em and they, they were extremely upset about that, they brought the tension in with them as a result em, but, they weren't unwelcome. The tension wasn't enjoyed by anybody there, and there was a, a relief of tension, release of tension and relief when

they subsequently left, but em, if they came back under different circumstances they would be as welcome, and I think there are very few social groups that would accept that kind of thing. Em, certainly my experience of more em conventional social groups em, you know, people who work from, in offices, and em conform to the normal social patterns I think would not tolerate that kind of thing

Rachel throwing you lot out last night.

Rachel throwing us lot out last night was probably indicative of that kind of thing. Whereas if that had been Dudley's place and twenty people would have arrived, it would have been [cheerful voice] "Oh great, party goes on" [laughter] - "Oh bugger, I'm knackered, see you, enjoy yourselves" and go and crash out, em. You've, yeah, in mentioning Rachel you've highlighted [laughs] really quite a good er quite a good example of that kind of thing. Em, she didn't like Rent-a-mob arriving [laughs]

Where, where does that leave people like say Dan or Dermot or whatever?

Em, I would say more than tolerated. I would say accepted. Within the group, em both people I think, and not only them, em, I'm sure myself included to certain people, em, are fine, their, their company is fine as far as everybody's concerned, in, in small doses em and they're, you know, more than welcome in most social situations, and the problem only arises if you see too much of these people in which case they wear on you, but, you know, neither of them, both Dermot and Dan are really nice people, just a bit difficult to handle in large doses em and the contrast is that while this social group, I think, will bother to accept them enough to, to discover that they *are* nice people underneath. Rather than just seeing the face and deciding "no, not interested, end of story" em. People tend to, within this group, will tend to give you time and find out what's underneath and allow you a chance to, to sort of develop

You, you were saying earlier that there was also some kind of formal etiquette. Does that underpin the tolerance, or, I mean, is that an etiquette about not telling people to piss off, or what?

Well, there's a certain etiquette about not telling people to piss off, which I've been [laughs] guilty of breaching myself, actually [laughter] having mentioned Dan, em,

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but then I saw far too much of him, em he just wound me up to the point where I got very drunk and, I'm sure you probably heard it

-ah

-the infamous story, but

I'm not sure I have

Well, actually it's quite a good example. Em, any chance of some more tea, if there's some

Surely

bit more hot water

[receding] I'll just nuke some

em.

(Maria: Are you OK?)

Yes, I'm going to microwave the tea

Em. I'll, I'll pause while you're, while you're doing that. Do you want to water it down a bit again, please?

[pause]

[with A Time to Travel (Earle et al. 1994)] I wanted to show you that anyway em, just to hear some vague responses, and I'll write down the reference for the other thing

Excellent

which I have in various

Good cover photograph

That's done by travellers

The photograph? Oh the book

The whole book

-Oh, right

-By travellers, for travellers

[reading] "Wearing a pullover his Granny knitted for him"! [laughter] Excellent. Ah, lovely. "Brew crew". Mm. I would have said I'd like to have borrowed this when I first came back, to have a read of it, but realistically I don't think I was together enough to read anything

(Maria: Has Josh seen the laid-out version of his article?)

Er, yeah, Laurence gave me a copy of -the

(Maria: -Right)

The magazine. [reads] Mm. This is presumably just a, sort of, series of, of bits of comments from people and

Yeah, it's tied together, but er

Pretty loosely, I presume

[laughs] Relatively loosely, yeah

Let's see, I should have it here, somewhere

[Semi-audible conversation between LC and Maria]

I was er talking to em Valentina about er sort of travellers in general, and trying to explain what the em so-called New Age travellers are all about, and she had absolutely *no* idea what the hell I was talking about. It appears to be em a, well, a Northern European, or an English, and em by default an Irish phenomenon as well

I'm going to have to get you that reference, I can't find it right now.

All right. Er, it's just er, I know Cormac will be interested, and if I can sort of find it I'll buy Cormac a copy

Yeah, I I know I have a reference somewhere, but I'm not quite sure where. Tea?

OK.

Maria?

(Maria: Mhm.)

Excellent, thanks a million. Here it is. There's, em, I think it's leaves rather than ash.

Yes, it is

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[inaudible] Worms.

Ach, good for you. Protein. Boy Scouts taught me not to worry about ash in food

[Joint laughter as first side of tape ends.
Second side comes in in the middle of something]

[silly voice].. side two.

[silly voice] It's a double album! (laughs)

[even sillier voice] Ladies and gentlemen, we would like to present you Side Two!

[drinks] Sláinte. Ah, that is nice.

Great, um

Er, mm, yeah, I was about to tell you about my infamous incident with em

Oh, yeah! Dan!

With Dan. Dan had been winding me up, not intentionally, of course. I don't think Dan is, I don't think he's *capable* of winding anybody up intentionally, to be honest. He's a really, really nice bloke. Em, he's a very gentle kind of bloke. Can't remember the last time I saw him annoyed, but em, ah, he just pissed me off lots. I remember one incident when, er, myself and, em, Louise, who I was, Louise McLoughlin, who I was going out with at the time, were sitting in a [parodying] quiet little corner of the Buttery, having a nice little argument all to ourselves, and trying to be civil about telling each other what wankers they were, and er Dan comes along. [Puts on cheery voice] "Oh, hello! Can I join you?", sits down, the two of us glare at each other, glare at him, glare at each other, deathly silence, and eventually had to ask Dan, "Em, we're having an argument. Would you mind leaving us in peace please?" He obliged, of course. "Oh, yes, certainly, sorry, I didn't realise" [as aside] - "No, you wouldn't, would you?"

Er, I just told him at Pat's twenty-first, I got very very drunk, and em, that was quite a momentous evening actually, whole bloody thing, but em I told him that er 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. Em, it *was* interesting, though, in that em, 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, em there was a serious breach of etiquette on my part, in that I actually said it. Em and this is where the sort of, there is an etiquette, I told Dan that I thought he was a pain in the arse, and would he ever fuck off and leave me in peace. This was a breach of etiquette. I did it in a, a, I mean there was a roomful of people, I didn't do it quietly em, I mean, I subsequently apologised to him for it, er, when I sobered up, em, but he didn't talk to me for quite a while afterwards, for some odd reason, em. I genuinely felt what I said, I just shouldn't have said it, and I apologised for saying it.

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

-They didn't have to fucking tell me. There was a -roomful of

-You felt that yourself?

-Oh, bloody right. There was a roomful of em people sitting there in (laughs) stunned silence (laughter) because I'd just let rip at Dan (laughter) and it was like "What?" (laughter). Em, I think we then, er, I think we then carried er em Brendan into the toilets so he'd throw up on something that was (laughs) easier to clean then, and then I left, I think. Er, I remember, I dunno who it was, but I can remember grabbing Brendan by the belt and somebody else grabbing him by the shoulders and dragging him into the toilet. Police got called that evening. Cathy had gone berserk and was running round in front screaming and shouting, em, They wanted to take Brendan away as well (laughter) Brendan was comatose (laughter) on the, on the toilet floor em, sort of in the recovery position is, yeah, he was inevitably going to throw up em, this wasn't uncommon for Brendan, er.

He had, himself and Wee Andy had sat beside the keg in the kitchen, and sort of somebody came in and handed them a glass, they poured one, emptied theirs, poured another one for them, poured one for themselves, poured another for themselves, poured one for somebody else, another one for themselves so it wasn't really

surprising, considering they did most of the damage to the keg. A good party. A good time was had by most.

(laughs) Wh, what else fits into that formal etiquette?

Em, [pause] I think most of it is, is surrounding em, the etiquette sort of supports the, the tolerance in the sense that em, I breached the etiquette by being into-, I wasn't, how I felt about Dan was immaterial. It was voicing my intolerance that breached the etiquette, and I think that sort of etiquette is about maintaining that sort of tolerance because I think em if you asked most people, I think they would say that that is very important, that, you know, that is the way you should behave towards other people, is to allow them to do their own thing em, in a sense sort of as long as it doesn't em, they can do their own thing as long as it doesn't impinge upon what you're trying to do em and possibly that's sort of another aspect to the etiquette is that you don't start impinging upon other people, em, I can remember things like er Ciarán in Drumcliffe Street waking up in the morning and finding somebody'd pinned a poster to the (laughs) ceiling above his bed going "Do the washing up, ya fucking hippie!" (laughter) Things like that. Em (laughs) Y- you know, that, it's , that sort of, I remember Ciarán getting really, really pissed off because er somebody had put a note with a mug on to hold it down on his turntable, and it was going round and round and round and em had been for hours while he was asleep. Ciarán got very very wound up at the damage that was going to do to the bearings in his turntable. Understandably, em, I wouldn't like somebody to do it to my turntable, but still.

Em, another interesting thing of that group is the idea of attitudes to property. Em, there's a very em, a very laid back attitude to property. People are not particularly possessive or protective of what is their property em, you know, em, people borrow things from, there's an awful lot of, sort of, you know, kipple that 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 (laughs), oh, take it back" - "Oh, yeah, well haven't seen that in years". You know, er, people don't get wound up about it, they just "Ah, shit, I haven't seen that, I was wondering where that went". You know, that kind of thing. Em, it's certainly linked, I don't know if it's from the same root as em the

attitude of, of sort of letting people do their own thing but certainly the attitude to property is, is very linked.

One of the other things is that em there's virtually nobody who's actually earning a decent wage so nobody really has any significant property. I think the person who has, you know, more, Dudley is probably in terms of sort of what they own, either you pair with sort of computers and stuff or Dudley would probably, Dudley cause of all the equipment in the studio, would probably be the wealthiest of the whole lot of us em a very extensive CD collection, and an awful lot of music equipment, audio equipment.

[indistinct]

There again, Dudley has, has worked fucking hard and put a lot of money and there is, I mean, people respect that em, you know, people don't, in Dudley's flat, you know, everybody knows that it's good equipment it's worth money, and people respect it. They don't trash it em, there again, I think, you know, we're all getting old (both laughter) I, and I think em the sort of days of getting absolutely pissed out of your fucking tree and trashing somebody's place, unintentionally, are I wouldn't say over but em a lot less common than they used to be. Not that it ever happened an enormous amount anyway, em.

From what I, you know, from what I can gather from the, the people I'd know, er, the *few* people I know and em the em little I've read, there's very strong parallels with the, the English New Age travelling community in terms of that attitude of, you know, people doing their own thing. Those people would fit into this group, and vice versa. Em, -and

-That traveller book did the rounds in a flash

I'll bloody bet it did, yeah, I bet it did

(laughs) and then it got lost

Did it? It's disappeared into the ether

I don't know who I lent it to.

You're going to arrive in somebody's flat for a party, and you're gonna go "Fuck, is that where it got to? Great!" (laughs) It'll do the rounds, it'll turn up somewhere, it's,

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either that or it's got lost in Dean's black hole of a bedroom (both laugh) I'm surprised *Dean* hasn't got lost in Dean's black hole of a bedroom. Em

Didn't you know that if you go through the wardrobe you come out into Narnia? (both laugh)

The centre of the galaxy, I think, would be more appropriate. Narnia ain't big enough (laughter)

Right (pause) Do you think em that experience of sort of, what's that then, Young Scientist, Montague Street, Occie, Drumcliffe Street was after the Occie wasn't it?

Maria?

(Maria: Sorry?)

Was Drumcliffe Street before or after the Occie? After it?

(Maria: I don't know when it was set up.)

When did you arrive?

(Maria: I moved there for a couple of weeks at the end of the year when there was the Occie.)

Right

That's right

(Maria: It may have been set up [indistinct]. That was the year I arrived.)

Ah, right, right.

(Maria: I wasn't in the Occie at all (laughs))

You were in One World, though

(Maria: Yeah, I mean, I met the sort of group of people from the Occie there)

Yeah, yeah, the One World thing. Em, yeah, I think Drumcliffe Street was, I don't, I honestly don't know when it was set up in truth, em I was there a few times for parties and stuff, I wasn't, I was trying to keep my head together and get some work done that year, em...

Do you, do you think that, sort of the experience of those different things made a big difference to what you did afterwards?

Oh God, yeah. Em, the person that I am is very profoundly influenced by em the whole, by the people I met in first year in College which, you know, subsequently became the Montague Street mob, and er / Sounds like a crowd of gangsters, doesn't it? (both laugh) [silly voice] The Montague Street Mob! -The [indistinct] Brothers!

-Sounds like an Ealing comedy! (both laugh)

Yes, it does, yeah. Probably, it *was* a fucking Ealing comedy (laughs), yeah. Sort of *Withnail and I* meets Ealing comedies (laughs). Em, actually, that's er, it's interesting, em, just as an aside, to, to, you know, having mentioned Ealing, having, er, er -brain dribbles out of ears

-Withnail and I

Em, having mentioned *Withnail and I*, in that em, [almost spilling something?] er [aside] Sorry, em, the, virtually everybody I know fr, sort of from that crowd, has found *Withnail and I* to be a brilliant film because they can relate to the sort of (both laugh) total degeneracy, you know, that, I mean, *Withnail and I* em, the, everybody I know can relate to those characters and the set up they're in. The absolutely trashed flat em, Danny coming in etcetera etcetera, I mean, I, it's like, em, when I was in school, well, yeah, towards the end of school em when *The Young Ones* was around.

Everybody I wa-, a lot of people that I was sort of associating with could relate to that, because they knew the sort of characters that they were stereotyped pisstakes of em, and similarly with *Withnail and I*. Em, and *Dirty somethings*, and and that kind of em sort of humourous look at that particular lifestyle. Em, the person I am is, is very very profoundly influenced by em those experiences and those people em. There again, I was em predisposed to, to, if, I was predisposed to become the person that I am now but if I hadn't em become involved with those people that predisposition would have never come to fruition and I would have become a, a com-, a very different person. Em, God knows what the hell I would have, yeah, you can't really say you know, it's all conjecture. Em, it's certainly I think em allowed me to, to broaden my mind em and has introduced influences and interests that I wouldn't otherwise have em have come across.

What kind of things?

Well, I'm trying to think of what I wouldn't, I'm trying to draw a em a line between what I *had* sort of come across and what I would have got involved with before em before I went into College, and drawing a line at sort of entering College, where the whole thing really started to, to gain em critical mass. Er, the, em, there were a lot of things that er I was vaguely interested in but meeting other people who were interested in them made me sort of dig into them deeper and get more involved in them. The old sort of interest in, in the occult and em all its various er aspects and astrology, and all that kind of thing, which I'd come across beforehand em, you know, I had a deck of Tarot cards before I ca- I went into College, but that doesn't necessarily mean I would've got into, would have got involved in them, or or taken as much interest in them as I have.

The sig- most significant single thing is music I mean, I have always been, as long as I can remember, I've always been extremely interested in music em whilst I did have some formal training as a kid em it was only, it was on piano, and only for a very short time, and I very quickly forgot. I was about ten or something at the time and I quickly forgot anything I learnt, and when I started playing the guitar again it was em very much back to basics. The old John Major approach to guitar (laughs).

Em, but if I hadn't met Dean, s- I would lay the credit at, or blame, depending what way you look at it, at Dean's feet er most significantly, for my having em, taken up music and played music rather than just em being a passive participant. Em, and I think most of the people that em, a lot of the people a-, among that group would probably be, be similar, and a lot of them, I think most people I know from that group have had a go at playing something at some stage however successful or long (hiccups) excuse me, that attempt would have lasted is another matter, em, I mean Pat's got himself a bodhrán and st- a bodhrán and stuff like that, er

Hig's practising

Hig's still playing the guitar.

Dermot got himself one.

Dermot got himself one, that's right.

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[sounds of cat moving around?]

She wants her [indistinct]

She wants her microphone stand

[various noises, indistinct comments]

Anyway

Have you got more tape? I'll just tape the cap on.

[sounds of Pat being taped down]

We could sample this and sell it to Dudley!

Yeah. More tea?

[silly voice] More tea, vicar!

[more sounds]

Here you go. Go raibh míle maith agat.

Like.

Loike [indistinct] / -em

-It's messy enough as it is.

Ah, I

I got those, I got those, yeah, I went into the shop, said, "OK, can I have em 20 Camel Lights and a pack of Rizlas", and he got me one of the green Rizlas, "Ah, can you give me a pack of the gold Rizla as well", and the other guy looked at me and said (laughs) "Those are really terrible, you can't build anything with them" (laughter)

Yeah, yeah. Em, oh

[sound of mike falling?]

There's no weight in the bottom of it, that's the problem (laughs) I'll tape it down!
(both laugh) Good gaffer tape solution! (both laugh)

We need Dean at this point.

Yeah, Dean'd probably build something

Voices from the counter culture

Drop mike from the ceiling!

Yeah, yeah.

Or with a boom.

Can you, can you get into the attic and drill a hole and (both laugh)

-I'm sure I could

-Boom mike from three empty yoghurt cartons and (both laugh) A man who builds heart-lung machines from empty yoghurt cartons. McIvor Deegan! Er (laughs), em, do you ever see the corkscrew in their place?

Oh, God, that, yeah!

Two blades? It's fucking excellent!

I think there's a bit of a techie trip there as well (laughs), isn't there?

Oh God, yeah, yeah, definitely. Of which I am definitely guilty, I'm a techie at heart.

I don't know how much of it is er sort of professional techie trip and how much of it is sort of deliberately non-professional things.

Em, oh with me it's em just er a fascination with anything clever. Somebody comes up with a solution to a problem that is clever, I will admire it em

Yeah, that was a pack of trained engineers, musical engineers and stuff like that, but you were all really hooked on this corkscrew (laughs)

Yeah, yeah. Which is totally i-, it's absolutely irrelevant, I mean it's just such a clever idea, I mean a corkscrew that'll take out a cork undamaged and then put it in the *whole way* without compressing it, undamaged, like, without a vacuum, without pressurising the bottle, is like, "Fuck!" Well impressive. Em, I just wish I could get me hands on one (both laugh). Mm. It's also ideal for Hig, cause it doesn't matter whether it's left or right handed. It's a universal corkscrew. I think Hig wants one, so's when he's working in the bar he can, somebody can say "Can I have a corkscrew?" and he can hand them *that* (both laugh) Which is Hig through and through. "Oh great, here's an opportunity to confuse somebody!" (laughs)

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Well that, that must be part of it as well, mustn't it, because a, a lot of those people do, a- are doing something which em means they're mixing with other people who don't mind too much what face they're wearing, or whatever.

I'm a bit lost, I'm not sure what you're getting at.

Well, like, Hig's working in a bar

Yeah

Where it's a positive advantage to be slightly bizarre.

Being em a little bit mad em (laughs). Reminds me of what somebody said, I - I was going a little crazy one afternoon and wrote a long, very rambling e-mail to somebody and er 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!" (laughs) Sort of, "Quick, I'll pretend to be mad in case people like realise I am". Em, yeah, there is an element of that. There's certainly an awful lot of mind games go on but Everybody does it for fun. Nobody's playing mind games seriously em (laughs) except when it came to Beth. Beth got a bit pissed off with it (both laugh)

What, because everybody played mind games -with her?

-With her! (laughter) Yeah. Em

Yeah, how did that happen? The, she must have been one of the first people who sort of came into that when it was already an -up and going concern

-In full swing

Cause I remember various people saying "We're going to convert her", or (both laugh) Hig saying "I've got a pupil" (both laugh)

I think actually she got to know people, I, come to think of it, I remember the first night I met Beth, em, there was a, Aongus had just finished his exams and everybody was in the Buttery em I remember Conor was there em, yeah, I'm sure it was Aongus finished his exams em Conor was definitely there, Hig was there, Cáit was there, Beth was there, er, that was the first time I met Beth. Beth, there was something going on, I think Beth was interested, Beth and B- Hig was interested in Beth, Cáit was interested in Hig and Cáit was very pissed off with Beth because Hig was paying

more attention to Beth than to Cáit (both laugh). One of those great little triangles, em, and everybody else was enjoying watching it (both laugh)

Er, yeah, Beth sort of came in when it was a going concern em, which actually must be fucking intimidating (laughs) in fairness because there's a lot of very very strong personalities in that group em again, characteristics of that group are, they are, I would say well above average intelligence well above average in terms of the amount they've read em and in terms of strength of personality well, and assertion and er self-confidence well above average er. Which really means it's sort of, it's like that Terry Pratchett quote, "The ideal number of people for a coven is one" (both laugh)

Exc- except they manage to survive each other.

Em, yeah. And there are em a lot of very very strong friendships have developed out of those associations and em I would, of my, my very close friends I would count quite a number of those people as, there's a lot more people that I would consider very close friends among that group than external to it, er. And the fact that so many of those people have known each other for sort of six, eight years is indicative of something em I think the fact that these people em have the attitude, the em 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 intera- to interact with each other without stomping on each other's toes, em and the sorts of ambitions that those people have, and the way in which the- they em allow that ambition to, to be fulfilled, doesn't involve er getting a group of people to centre round you, at least not that group of people.

I mean the, I'm sure there are some people that em, I'm being general rather than thinking of a specific example, em, notably people like Bob Campbell, who did want a little group of disciples around him, was peripheral to that group, and never really fitted in properly, em and em I don't know what the hell Bob's doing now, but he's, he's gone off somewhere else and doing his own thing somewhere else, but Bob was somebody who wanted a little grou- coven of disciples around him, em, and, you know, he wasn't going to get it in that group. Maybe that's not why he isn't a par- an integral part of that group, maybe it is, I don't know, but -I think it's a significant

-[indistinct]

It's worth mentioning, I think it's quite significant.

Mm. (pause) What a- what about, em, the, the other two things that I could think of around that period were, one One World, and Brandon Road, which was that place up on, beside Parnell Street, where er sort of Mick and Hig and Maria and [?] were living for a while.

Right. I was never actually in that place, at least not that I can recall

You were in One World, though

I was in One World. Em, One World was, was predominantly happening the same year as the Occie and I was trying to do some bloody work. The subsequent summer after One World everybody fucked off to London again to em Notting Hill to the squats em I didn't, in spite of trying to to distance myself somewhat and get some bloody work done, I didn't succeed in my aim and ended up spending the summer here doing bloody repeats so I wasn't part of the, the Notting Hill squatting crowd em There's a few people that've sort of come from there, people like Hig and Ciarán and that stayed on for a while em and you know Des K has turned up here in Dublin as a result of having met people in the squats there, em, and there are a few other people that are -peri, sort of peripheral to it

-Mick spent a few years there, didn't he?

Was Mick there for a couple of years? He probably was. I don't accurately recall em I, the, my third and fourth year in College I was peripherally involved with, with that crowd of people, but I was trying to get a degree at the time.

So, I mean, what, what happened to that, what happened to that crowd of people after that?

After...

After, say, Notting Hill or whatever?

Right. Well, my involvement with them started again when I finished College. I sort of had the liberty, if you like, to em get involved with those people again, em, sort of towards the, by the second half of my final year in College I'd got enough work behind me and got into a mindset that allowed me to switch off and actually get, achieve, some sort of work. Consequently I was sort of able to, it was, er, damage limitation operation on my part (both laugh) If I went out em on binges with these people I was not going to get any work done, I wanted my degree, em so I distanced

myself and I, I ended up getting my degree. Em, most of the people who *didn't* do what I did haven't, didn't get their degrees. Em, whether they wanted them or not is another argument, another day's argument completely, em, but I don't think that lifestyle is conducive to, em to actually achieving, er, you can hold down a job em as long as it's not too mentally taxing, em

KP.

KP-type thing, er, I mean, smoking your brains out is how you survive being a KP, cause it is really shit work, em. My Montague Street experience was sort of KP-stroke-waiting staff and em I survived it by (laughs) I remember Fergal em used to, when Fergal eventually moved in, he'd er wake up in the morning, he had to leave for work at the time that I'd have to get up and er Fergal would er get up in the morning, make a pot of coffee, er, sit down, drink a mug of coffee, roll a spliff, smoke half the spliff, er pour another mug of coffee, come upstairs, kick me in the ribs, into (laughs) one hand went mug of coffee, into the other hand went the other half of the spliff, "I'm off to work, get up you bastard" and off he'd go. And em, well, the day went downhill from there. But er when you don't have to think it helps to, it helps to not think in jobs like that, I think, em. What happened to them afterwards, em, right, 1990, em

Well, not necessarily chronologically, but sort of [-indistinct]

Well, I'm thinking back to where, em sort of trying to think back to where I got involved, er, heavily involved with that group of people again and subsequently em er sort of I, I've been heavily associated with them for the last four years since I finished College really, em. The, Dean was basically making a living busking at that stage and it was Dean really that I saw most of initially, em I had seen an awful lot of Dudley around that time, and I don't think Dudley, Dudley wasn't particularly involved with that crowd at that stage, it was sort of later that, through me. I got to know Dudley very well in, in College, and Aongus as well, and it, sort of through me that I introduced, that these people were sort of introduced

Aongus was an engineer as well, was he?

No, Aongus did em Latin and I think Classics and er Irish as a, you know, the TSM, and I, I met him in the cloakroom, actually, where I met Conor, Conor Lacey, as

well, he was in school with Aongus, he knew Aongus em, and, Jesus, how the fuck did I meet Aongus? I dunno. I met Aongus round College, you know, there's hardly anybody in College who doesn't know Aongus. Jesus, I can't really remember, what the fuck was going on [indistinct] Dean was busking an awful lot, and trying to get his act together, em, Elena was still very involved with those people. I was going out with Elena at the time so I'd sort of lost contact to a certain extent with those people, with quite a few of those people and then sort of reformed the links, came back into it, having now being at liberty to do so and you know having a shitty job it's very easy to sort of, I got, when I left College I got a job in a bike shop to pay off debts and then spent two years binging (laughs) he says, looking back on it with nostalgia and reverie. (both laugh)

Em, mm, I'm trying to think really, what these people have b- have been doing, em Dean was busking for a long time, played gigs, and as time goes by he's been, I don't think he's busked in ages, em he er, he's now playing quite a few gigs, and I think he's reasonably, I mean, he has the sort of lifestyle I think that em, that he wants, which is to be able to make a living playing small sort of pub gigs I don't think sort of the big time is part- as in quotes, is particularly what he's after. Em, although I've never really talked to him about it, so I don't know. I'm, sort of, judging from what I see rather than what I've actually been told. Em, Dean is an ambitious person in a different way to the conventional interpretation of what ambition means. I mean Dean is, is ambitious within himself, it's himself that he wants to develop, not a career or any of that kind of stuff. Which again is quite characteristic of those people, em the fact that they're very well read and are involved in, *interested* in most things. Em Ciarán, whilst being a superb musician, has always maintained that he does not want to make a living as a musician. He enjoys music and wants to continue enjoy music, enjoying music. He's acquired himself a piano and -em

-Yeah, I never really understood what, what his, what his thing is there.

What he wants to do, as far as I know, is he wants to make a living as a programmer which is his other main interest and, whilst I've no experience of it, I believe he's extremely competent, em Ciarán's one of these people, I think, who's good at anything he puts his mind to, em, it's as a programmer that he wants to make a living, em. Which he does to some extent, em, he certainly supplements whatever

other sources of income he has, he will supplement by whatever programming work he can get, em, most notably this stuff with Chris Malone, for, I think it's a database for Knorr or something like that

Something like that.

Em, there again Chris and Ciarán've fallen out quite heavily, and I will reckon that in time those two will eventually get round to talking to each other and being tolerant of each other, which I know a lot of other people, external to this group who if the sort of, if what had happened between Dean and, and, and em and Chris had er happened elsewhere I, the tolerance would not have been there to, to be able to sort of forgive and forget after a certain length of time, em at the moment there's still very significant grudges, and they wouldn't talk to each other in the pub the other night and stuff, they sat beside each other and wouldn't even acknowledge each other's existence, but I think that'll diminish in time.

Em, Mick is, again, programming, you know, will, does whatever work he can em. A lot of people are mm really I think just not together enough to actually em achieve whatever the hell they want to do, they just don't get it together to put the effort into pursuing whatever line they want, em, Having said that, I mean Dean now has himself a, well, at the moment he's still officially temporarily employed by O'Sullivan's 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 do 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 time to do anything he achieved nothing, which is characteristic of that kind of lifestyle, you end up achieving sweet fuck all (laughs), em.

Do you think there are a lot of people who are unhappy about that?

About achieving fuck all? Em, I don't know if I'd go so far as to use the term unhappy about it, em, most of the people I think have the strength of character and the strength of will that if they decide they're pissed off with it they will go and do something about it, em Dean being the classic example, em Mick himself has, on a number of occasions, got decent jobs and held them down for you know months at a time and em Mick is, is one of these people who is well capable of, enjoys this

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lifestyle, but knows that em this lifestyle is not compatible with sort of getting a decent job and holding it down em so he tends to sort of disappear from the scene em and go and hold down his job and get himself together, and, and you know pay off his debts or whatever, and em and then get back when that job finishes, whenever you know, six months of work or whatever, when it finishes he sort of goes back into the, the lifestyle that he enjoys, em it is a very attractive lifestyle there's no doubt about that, but

It's fun

It's damn good fun (laughs). Very definitely damn good fun. Em, I think most people'll, at the end of the day, will sort of get it together and you know settle into something, em, it may take quite a lot of time, but you know, in, in, another ten years I think most people will have sort of settled into something, er...

Does that mean the end of the lifestyle?

I - no, I don't think so. Em, the reason I say that is, is, the example that springs to mind is Des K who, well, he, he had a run-in with a number of people, which from what I understand is the reason the whole thing fell to bits, he just could not get on with, with certain people em, namely the guy he was working for, er, but, you know, Des K had a very, a thriving business and, and was employing a couple of people em, as in he set up a - Do you know -what's

-The studio? [indistinct]

No, it was, he, he came over here first of all from E-, from London, he was basically wasting away in London getting absolutely nowhere and em, people like Ciarán and that said to him, "Listen, Dublin's a cool place, why don't you come over to Dublin and get your head together for a while?" So (laughter)

Sort of a reverse of the normal way of doing it?

Well, the, Dublin was a lot more together than the, the Notting Hill squats, from what I can gather, em. He came over, he, he em met Dudley mainly, and Dudley sort of went round the place going "Oh Des, see that guy, he owns Eyeball Studios, see that guy, he owns such-and-such, see that guy, he's so-and-so" and Des is, is, you know, neck like a jockey's bollocks as they say, and just went up and said "Hello, I'm

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Des K, I'm brilliant at, at doing this kind of stuff" and he sort of, well, people gave him a chance and they realised he is damn good at what he's doing and he set up a repair workshop which was peripherally associated with em the sort of I- whole Eyeball Studio set-up, the details of it are, are I heard them, but you know, they're very interlinked with people I don't know, so I've forgotten most of the detail but em he got involved with that, and he sort of got the whole thing going, em and, had far too much work, he just couldn't handle the amount of work he was getting in, so he employed Caoimh and trained Caoimh up, and then Christine came in, and Christine took over the running of the em the whole thing and then I think he just fell out with the, he always had difficulty getting on with the the, the guy who ran the place, and em I think he just had one argument too many with the guy, em.

There again, I don't think, I've, you know, Des being damn good at what he did is indisputable, but em in terms of running a business I think Des was not the greatest er, you know you arrange a meeting and he might turn up an hour late and things like that which, if you're dealing with this group of people is cool, they don't really give a fuck about things like that, but em if you're dealing with people who have much more conventional views on, on life and punctuality (laughs) it's er, not *really* conducive to good relations em, but he, I think he's a good example of, - oh, excellent, ta - I think he's a good example of the em, cheers, the lifestyle not being entirely incompatible with em holding down decent job, but the music industry is one of the more tolerant em of characters like that em, it's an arts industry, and em I think there's a, an acceptance that artists tend to be somewhat em highly strung people at times and tend to behave a little strangely. So the music business is rather tolerant, more so than other places.

Isn't that true for computers as well?

I think so, yeah, em

Thinking about the number of programmers

Yeah, yeah. Em, s- peripheral to those, to all those, that group of people are the em people like er Oisín and er, well Oisín's a musician, but em Joy Armitage, and em the late Sarah Roche and people like that who er, you know, were ar- they are peripheral, a lot of people know them, but they weren't an integral part of that, they're you

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know Sarah and Joy were you know, the artistic community, em, em, you, I presume you saw the murals they did up in em Derry Street?

Oh, yes, I saw them once, yes.

and things like that. I mean, there's a lot of people, em, Ciarán's got well into art at times, and Elena's got well into em painting and stuff, em

Ciarán's trousers!

Did she do a pair of trousers for Ciarán?

Somebody did a pair of trousers for Ciarán actually.

Yeah?

I'm not sure if it was Elena or somebody else painted them

Probably would have been Elena, em, she's done T-shirts for loads of people, I've a few of them myself

But, ju- just getting back to the way things changed, I mean you were saying that when you left for Bristol everything was kind of stagnant here?

Well, for me it was. I was running around the same social circles em interacting with the same people in the same way, doing the same thing, drinking in the same pubs em there was no new influences coming in em and I was, I had just got to the stage where I was the same, you know, six months on I was exactly the same I had been six months be-

[End of tape. Start of second cassette; sounds of tea?]

Just, just, (laughs) that kind of

Want to try and do some clever editing and jump in where I (laughs) left off from the last tape now?

Well you're, you were just talking about -it being

-Em

stagnant at that stage?

Yeah, yeah. Em, it, the fact that em it was for me doesn't mean it was for other people em it was a very personal experience to, for me to be stagnant em, I know em, for the serious musicians like Dean and Dudley it was anything but stagnant. They were still interacting with a lot of new musicians on a, a musical level but I am at best a *very* amateur (laughs) musician em consequently that wasn't happening for, I was still meeting a few people through, sort of, people Dean would meet and people Dudley'd meet, stuff like that em, but at the end of the day I was still going to the same pubs with the same people and going to the parties and I'd know *every* fucking person at the party well, and had done for years.

So what did, what, what would new people mean then? What's...

Em...

What difference does that make?

New influences. New ideas. Er, if I can be excused using sort of Americanism clichés, personal development (both laugh) em in the sense that my interaction with these people, whilst it is completely wrong to suppose that em I can't get anything more out of interacting with these people, I had got caught into 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 em ideas, fresh outlook on the, on old ideas, anything, into it, would have possibly changed that and, and sort of got me out of that rut, or

(Maria: Thankyou)

[having unscrewed jar?] Capers, I think

Oh, right. Em, or alternatively, em, what I did do, which was in some ways the easy option er, which was to leave and go and do something else, em also the best move I ever made in retrospect, undoubtedly, yeah.

Why?

Em, the, there is something really really nice about going to somewhere where absolutely nobody knows you, especially when you come from a situation which I

was in where most of the people I had known for upwards of s- five, six years em, and you carry an awful lot of dross with you, em, the infamous incident of Dan is still, I mean, if you mention it to an- to anybody around, even people who weren't there, I'm sure they have heard of it. That is sort of baggage that I carry with me in this group.

Em, you leave everything behind you and you get a fresh start, em, when you go somewhere that, where nobody knows you and em that sort of fresh start allows you to develop aspects of your personality that because of the situation you're in you don't get the opportunity to, to develop. Em, it's a good experience, it's a very very good experience and one I've thoroughly enjoyed em, there are, the, a lot of what I've been saying about sort of the, the, the tolerance and the attitude and the etiquette and the, and stuff of the people around *is* interesting also in that there is a contrast with the people that I now associate with over in Bristol. They are...

I thought you were hanging out with crusties and -people like Cormac?

-I know, I know quite a few crusties over there, em, or sort of crusty-type people, but the people I hang around with mainly, the people I *live* with and see most of are people from the same department as myself who are other PhD students, research assistants, people like that, em a couple of postdocs em but the variety of inf- of interests is narrower, the field of interest of the people is narrower, those that they are interested in they're *far* more focussed on, they have a much more academic view of the world em, there are a, there is one notable exception em, who is, em, who would fit in here extremely well, em, but in general they're, they're sort of, em, well I don't, in truth don't really know how they see me, but em I tend to, I have found that the, the number of different things I am interested in, which is not unusual for the group here, is quite unusual for the group there. I'm interested in a far broader range of things em and with the, the one exception that I mentioned, a guy who would fit in here, I read an awful lot more than virtually everybody over there as well of an enormously var- broad variety of, of material.

Em, I suppose in a way it's a, it's a consequence of, most of the people I know over there have gone from doing a degree in college and being your average sort of piss-head student em to going either straight into a job, a decent sort of, a good job, a

career-type job em, a, or going straight into em continue further education, higher degrees. Em, so there hasn't been the sort of, those people haven't really experienced, with this one exception haven't really experienced the em type of, you know, day after day after day of, of you know, sleeping during the day, getting up, going to the pub, you know, this sort of staple diet of, of pints and dope, you know? Em, and the lifestyle that goes with that. The people over there do smoke. As much as people over here em, and the, yet the, the attitude and the lifestyle is quite different.

They are still a v- a very tolerant group of people em but the attitude is quite different em so to say that, I would definitely, you know, refute the, the idea that em the em use of drugs is, is a significant factor for the way in which these people behave, the people *here* behave because there is quite a significant group of people, of quite a significant difference between the group of people over there and the people, the group of people here. Em, whilst both are I suppose habitual, yeah, it's, it's fair to say habitual users em, certainly some of them are, em, there's quite a few er people I know over there, there's quite a few ex-hippies and em one person I know who's, was at the Isle of Wight festival and (both laugh) things like that. Aging hippies.

So what, I mean, what's your impression of it now, em, either sort of this Christmas or other times you've been back, you've, you've mostly be- been back for fairly short...

The longest I think I've been back is about two and a half weeks, er, maybe three weeks em so it *has* been a short, a series of short periods, I've been back about five times, I think, em, for a couple of weeks at a trot. *This* Christmas has been quite em unusual in that there are f- now far more people who were scattered all over the place em and are coming from, you know, Brussels, Italy, the States, em, England and have converged on Dublin again, and are in serious party mood. Everybody wants to get back together, and like binge out for a couple of weeks. And it has been a very successful (both laugh) and valiant attempt at doing so, I must say. You know, full credit to these people, myself included (both laugh) Em, the, that is getting really irritating, Maria (laughs) [referring to cat noises made by computer]

(Maria: I'm sorry, it's low on memory, er, low on resources in fact)

Oh, right

(Maria: It does that [indistinct])

Voices from the counter culture

Fair enough

(Maria: No matter how much memory you have on a computer, you always have the same amount of resources [indistinct])

Fair enough

(Maria: Anyway, while we're interrupted, you're interrupted, I have concocted, em not really, but)

Created

(Maria: Created a coleslaw [indistinct] salad and [indistinct] salad. There is reasonable quantities of both, there's cheese, there's bread, which Josh brought)

There *was* bread which Josh brought. There's a tiny bit left

(Maria: Then there is sliced bread, like, the nice variety)

Yeah

(Maria: [indistinct] There's biscuits)

Excellent

(Maria: That's announcement)

Excellent

Great

(Maria: [indistinct])

Ding-dong, public information announcement

I think we're sort of

Yeah

ten minutes or so

[computer meows again]

(Maria: Sorry about the cat)

Oh, yeah, no problem

But you, you think it's mostly a sort of holiday

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Well I mean here it, oh, oh yeah, it is. Em, people like em Dudley who well, Dudley's place has been *the* most convenient crashpad, em most people who've sort of come back are, are from the sort of Southside of the city, em and Dudley's is at a very convenient location, and Dudley has held open house for the weekend for the last couple of weeks em it's I think getting to him at this stage

But it has, you've been vaguely in touch with various of us

Em...

from abroad

I'd say more than vaguely, but I've been in touch with, some more vague than others (both laugh) That can be taken either as the people or the contact, depending on who it is, em, yeah, I think, what you're sort of wondering about is how the situation has changed and how people have em changed. The serious musicians have definitely come along em, other people I think are much the same em, little has changed really. The people who have come back have all changed quite a lot em as a result of their experiences

Abroad.

Yeah. More than anything else, I think they've got themselves together quite a lot em and I think I, not sure it's absolutely universal but in most cases I think the sort of binge mentality that's here, the "out to the pub every evening and smoke a lot" is not the sort of lifestyle that these people lead elsewhere. They're much more together, they get jobs, they hold them down and they get their act together. And that has had a, a significant influence. Em, it's also part of the reason why people are binging so much when they get back is that, you know, "here's my chance to enjoy myself" em and catch up on (laughs) abusing my liver as much as I can. It's a, an extremely good way em from my own point of view, and, and em I would say it holds for others as well, it's an extremely good, comfortable, almost like a womb to sit back into and it's an amazing way to relieve stress because you don't have to worry about, knowing these people for so long, you don't have to worry about

[indistinct]

You know, "what will they think if I say this?" You just fucking say it anyway and people don't bat an eyelid, you know, they just take you as, as you are em and that's a very very comfortable relaxed atmosphere to be in, which is great for relieving stress.

I wonder, I mean, the, the getting it together is sort of something which em is part of the lifestyle as well, isn't it? Or at least the idea that it's a good thing to do. I mean, people aren't just going abroad to make money.

They're, it comes back to the, this idea that em the way in which people em perceive ambition as *not* a material ambition, em which again links back to the ideas about you know, 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, em, The development is, is sort of personal development, it's not er material development. So the idea of going away to make money isn't really em, you're not going to impress every, anybody really. Em, "Oh wow, he's earning fuckloads of money, good for him, so what?"

But people are impressed when people come back and people see how much more together they are.

Yes

-or whatever

-yes. Em, which may or may not have an influence on the people who are here. Having said that, the people here are, I would imagine in the next few months Dudley is gonna really get his act together em there's v-, mentally he's reaching critical, he's getting close to reaching critical mass, em, you know, he's moving out of that flat in the next few days em, he's, I think he hands in his notice today and he's moving out soon, em, the studio in Limerick Street is already produced a couple of albums that one of which is going on world-wide release, not, Dudley didn't produce it, but the studio has, he's put that studio together, he's a part of that whole thing.

Em, you know, critical mass is definitely building up. Dean's got himself the job which er by his own admission gives him more energy than he can ever remember having had em. People here are getting it together. Part of it is the fact that people have got it together to get out, to get out of here em so there's sort of a knock-on you know, it's, it's almost infectious, togetherness is almost an infective, an infectious

quality er when people around you get their shit together, you tend to get dragged along by the, the coat-tails, as it were on the shirt-tails of it em, I think, I think the lifestyle will still exist in em a much more limited form in that people will get together and slip back into that mode of, of behaviour. I think the way in which people interact with each other won't really change. Em, I think that is, is fairly much a constant, em, and it's certainly well enough established that it will take many many years of very strong influence to change that kind of way of interacting.

But people seem to be seeing less of each other, the, the sort of em continuous, that group gathering together over in Dorset Street, em the parties that were happening before I left, there was party after party after party in that house, and a lot of the people that were going to that parties hardly ever see each other now, em, Christmas is an exceptional case because everybody's gathering, and, and there's loads of, you know, there's likely to be a pub with four people that you haven't seen in a year because they've been away and, course you're going to go there and see these people, they're, they're your friends, you know, and everybody takes that attitude and you get enormous gatherings in pubs and go back to somebody's flat and get trashed.

Em, the, the fact that people aren't doing that as much, people ten- will tend to get themselves together. It was notable the, the atmos- the difference in atmosphere between coming back this time and the previous time, which was em at the end of August, er very, the very end of August, beginning of September, em, there were a lot fewer people around, em as a result of people emigrating em and those that were around were pretty much doing their own thing, there wasn't the same sort of

That's right, yes

serious gathering of people em. Galway scene seemed to be reasonably healthy at the time, though when I was down in Galway, there was a, still a lot of people round. That itself has fragmented as well, but that's somewhat peripheral to the sort of Dublin core of, of ex-college people

But I mean, there is a, a sense in which sort of different places do play a big role.

The three significant places have been London, Dublin and Galway, em Dublin has been the default. People have gone to London, people have gone to Galway and come

back again, em, London being the, the squats in Notting Hill, Galway being 6 High Street (both laugh)

Oddly enough. OK, just, just one, one other question which, I mean al- always puzzled me because it wasn't particularly part of my experience of it, em, it seemed to me, I mean particularly earlier, it's changed a bit now, but it, there was a long period where it seemed to me that it was by and large a lads' thing, and, sort of, any women who were there were there sort of as somebody else's partner, and then various of them sort of shuffled round, and some of them stayed, and some of them sort of shuffled off elsewhere. Do you think that's a fair...

Em, I don't know if I would entirely agree with "the reason they were there was because they were somebody's partner", em whether that's the reason they were there or whether that's em incidental to them being there em, There's been quite a few of that group, it's as is characteristic of any sizeable group like that, it's somewhat incestuous, people from, various people from the group will get it together with other members of that group at some stage, em and you know it's not uncommon for people to go out with two or three people from the group.

It is sort of em I was going to say, it's sort of noticeable that er the, there's sort of the, yeah, I think the group is somewhat a, a sort of, mainly lads em which is a term I detest em but er, however, em, and the, the sort of, the women amongst the group have tended to, to move in, come into the group from whatever, whatever way they met various people and em sort of s- er, quite a few of them have stayed as, as relatively constant, but they've tended to be a bit more together, I think, and do their own thing to a certain extent em (sneezes) I'm not really convinced by that, the, the idea that they are there as, as people's partners rather than anything else.

Well, I mean, is there maybe a difference between, sort of, when somebody turns up with, you know, somebody new on their arm, is there a difference between, sort of, people who are then, sort of, simply X's girlfriend, X's boyfriend or whatever and people who sort of say become somebody with a name and part of the group?

Em...

Or, I mean, you know, even people -who'd

-Anybody

... come in as somebody's...

Anybody who -comes into that group

-I mean, Beth didn't come in as somebody's friend, did she, from what you were saying earlier?

Em...

She sort of arrived and then Hig started chasing her

Yeah, em, that's true all right, but er Hig and herself never did get it together -as far as I know

-They did

Did they?

Yes, (laughs) very briefly [indistinct]

Ah, shit, I didn't know that. That's an interesting bit of gossip (laughter). File that away somewhere (laughs) Em, I, I was under the impression that em there was an awful lot of em (laughs) ritual courtship but nothing ever came of it (laughs) er, the, I think that, that, the, definitely, the, the serious sort of em hardcore, in terms of the sort of binging are, would be more the blokes than women, but, and it, the if you actually list the people that are involved there would be far more, er, men than women amongst its numbers, em, but I think the fact that somebody would arrive into the group as somebody's partner, you know having got it together with somebody externally and then sort of being brought into the group, that person I don't think er, there's any particular difference except that the other people aren't gonna try and chase them or whatever.

I don't think there's any difference between that situation and somebody just, you know, having met you know, Dean having met somebody and in a, a jam session or something and, and you know, inviting them round to a party or whatever and meeting people that way, I don't think there'd be any significant difference. It's such a close-knit group of people it will take a long time for people to sort of become an individual rather than, I mean, Dudley for a long time was my friend, I think em and then after a long period of time became himself em and people saw him as Dudley,

not Josh's friend so I don't think the fact that somebody comes in as a partner plays a significant role em in their relationship to everybody else any more than, than somebody coming in as a friend of somebody

D'you think, d'you think attitudes are different?

To...

To women, or to relationships.

Em, no. Em, and the reason I say that so categorically is I'm comparing it with my experience in Bristol, where the attitude to, the behaviour of a group of people, er, virtually everybody I know in Bristol at this stage is part- is in a relatively stable relationship em, and the, the mode of behaviour that occurs when em there is a group of men together is quite different from the behaviour when there are women present.

What kind of things?

Em, the, to use my much-hated term, it's much more laddish in the, the very, sort of, the common colloquial use of that term when there aren't er, distastefully more laddish, I would go so far as to say er -when there aren't women present.

-Is that true in Dublin as well?

No, much less so. Em, the fact that there, the women that are now part of the group, em, yes they bring different influences in, but because of the people they are, not because they are women em, I think that the behaviour is much the same whether they are there or not. Em, and whether they are going out with in a relationship with people in that group or not is rather immaterial. Once that person is well-enough known to be accepted as a member of the group rather than somebody peripheral to it. Em, I think it's pretty much, the, I think people are pretty much seen as em, women within the group are pretty much seen once they become well-enough known, are seen as individuals, as people, and not as partners or ex-partners or any other label you want to attach

Right, I mean, that's, that's pretty much em all I want to ask, em, are there things you want to ask about, things you don't follow about this, interviewing or -anything...

-I'm curious to know what exactly you're, I sort of partly intentionally didn't ask em much about why you wanted, what when you asked me to f- to do an interview, why

you wanted to do the interview on the basis that em I reckoned, rightly or wrongly, that em I might be more interesting or more useful if it was somewhat spontaneous, and you just sort of sat down, asked questions, and I'll throw, rather than having thought about it, I'll just give you whatever comes into my head em so I'm now curious to know what your work is, and what you're actually trying to do.

Well, what, what I'm looking at is em I, I think that there is an extent to which there's, say you can go from here to Britain or Germany or the States or whatever and you run into people or sort of groups of people that, " 'ang on (laughs) this seems familiar"

Yeah

em and I'm trying to make sense of that, em

Trying to see if there is a, a broad sort of European, American phenomenon of this kind of behaviour?

em I'm struck by the way that em people you meet say in er you know, peace movement or Green Party or whatever, the number of things they have in common with people who are basically into music, say, for a good example, em, and even if you think about the people in Dublin, the way that, I mean say talking about some of those people who were in em Montague Street, say, Gibbo and Aoife,

Yeah

who've gone on then to become mainly political

Yeah

and then a lot of people have gone through a stage of that, I mean Dermot did

Mm

and the various people were in, I mean One World wasn't particularly political, but (laughs) various people -were in the Occie

- One World was, One World was a convenient crashpad

Yeah. But various people were in the Occie em

For political reasons, I think most people realistically were in the Occie because it was damn good fun, em to me, from my perspective, politics is something that, and I think it's a, it's it's reasonably common within this group of people politics is an

interest but not the driving force and those that, for whom it is the driving force, such as Gibbo and Aoife are now very much peripheral to the group. I believe Gibbo and Aoife were in r- er, Rachel's place as well...

Were they? Right.

I missed them as well. Or Aoife was, certainly. Which was a shame. But em, however, shame I missed her, I mean em

But I mean, say, you were sending me back articles about em tree protests, stuff like this

Yeah, but I mean it's not, politics is not the driving force, it's em, politics is the mechanism by which decisions a-, 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

But I m-, I mean I think the kind of sympathies that people have -tend to go in

-Politically, I think, you'd classify people very very very similarly / em

I'm not quite sure how, but (laughs)

I'm not quite sure how, either, em, but er, (laughs) definitely very left of centre

Yeah. But also, I mean, sort of quite into green things, peace, things like that

Yes. Em, the em, an overriding interest of most of those people, to a certain extent because they're very dependent on it, is em the maintenance of a, a good welfare state and

Do you think people are interested in that?

Yes, I do, if nothing else out of self-interest, because an awful lot of those people are dependent on the welfare state

I can't remember m-, admittedly most of the times I talk to those people it's sort of Mick and Dean talking about, say the history of the Civil War or something like that (both laugh)

Yeah, yeah, fair enough. Em, I don't think anybody is really up on current political issues except in a, a, em, a sort of, you know, pub philosophy type way er, with a few exceptions, but....

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Mm. But, any-, what I, what I'm looking at is this idea that well, you know, something happens, say em in the States and in Britain, you know, in the Sixties, em, there was, you know, this big em sort of hippie explosion, really, em, prior to which there was very little. I mean, there was Kerouac

There's the Beat Generation, yeah

That, there was a Beat Generation, which is

-Cassady

-A few hundred people who all knew each other

Yeah, yeah. Ginsbergs and Cassadys and people, yeah

Em, and say in France or Italy or Germany you have something which was rather more political

Right

Em but you can I think still see similarities between, I mean, say Italian squats and American hippies or whatever

Right.

There, there's something there em

Is it that there is a common prototype in the, in what happened in the Sixties in America, you know, what grew out of the Beat Generation and, you know, the likes of Kesey and Hunter Thompson and stuff and the, then the, the emergence of acid and the subsequent hippie movement, is that sort of a, a prototype that has

Well I don't think it's, I don't think it's as much a prototype on the Continent, you know, because if you say Sixties there it's sort of sixty-eight

Yeah

You know, em, but, I, I think, you know, for all that they've been interested in different things, like say, you know, dope and music are, you know, much bigger things in the States

-Constant factors

Well, I'd say, I was going to say much bigger factors in the States than in Germany

Right

Voices from the counter culture

but em that you know, there, and say I mean by comparison with, we're, we're not actually very similar either to, you know, just sort of in terms of what we do, either to New Age travellers or to American hippies, -but

-but

you can see the similarities quite easily

Yes, yes.

Em, and I'm just looking to see em, I mean particularly in this Dublin stuff, because it seems to me that whereas in the States, you know, there is already a very s-, a very sort of set-up, ritualised, you know, sort of hippy lifestyle

Mhm

Sort of, there're already people doing it, there are people who've been doing it for twenty years, there are people who were at the Isle of Wight festival

Yeah

em those kind of people exist in Dublin but there's not that very many of them, and, there's not, like, sort of, continuous lifestyle that you can just drop into

Yeah, yeah

so that em the people our age have actually been you know sort of creating something more or less from scratch

*They've taken on an awful lot of influences from popular culture and literature, em
But they've selected them.*

They've chosen the, the nice bits and thrown away the bits they don't like, yeah, yeah. Em, it's I think, you know, not entirely insignificant, insignificant that em virtually everybody in that group has, there's a large library of material that virtually everybody in that group has read

What, Fear and Loathing?

*Y- and a lot of other things / like that em, yeah, my copy of Fear and Loathing
(laughter)*

Your copy of Fear and Loathing! Yeah.

Em, and y- what you said about that book about the travellers which has you know, been snapped up like, like gold dust. And there's a large body of music which is common to this particular group, em. Again, my experience in England is that that is not true of the the group over there. The material that I can sort of, went over there with a rather naive assumption that, you know, just about everybody who had any connection with that kind of lifestyle had come across this. This type of music and this type of -literature

-And they hadn't?

And they hadn't necessarily em and I initially was a little surprised and then sort of, you know, it very quickly dawned on me that "why should they?" just because everybody I know in Dublin does, but that's because one person discovered it and passed it to everybody they knew em. Do you think there is an overall sort of pattern em, or is it just common interests?

Well, I, I think, no, I think it's more than just common interests because, you know, you get people who are into music in very different ways, or em you get people into drugs in very different ways or whatever,

Mhm

but I think em something of what you were saying about em sort of enough tolerance to leave people space to develop themselves, or something like that

Mhm

Em, in that I think one of the few things which really is common is em sort of wanting not to be constrained by other people, other people's attitudes, people telling you how to do things,

Mhm

em and fin- setting out to create some kind of space within which people can do more or less what they want to do

Mhm

Em, that might be an occupation, or it might be just a party, or it might be

Yeah

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you know, something like Greenham Common or what have you [indistinct]

Yeah, yeah

for more than ten years (laughs) em and then, I mean that must have, the, the way that happens, the fo-, the form it takes must have an enormous impact on you know, where people find that

Yeah, yeah

Like, you know, Gibbo and Aoife, even back in the Occupation, were in the Occie partly as political hacks, and they were in the Network and so on and so forth

Yeah

and they went on to mutate into libertarian communists and whatever else

Yeah

em whereas I think a lot of us found something rather different

Yeah, it's interesting that the fact that, I mean these two people were very involved in that thing and were very passionate about what they, they believed yet, whilst it did rub off a little bit, it didn't significantly influence a lot of the people around em, you know, people know what Gibbo and Aoife are up to but they, they don't, they're not very strongly influenced, and that's a, an example of Gibbo and Aoife being part of that group, coming from that group and finding their own space and

and other people not wanting to be dragged into that space

Exactly, yeah. But, er, Gibbo and Aoife didn't ram it down anybody's throat, and nobody tried to make them conform to what was going on, as it happens, influences have been such that they've they've gone their separate ways, em, of, well, not entirely, but

Mhm, yeah, yeah, but I think, you know, if you set out to say, well, what people have really been doing is, you know, personal development, say, in different contexts, or whatever, - but

-Mhm

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you know, anyway, looking for somewhere where they're not being controlled by other people, not being made to conform

Mhm

then it's really very very natural that it's going to find all kinds of very very different expressions

Yeah, yeah

You know, if you say, well, actually, these are people who are, you know, strong personalities, in other words, quite, you know, explicitly different from each other

Mhm

em and are trying to develop something em which they couldn't develop if they had to conform to other people's ideas

Yeah

That suggests, you know, something quite centrifugal

Yes, yeah, yeah

but, you know, I, I'm always just sort of struck by, you know, say, I was sitting around talking to this er woman who is now a goat farmer and a nurse in California, and she was telling me about these Joan Baez concerts that she used to go to (laughs) and these (Donovan?) (laughter) you know em and er they go to these farms where they all swap organic goat cheeses (laughs) and, there going "yeah, mm"

Whatever you're into! That's, that's pretty cool, that's...

and discovered that we both know this woman who's em a psychiatrist in Hamburg, teaches (laughter) who uses runes and tarot cards (laughter) in her therapy

Excellent! (laughs) Well...

you know, just thinking well, maybe they're kind of us twenty years on

Yeah

or some of us twenty years on

Yeah

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Em...

There but for the grace of God, as they say (laughs)

*Well, it's always useful to know like what your options are in advance because (both laugh)
I, I think there's a lot of people who are sort of, discovered what was going to happen to
them, sort of as it happened*

Yes

and not at the point where they were making the choices which

Yeah

could have made a difference

Em, there has been, amongst the group, one of the the em pitfalls of this kind of em, you know, "do your own thing" attitude, whilst you do benefit enormously from being allowed the space to make your own mistakes and the sort of again, space and support of the group to learn from your own mistakes, the problem is, you, you're, the price you pay is that you do make big mistakes potentially you do make very big mistakes em whereas a much more formal conventional sort of em -society

-Don't take risks

I wouldn't go so far as to say don't take risks, but you benefit from other people's experience and you don't make the same sort of mistakes em there again, you don't learn the wisdom that comes from making those mistakes

Maybe that's the other interest in reading all those hippie books.

Where have other people gone wrong?

Yeah.

It's very subliminal if that is the reason, em people read them, I don't know why the hell people do read them! (laughter) actually! (laughter) If that is the reason it's a very subliminal one, because I've never heard any sort of reference from which you could even infer that kind of thing, you know, it's em, to say it's explicit i- is, is definitely not true.

The other thing about it, I think, is just the er extent to which people are sort of thinking about what's going on, observing themselves, observing other people, you know, building

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up these rather sort of complex sort of castles in their head about (laughter) what's actually happening

As distinct from reality, yeah? (laughter)

Well, I'm not sure if it is distinct from reality

Mm, well, it certainly is according to the conventional world view or the, the view of conventional society, em

but it's like, you know, in some ways if you, if you sat down and s-, and somebody said, "OK, now what actually happened in CV terms, you know, these past ten years?" you'd go "well, mm" (laughter)

Well, my own has an enormous hole after I left college (both laugh). Luckily the, the sort of academic environment is very tolerant of things like that

but, but I mean in terms of sort of what happened from our point of view, a lot.

A hell of a lot, yeah em and an awful lot of people have grown enormously em as people, but em (laughs) you remember Des K on one occasion em talking about, you know, getting, I was talking to him about him when, when he first started getting this whole thing together and em son- he described the sort of group of people, included himself in it, not so much as unemployed as unemployables (both laugh)

What, what was that you were saying about "a mess of us"?

Yeah, (laughs) that, yeah, that's right, yeah. Collective noun for us lot, a mess of us (both laugh)

Fair enough. Ah, do you want to get some food?

Em, yeah, I wouldn't say no.

[end of recording]

Appendix II: who knows best?

Although it is not strictly part of the thesis, the question of the *value* of the knowledge created by social movements is not without academic interest. Since Lukács (1971) the idea that movements from below know things about the world that are not found in the “official story” (Wainwright 1994) has been developed into various arguments to suggest that such “knowledge from below” is more complete than “knowledge from above”. For Lukács this was because the standpoint of the proletariat was that of the future social totality. For more recent feminists (see Tong 1989, Lentin 1993) it is because those who are oppressed know more about the world than those who do the oppressing. These arguments operate on two possible levels, depending on whether we consider tacit or verbal knowledge.

Verbal knowledge from above and below

Firstly, if what we are looking at is verbal knowledge - in other words that articulated by movement *projects* from above or below - it seems reasonable to argue that the ability of a movement project to offer adequate (in the sense of practically workable and socially acceptable) solutions to human problems is in a sense coterminous with its hegemonic *capacity* and thus to a large extent with its actual power at a given point in time: until we arrive at the point of stalemate described by Gramsci, “official” knowledge can be said to “work” for everyday purposes, even if (as Hall 1996 has observed) it is often in practice “negotiated”. This “working” is not an external criterion, but is part and parcel of hegemonic relations as the *leading* and *organising* of one social group by another. It is possible, particularly in the case of a movement from below, for a movement project to have a greater hegemonic *capacity* than its actual power - in other words, to have developed an alternative “verbal” knowledge which is capable of “working” for large social groups who have not yet been reached by it - and this is of course one element of large-scale revolutionary mobilisations.

One important role for critical sociology may be to ask after the nature of this capacity and power: to whom does / can the existing social order offer workable solutions? To whom does / can available counter-hegemonic movement projects offer

workable solutions? This problematic makes sense within a *democratic* politics of truth: what expresses best the practical striving-for-solutions of the six thousand million other people we share the planet with is, not “truth” in the absolute, but the best shared understanding available. In this sense I would argue that the capitalist world-system and its associated rational-scientific ideologies provided a better response in the eighteenth century than the feudal-religious order, within the European “core” at least¹⁰⁹, but that that response has worn very thin faced with the human suffering it has given rise to (Wallerstein 1996); if social movements from below are trying to construct a better answer, sociologists could do worse than help them in that.

The completeness or otherwise of competing forms of *verbal* knowledge, then, cannot be judged entirely on their present showing, but it is unlikely that potential and actual power can remain vastly different for long periods; more plausible that where movements from below are restricted in their development of verbal knowledge to an engagement with the tacit knowledge of small sections of the population, or to small fields of tacit knowledge, they also lack the “organic intellectuals” necessary to enable the junction between their existing verbal knowledge and the tacit knowledge of wider groups of the population. These are, of course, areas that movement projects from below, to the extent that they remain movement *projects*, constantly try to develop¹¹⁰. Thus I conclude that the truth or otherwise of the claim in the context of *verbal* knowledge depends on historical circumstances.

¹⁰⁹ GA Cohen: “Marx frequently allows that a dominant class promotes not only its own interests but, in so doing, those of humanity at large - until its rule becomes outmoded, and it becomes reactionary - and he gives no explanation of class supremacy which is not founded on the productive needs of the present age” (1978: 149).

¹¹⁰ For movements from above, to remain in this situation for any significant period of time is to risk overthrow, and certainly to manifest the inability to generate active consent as opposed to an absence of resistance to coercion.

Tacit knowledge from above and below

In relation to *tacit* knowledge, however, it is entirely plausible that *certain* kinds of oppressed groups know more about the world than their oppressors. This cannot be deduced from the simple fact of oppression, however; even barring extreme cases such as the exploitation of the mentally handicapped, children or animals, it is clear that, if surviving oppression requires much knowledge of one's oppressors, managing to remain on top requires much knowledge of one's victims. The matter is not absolute in either case: the oppressed sometimes fail to survive, and coercion can substitute for some lack of consent ¹¹¹.

The oppressed can, however, be argued to know more than the oppressors where it is the case that the oppressed engage with a wider spectrum of the world (and thus have a wider basis of tacit knowledge) than their oppressors. This is not primarily a matter of numbers, more a matter of the range of experience. The most important likely case is that where the oppressed are distinguished by carrying out forms of work which their oppressors do not; in other words, where oppression is carried out for the sake of exploitation¹¹². To sustain the position that "knowledge from below" in this case is more complete than "knowledge from above", however, the wider range of individual experiences combined by the exploited group must be shared rather than individual possessions; in other words, we can argue that knowledge from below is *potentially* more complete than knowledge from above, to the extent that we can imagine a form of shared action from below within which this knowledge would *in fact* be shared. (That from above is routinely shared, and an important part of sustaining the relationship of exploitation and domination).

I conclude that both tacit and verbal knowledge from below is *potentially* more complete than that from above, but needs to be made so *in fact*. The activity of doing so is that of movement projects; but both movement and academic theorists can

¹¹¹ Not, however, for a total lack of consent except possibly in the case of invasion or colonisation: at a minimum, those actually doing the labour of coercion must consent to continue being directed by the oppressors.

¹¹² Since oppression is a social relationship, both oppressors and oppressed understand particular aspects of it; it is not, therefore, a specialised knowledge of the oppressor.

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contribute to the examination of which forms of verbal knowledge are likely to be adequate to this task.

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Supplements: published work related to the research

This section includes the following pieces derived from the research for this thesis:

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