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**At the cusp of the Information Age:
Outplacement as a rite of passage in late 20th century Canada**

By

Marc W.D. Tyrrell, B.A., M.A.

**A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of
Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment
Of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
In Sociology**

Carleton University

Ottawa, Ontario

May 23rd, 2000

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Canada

At the cusp of the Information Age: Outplacement as a rite of passage in late 20th century Canada

**in partial fulfilment of the requirements for
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

Co-supervisor

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ii

Abstract:

The outplacement industry started in Canada in 1975 in order to help downsized executives make the transition to finding a new job. The experience of going through an outplacement program has often been compared to a rite of passage. The purpose of this dissertation was to examine the construction of the outplacement industry in Canada, its operations, and to discover whether or not it was a rite of passage.

Unlike "classical" rites of passage, the outplacement industry did not operate in a homeostatic society. And yet, at the same time, it had the same processual form as classic rites of passage. This situation has required an analysis of classic rites of passage theory and an extensive reworking of that theory to move it from a static taxonomy to a dynamic, processual theory capable of operating in non-homeostatic societies. This reworking has involved linking rites of passage theory to both evolutionary psychology and to social constructionist theory.

In the first analytic chapter, the environment in which outplacement develops is traced out, and the boundary conditions which led to its emergence are identified. This is followed by an examination of the rhetorical and legal construction of outplacement in the second analytic chapter. The third analytic chapter examines the process of outplacement; how it operates, who are the counselors, and what do they do. Finally, outplacement is situated in recent (post-1992) changes in social relations and technology.

The four analytic chapters of the dissertation trace out the emergence, growth and potential decline of the industry in Canada. They not only examine the industry, but they also serve as an exemplar of the reformulated theory of rites of passage

produced in the dissertation. This reformulated rites of passage theory should prove of use to sociologists studying a variety of new social forms both as an analytic tool and as a way of producing competing forms.

Acknowledgements

The material presented in this dissertation comes from many different sources and stems from many conversations with different people. Needless to say, any errors are mine and not those of my colleagues and informants. There are many people who have helped me in the development of the arguments presented in this dissertation.

In particular, I would like to thank Lena Bourrasa of Andre Fillion, Luc de Sadler ex- of *KPMG*, Rob Notman of Murray Axmith and Associates, Louise Courier, ex- of Drake, Beam, Morin, Bruce Merklinger of Right Associates, and David Craig, ex- of *KPMG* and currently working with Drake, Beam, Morin for all of their help. I would also like to thank all of the counselors working at *KPMG*, both for talking with me and for putting up with my constant questions. Michel Dandeneau acted as my field supervisor and managed to keep all of us sane, and I could not have done what I did without his help.

I would like to thank many of the people involved in the North-Eastern Anthropology Association for both their interest and support. In particular, I would like to thank John Omohundro for his humour and comments, Estelle Smith for her unfailing insight and criticism, and Charles Bishop for being what he is - nice. I would also like to thank Karen Szala-Meniok for her comments and advice on a number of papers I have written

At Carleton, I have had the good fortune to work with many people who have helped out this project in a variety of ways. I want to thank Walter de Keseredy for always being willing to listen and provide advice; Tullio Caputo for some very lively discussions; Paul Thibaudeau for helping me translate my rough drafts into English; and

Joe Manyoni for always telling me that "this too shall pass". Of course, this project could not have been completed without the support, advice, and harassment of my committee: Shahid Alvi, Brian Given and Charles Gordon - thanks folks.

There are two final people without whom this project could not have been completed. My wife, Leslie, has put up with me throughout all of the time I have spent on this project, and I could not have done it without her support, encouragement, and love. Finally, I want to thank my father, Robert D. Tyrrell, who was senior partner in charge of outplacement at *KPMG's* Ottawa office. Without his support, I could not have gained entry into the field. He has also taken vast amounts of time to point out to me when and where my ideas were wrong and where they were right. His support, and especially using his personal network to get me interviews and material, has been immense.

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1 Introduction

The purpose of this dissertation is to account for the emergence and development of one particularly puzzling industry: outplacement. Outplacement, ("career counseling", "relocation counseling", etc.) is an industry that developed in the mid-1970's in Canada, initially to meet the needs of unemployed executives (see Chapter 7). There are two points that make the outplacement industry so puzzling. The first point is that so many companies were, and are, willing to pay thousands of dollars for its services when the basic techniques of job search are available in any book store for under twenty dollars.

The second point is the para-religious quality of the operation of the industry. By "para-religious" I mean that there is a "transcendent" quality to their writings and seminars which is melded in with a technology of changing consciousness (see Chapter 8). Furthermore, even before I started my research, the term "rite of passage" was being used to describe the process of job search (Lucht, 1988), and it was rites of passage theory that provided a key to understanding the industry.

Rites of passage have been of a topic of recurring concern in anthropology ever since Van Gennep (1960) coined the term in 1908. While sociologists have also come to see that a rites of passage model can provide valuable insight into social interaction (e.g. Becker, 1963; Glaser and Strauss, 1971), the sociological examination of rites of passage still languishes far behind that of anthropology. This is, perhaps, not surprising given that the model was initially developed to account for a particular pattern of ceremonial interaction regarded as mostly applying to "primitive" societies - a form of society which,

despite the examples of the “founding fathers” of the discipline,¹ is usually left untouched by sociologists.

And yet, ceremonial patterns identifiable as of the form of rites of passage are clearly and easily identifiable in “modern” (i.e. Western industrialised) societies (cf Moore and Myerhoff, 1977:3-24). Not only are these ceremonials identifiable, they are, in some cases, advertised on that most ultra-modern of media, the Internet.²

What, then, are rites of passage? While there are some very clear models available in anthropology (see section 1.1), the concept is not exactly clear except in its structural form. This lack of clarity derives from the simple fact the rites of passage is a compound concept, containing elements operating at individual, institutional and social structural levels. As far as the structural form is concerned, a rite of passage “shifts” a person from a particular state, “A”, to another state, “B” within a given social structure. This shift, the “passage”, involves a change in the knowledge, perceptions and experiences of the individual: a simple model that is quite powerful and yet also very complex.

This complexity derives from the assumption of a) a method or methods for changing knowledge (social, personal, etc.), perceptions and experience (including techniques for developing altered states of consciousness), and b) the existence of the starting and terminal states. Unfortunately, the application of the concept of rites of passage tends to be limited to an assumption that the rite of passage is merely a symbolic

¹ See, for example, Marx (cf Engels, 1970 - especially the preface to the first edition), Durkheim (1915), and Weber (e.g. 1988, but interspersed throughout his work).

² See, by way of example, the Trust for the Development of African-American Men (1996a, 1996b). Other examples, to mention just a few, include advertisements for rites of passage from the Unitarian Church (<http://home.ican.net/~torfirst/chaplain.html>), and descriptions of Muslim rites of passage (<http://irdu.nus.sg/kampungnet/rites.html>).

vehicle for changes in status (e.g. Glaser and Strauss, 1971; Trice and Beyer, 1984), leaving out the complexity of individual changes, the techniques for producing these changes, and any changes at the structural level.

It is this complexity, one might almost say “slipperiness”, that has led both to the structuring of this dissertation, and to the complexity of the models presented in it. In section 1.1, I present a model of rites of passage theory drawn from the main formulations of the theory. One clear problem evident within the theory is its inability to account for changes over time and the creation and dissolution of various rites of passage (i.e. structural level changes). Indeed, the theory as currently constituted is incapable of accounting for the development of the outplacement industry, even if it is capable of analyzing it.

In order to overcome this limitation, rites of passage theory needs to be embedded within a larger, meta-theoretical framework which can account for change. Of the general meta-theoretical frameworks available, I have chosen to use neo-evolutionary theory since it is amongst the most powerful and, at the same time, parsimonious available (see section 1.2). While evolutionary models, in and of themselves, are not new within Sociology (see sub-section 1.2.1), recent advances in their formulation (especially Calvin, 1996; Dawkins, 1976, 1989) allow for the deployment of non-deterministic forms of evolutionary theory. While an exact outline of the necessary extensions to the theory must wait until after we have examined rites of passage theory (see section 1.3), it is possible to give a general overview of where the dissertation is going.

One of the core problems addressed in this dissertation is the need for a series of theoretical models which link the three main levels of social analysis (macro-, middle range and micro-) together and tie them into rites of passage theory. This requirement derives, in part, from the very nature of the problem I am attempting to solve and also in part from the pre-existing models of rites of passage theory.

Stated simply, the outplacement industry could only have developed in a situation of fairly rapid macro-structural change where mid-range social institutions broke down and produced a micro-level "need". More specifically, increasing global competition, coupled with the introduction of new technologies forced companies to "downsize" their operations (i.e. fire executives) which, in turn, led to a "need" for some institution to handle the newly unemployed executives. This situation has conditioned the structure of this dissertation and the ordering of the three major analytic chapters (6, 7, 8), in turn, has been set by the temporal flow of events: macro-structural changes (globalization, etc.) produced mid-range failures (downsizings, etc.) which led to micro-level needs.

The order, however, has one unfortunate consequence in that it reinforces a "top-down" model. In truth, the models I am proposing are "bottom-up" - emergent - models based on the assumption of an emergence of structures from simpler components in a manner similar to that of the natural sciences. Possibly the most sophisticated social scientific model of this form of bottom-up functional analysis was produced by Malinowski (see Chapter 3).³

³ "Sophisticated" in terms of range of applicability, parsimony of axioms, and elegance.

One point that has become clear since Malinowski produced his theory, however, is the important nature of the roles played by various specific knowledge systems beyond those of symbolic integration. The inclusion of roles for knowledge systems into a modified theory of needs allows us to draw on two new models. First, we can include Abbott's model of the interaction of professional knowledge systems (Abbott, 1988), and second, we can draw on the social constructionist model of the "creation" of "new" social problems. Both of these models allow us to engage in diachronic analyses of changes in knowledge systems.

With the addition of these two models, we can reformulate Malinowski's Theory of Needs to apply to complex societies. First, the concept of "needs" must be shifted from specific needs to specific boundary conditions required for replication of the individual and/or institution.⁴ Second, the boundaries of the "system" must be extended beyond an individual society or culture area to include the "world" in which the society/culture area operates.⁵

Third, within any given sector, there will be competition between institutions.⁶ This competition allows us to speak of an "institutional imperium" or "sphere of influence" within any given sector of the system. This institutional imperium can be

⁴ These boundaries are, of necessity, "fuzzy". Furthermore, there may well be more than two boundary conditions that can reduce the replicative successes of the specific institution or individual. These boundary conditions are defined by other components within the overall system and may be social, biological, ecological, or technological.

⁵ As such, the system must be formulated as a "world-system". This shift should take place both at the level of intermediate structures (e.g. professional groups that cross national and cultural boundaries) and at the level of "national" structures (e.g. societies and culture areas).

⁶ A "sector" may also be defined as a "social arena". In general, a sector is the operational area in which institutions compete, and which satisfy various "needs".

examined both at the level of "institutions" (e.g. mass production, hierarchical organizations) and at the level of "chartered institutions" (e.g. General Motors, Ford, IBM, etc.).⁷

By the time we have reached an analysis of specific institutions, however, we have left the macro-social level and moved into the mid-range level where we are examining the ways in which a given society encapsulates and codifies its behaviour patterns (see section 5.3). These social roles are operationalized via chartered institutions both in their own right as chartered institutions and in their particular location within other chartered institutions. For our purposes, a "social role" is defined by

- a) its associated skills (i.e. specific knowledge systems) and "morality" (i.e. attitudes, perceptions, and "values");⁸
- b) its position within the social structure (i.e. the associated status, rights and privileges), and
- c) by who or what may fill it (see section 5.5.2).

While it is generally recognized that various sectors bear the general responsibility for role inculcation (e.g. the family, "religion", etc.), these sectors are

⁷ For a more detailed discussion of the differences between "institutions" and "chartered institutions" see section 3.4. In general, "institutions" are conceived of as the function of a knowledge system - the ideal typical, or "normal science" (cf Kuhn, 1970), form of a knowledge system. "Chartered institutions", on the other hand, are viewed as the specific socio-cultural embodiments of institutions. They are the phenotypic expression of the genotypic institution. Chartered institutions include social roles, specific organizations, and "disciplines".

⁸ Generally speaking, the term "values" is used to refer to the combination of a specific experiential knowledge system and a role or sector specific system of morality. Given this definition, "morality" should not be confused with "ethics". The term "morality" refers to a code for survival/replication within a specific sector, while the term "ethics" is used to denote a system of "morality" that includes and transcends all individual sectors.

usually only capable of applying “common knowledge” (see section 4.3).⁹ It may be argued that the chartered institutions in the formalized education sector provide specialized knowledge, however, they are only capable of doing so within a given time lag and in specific areas.¹⁰

In order to find chartered institutions with a rapid response time, we have to look to the fringes of a social formation: specialized intermediate structures that develop to meet specific needs which arise due to rapid changes in the environment. Many of these institutions will have characteristic “technologies” which resemble rites of passage.

Broadly speaking, one function of rites of passage is the application of specialized knowledge systems to inculcate specific roles within individuals (see section 1.1.1). These specialized knowledge systems are one form of “the art and science of causing changes in consciousness in accordance with will.”¹¹ In addition to the function of inculcation, a rite of passage is often ritualized (i.e. standardized). It focuses the

⁹ One major exception to this is the existence of monopolistic instances of these general sectors. A good example would be the specialized cultural capital that may exist in certain families, especially in the form of access to networks and specialized knowledge.

¹⁰ In many ways, the old aphorism about the military always being ready to fight the last war is applicable to the education sector. This situation is not, *per se*, usually contra-survival. Education should be for the system roles as they are known. The danger arises when the roles in the system are subject to constant, dramatic change and a “gap” (time lag) appears between what is taught and what is in actual use.

¹¹ The quotation is Dion Fortune’s reformulation of Alestair Crowley’s definition of “Magick”. I have included it here for two reasons. First, it highlights the continuing social role of the “magician” or “shaman” that operates even in a “secular” society. Second, it points toward a major similarity between “zone of uncertainty” professions, regardless of the form of society in which they operate (see section 4.2.4)

individual on certain actions, limits the options available, forces a shift in perceptions, and offers experiential “proof” of its own efficacy (see Chapter 8).¹²

The inculcation of “knowledge” within individuals is, however, “contested terrain”. The social “right” to perform such actions is constantly challenged both by the individuals participating (at the level of the efficacy of the actions), and within a more general social arena between professional groups. This contestation serves as an analytical entry point. By drawing on the methodologies developed and deployed by the social constructionists (e.g. Best, 1987) and, to a lesser degree by Abbott (1988), we can analyze the specific claims of various professional groups. In particular, we can examine the process whereby a specific social pattern is constructed as a “social problem” or “need” (see Chapter 7).¹³

By using this model, the development of contingent structures can be seen as motivated by biological, individual and social components. Furthermore, it highlights the key role played by the professions in social recognized areas of uncertainty and risk (see section 4.2.4). This model allows us to account for the emergence, change and disappearance of specific contingent structures including rites of passage. This level of analysis, however, relies on changes in individual consciousness and the technologies

¹² I have discussed this in a previous paper (Tyrrell, 1995a) which argued that, in addition to the analysis of rituals/rite of passage proposed by Turner, it would be profitable to consider the topological properties of rites of passage.

¹³ This is not to say that the social pattern did not “exist” before its construction as a social problem. Rather, the underlying assumption is that for a specific contingent structure to emerge, it is necessary that a) resources be deployed, and b) that it have some social “validity” and legitimacy *as a social, rather than personal, problem*. Only once a problem has been legitimated, will the providers of solutions to that problem have a specific, legitimate social role place within the social structure *as solution providers*.

developed to produce such changes which, in turn, relies on a theory of individual/cultural consciousness that is, in many ways, the ultimate in micro-level analysis.

In Chapter 2, I develop a model that draws on many of the recent discoveries in brain research.. The major thrust of the argument is that individual consciousness is a function of three differing components, all of which are mutable. These three components are: a) the structuring qualities of the brain and central nervous system (CNS), b) the structuring qualities of socio-cultural system,¹⁴ and c) the “content” of this system. These three components of consciousness allow us to produce a model that can connect into the larger social levels.

Chapters 2 through 5, are designed to present a coherent, systemic extension to classic rites of passage theory, within the larger meta-theoretical framework of neo-evolutionary theory. Given this goal, they must rely on many different components, each of which is, in its own right, part of complex theoretical debates in a number of different disciplines. As such, I make no absolute truth claims for these separate components, only the claim of “plausibility”. They have been chosen for inclusion since a) they are capable of explaining all observed “facts”, and b) they are the most parsimonious explanations for these facts.

The requirement to use such “black box” components stems from the very nature of the assumptions that underlie rites of passage theory and its necessary extensions. These assumptions operate at three different levels:

¹⁴ I have purposely subsumed the structuring qualities of the lived environment under both of these headings since the experience of that environment is mediated and controlled by the other two systems.

- the “nature” of consciousness, thought and perception (micro-level and at the level of species biology);
- the operation of a rite of passage as an “institution” within an environment of other, competing, institutions (intermediate level or the “mid-range”); and
- the placement of and interaction pattern between any given rite of passage and the broader socio-cultural system (macro-level).

Given this spread, any model that attempts to link all levels together in a coherent whole must engage some form of theoretical “black boxing”. At the least, the model provided in the following chapters is coherent and interlocking.

While chapters 2, 3, 4, and 5 expand rites of passage theory within the overall framework of neo-evolutionary theory into a dynamic model, Chapters 6, 7, 8, and 9 present analyses specific to the outplacement industry. In Chapter 6, I examine the broad, macro-social changes that have “set the scene” for the development of the outplacement industry. The goal in this chapter is to show the development of specific technological and cultural “vectors” that condition the environments in which outplacement develops. This analysis is extended in Chapter 9, where evidence from outplacement/job search, the renovation in human resources, and the development of virtual communities serves to highlight a particular case of convergent evolution in technology and cultural forms that serves to reinforce many of the core concepts of the outplacement industry. The choice of placing this material in a separate chapter stems from its development long after outplacement was already established.

In Chapter 7, I examine the specifics of the rhetorical construction of outplacement in Canada. In general, this construction took place in three main arenas:

the business press (sections 7.3 and 7.4), the courts (section 7.5), and via personal networks. As I mentioned earlier, the "need" for some institution to deal with unemployed executives precedes the creation of the outplacement industry, and much of the material presented in Chapter 7 deals with the creation of this need as a social problem in addition to the establishment of outplacements' "professional" claims.

This is followed in Chapter 8 by an analysis of the actual processes involved in outplacement programs. The components of the various programs are fairly straight forward. What is not straight forward is how these various components interlock to inculcate and reinforce certain beliefs and perceptions, and how various components serve multiple purposes. The beliefs and perceptions inculcated during the outplacement process have received additional support since 1996 as a result of the increasing use of the Internet (see Chapter 9). Finally, in Chapter 10 I present a series of conclusions and areas for future research.

In the last several pages, I have given a very general overview of the organization of the dissertation and some of the reasons for extending rites of passage theory. This general overview will be extended in greater detail in section 1.3 after an examination of the theory itself (section 1.1) and the neo-evolutionary framework in which I will embed it (section 1.2).

1.1 Rites of Passage Theory

In this section, I examine the patterns of social action that are usually termed as "rites of passage" and "passage rituals". This examination is, of necessity, limited to a discussion of general types rather than a more general literature review covering every pattern that has been termed a "rite of passage" or "passage ritual" in sociology,

anthropology and psychology. This necessity arises from the single problematic that, with a few notable exceptions (e.g. Van Gennep, 1960; Turner, 1969, 1982, 1987), the terms are analytically meaningless for one of two reasons. Either the terms are too broadly defined (e.g. Glaser and Strauss, 1971) and/or second, the theoretical models are not integrated into any larger theoretical perspective that can account for cross-cultural and cross-temporal commonalities.¹⁵

1.1.1 Rites of Passage and Passage Rituals

The life of an individual in any society is a series of passages from one age to another and from one occupation to another. Wherever there are fine distinctions among age or occupational groups, progression from one group to the next is accompanied by special acts.... For every one of these events there are ceremonies whose essential purpose is to enable the individual to pass from one defined position to another which is equally well defined. Van Gennep, 1960:2-3

The term "rite of passage" was coined by Van Gennep to refer to a particular pattern of actions that he considered universal. He goes on to note that since the periodicity which is the basis of these rites is also apparent in nature, we should also include those ceremonies which mark the transition between "celestial changes" (i.e. month to month, season to season, etc.). After analyzing various theoretical models, Van Gennep (1960:10-11) argues that

I have tried to assemble here all the ceremonial patterns which accompany a passage from one situation to another or from one cosmic or social world to another. Because of the importance of these transitions, I think it legitimate to single out *rites of passage* as a special category, which under further analysis may be subdivided into *rites of separation*, *transition rites*, and *rites of incorporation*....

¹⁵ Turner (1982:20-60) does attempt to account for cross-temporal regularities in specific rituals, but his solution only operates in situations of a homeostatic ritual such as "communion" or "boot camp".

Furthermore, in certain ceremonial patterns where the transitional period is sufficiently elaborated to constitute an independent state, the arrangement is reduplicated. [*italics in the original*]

1.1.2 Problematics with the basic model

While the model presented by Van Gennep appears to be simplistic it is, in fact, very sophisticated and, at the same time, subject to definitional problems. Let us consider it in its' simplest form. A rite of passage is defined as the passage of a given person or group, "X", from a specific state, "A", to another specific state, "B". This passage is composed of, barring recursions, a separation of X from A, a period of liminality where X is neither in A nor in B, and an incorporation of X into B.

1.1.2.1 State Definition

The first problem is what are A and B? How are they defined? In certain cases, such as biological life cycle processes, these appear to be readily observable. For example, living/dead, non-being/birth, child/adult, etc. The problem with this type of naïve assumption is that in addition to any biological "meaning"¹⁶, all of these states have culturally and socially defined "meanings" which are independent of the biological reality of any given individual(s).¹⁷ This problem is further exacerbated when cultural

¹⁶ Which is in and of itself quite problematic since all humans do not share the same genotype and have, as a result, differing propensities and developmental states. Thus what may be biologically possible for one person may be impossible for another at the same chronological age (e.g. fertility, the development of abstract reasoning powers, etc.).

¹⁷ A very good current example of the problems created by this is in the area of "child sexual" abuse. Not only is the term "abuse" subject to competing and conflicting definitions, but so are the terms "child" and "sexual" (cf Hornick et al., 1994). In a number of societies, for example modern Canada, it is illegal for an "adult" to have sexual relations with a "child". While many people would agree that this is a "good" law, what if the "child" is two weeks younger than the "adult" and they have been engaging in sexual relations, quite legally, for the preceding two years (a situation which is quite possible under Canadian law)?

meanings are not the same as social meanings and competing institutions claim definitional jurisdiction (cf Abbott, 1988; ch. 3, 4, 10).¹⁸

There is a second problem with state definition that arises from the cultures studied to produce rites of passage theory. This problem has to do with a presumption of *de percepto* homeostasis or, in other words, the perception that the two states involved as start and end point are "stable". This assumption is quite problematic, since most social states and many biological states are not "stable".¹⁹

1.1.2.2 The problem of "liminality"

A second problem concerns the nature of the transition from A to B, the stage of "liminality". As with the problem of state definitions, the problem of liminality is definitional. Since liminality is a central concept in rites of passage theory, it is important to examine it in some detail. Liminality, according to Turner (1982), can be divided into two major groupings: liminal and liminoid. Drawing on a distinction of the nature of "work" in pre-industrial and industrial societies, he argues that a crucial distinction must be made concerning the obligatory nature of ritual acts, even those acts which are outside of the everyday social norms. Turner (1982:43) summarises his argument as "option pervades the liminoid phenomenon, obligation the liminal.", and

¹⁸ A good example of this is the current debate over Female Circumcision or Female Genital Mutilation (the very names given to the institution show the competing valuations of it!). For a review of the literature on this "problem", see Ferguson and Ellis, 1995.

¹⁹ One particular example of an "unstable" biological state that has caused problems recently is the average age of menarche amongst young women. At the start of the 20th century, the average age was 15.5 years old, while at the end of the century, the average age is roughly 12.6 (Calvin, 1991). This has created a situation where "children" (culturally defined) are having children (biologically defined).

argues that this distinction arises from the separation of work and leisure in industrial societies from the work-play combination of non-industrial societies.

While Turner assumes that this distinction is a result of industrialization and the concomitant increase in non-obligatory "play" forms (i.e. "leisure"), I would suggest that the reality of the situation is somewhat more complex. While many sectors of activity in industrial societies may well be based on "leisure" (i.e. non-obligatory "choice"), many other sectors are not. Even if we assume that there is a "choice" as to which sectors of society an individual operates in, those sectors themselves may very well contain stringent limits on "choice". There are clearly prescribed forms of obligatory "play" in various groups (e.g. the military, para-military organizations such as the police, some street gangs, certain newly evolving forms of business "teams", etc.). Perhaps a better way of utilizing the terms liminal and liminoid would be to consider whether or not the "rituals" are obligatory or non-obligatory to the organizational and/or institution which "houses" them.²⁰

The discussion of the difference between liminal and liminoid has not been undertaken solely for typological purposes. The distinction between the two has a clear influence on the place of the ritual in the social system/organization and also an influence on the social function of the ritual. Thus liminal (i.e. "obligatory") rituals have a clear

²⁰ And this, in turn, creates the problem of defining "obligatory". At this stage, I would suggest that a ritual may be viewed as "obligatory" if the social costs of not taking part in the performance of the ritual include the ostracization of the individual from an organization to which they believe they "must" belong.

mandate to maintain the social integration of the organization, while liminoid rituals may not have, although there may be individual advantages to undertaking them.²¹

Turner (1987:9) presents a model that argues that the liminal has three major functions: a communication of the "sacra", the ludic recombination and inversion of social norms. These two functions combine to: a) reconfirm the absolute authority between social categories, and b) to create "communitas" within social categories.²²

Liminoid activities produce similar effects, however to use a mandatory-optional dichotomy as the key difference between liminal and liminoid is both simplistic and misleading. The distinction may be captured better if we relate the "mandatoryness" of any given ritual activity with two other factors: a) the organization in which the ritual is embedded, and b) the differentiation of organizations within the given society.

Etzioni's (1961) typology of coercive, utilitarian and normative organizations gives us a good starting point, while organizational differentiation may be measured along domain lines (i.e. production of livelihood, mate selection, medical care, etc.) within particular societies. The first step in clarifying the distinction is to expand the mandatory-optional dichotomy to mandatory, permitted, and accepted. This expansion allows for a distinction to be drawn between ritual activities that are not required, but are allowed/encouraged (the "permitted" category).²³ The tripartite expansion also mirrors

²¹ This is the social equivalent of sexual, rather than environmental, selection pressures. One example is the social benefits that may accrue as a result of "collegial" action in an academic setting.

²² For more on the specific meanings of "sacra", "communitas", and "ludic" see Turner 1967:93-111, 1969, 1974, 1987 and sections 5.3.2 through 5.4.3.

²³ The tri-partite distinction is drawn from distinctions made by abu-Hamid al-Ghazali in *The Revivification of Religious Sciences* (cf. Watt, 1963). I am indebted to Leonard Librande of Carleton University for a seminar course in al-Ghazali's thought where these ideas were discussed in detail. The

Etzioni's organizational types. The second step is to cross organizational types with the mandatory-permitted-optional distinction (cf. Table 1). The third step is to assign a membership strength to each row and column which, when the cross-cells are examined, will produce a membership degree in the set "mandatory".²⁴

Table 1: "Mandatoryness" and organizational types

Organization Type	"mandatory" ms - 1	"permitted" ms - .5	"accepted" ms - .2
Coercive, ms - 1	Ms - 1	ms - .5	ms - .2
Utilitarian, ms - .5	Ms - .5	ms - .25	ms - .1
Normative, ms - .2	Ms - .2	ms - .1	ms - .04
Notes: The assigned membership strengths are purely for illustrative purposes. The membership strength of any given activity would have to be defined separately. The quantification of the membership strength of normative organizations and "accepted" activities was given as .2 to avoid multiplication by 0.			

Etzioni (1961:151-160) notes that there is a significant difference in how each type of organization recruits its members. The methods of recruitment are, in some measure, a means of determining the mandatoryness of membership in the organization within a specific society or culture. According to Etzioni (1961:151-2), coercive organizations employ coercion, utilitarian organizations compete within a labour market.

inclusion of the "permitted" category also allows for the operation and differentiation of selection factors that have little to do with individual survival. This category operates at the cultural equivalent of sexual selection via the production of different forms of status markers that may not be included in the general social organization.

²⁴ The concept of "membership strength" comes from fuzzy logic (cf. Zadeh et al., 1975). The membership strength of a given element, e , is stated numerical from 0 to 1, where a strength of 0 means that the element is never a member of the set, and a strength of 1 means that the element is always a member of the set. Elements in fuzzy sets are stated as e,n where n is the membership strength of the element.

while normative organizations "rely predominantly on expressive communication and socialization" (i.e. competition in affective, emotional and moral "markets").²⁵

The second layer of this model requires an examination of two other sources of "mandatoryness": socially constructed necessity, and biological necessity. In part, the social construction of a series of task areas as "necessary" can be seen in the characterization of social and cultural organizations as coercive, utilitarian and normative. Certainly the social construction of the rituals encapsulated within the organization as "universal" and hence "mandatory" to some specific group is apparent in coercive organizations. Consider, for example, the "universal" necessity of circumcision in many cultures in order for a child to become an adult or the example of the "universal" necessity for a trial and punishment for bigamists in modern North American societies.²⁶

1.1.2.3 The creation, maintenance and change of states

This separation of liminal and liminoid rituals brings us to a third problem which concerns the creation and maintenance of states A and B. Since there is always a component of social construction in the definition of these states, and since social constructions are inherently unstable and subject to revision, what then is the difference between liminal and liminoid rituals? This question is at the core of how rituals come into existence and how they disappear.

²⁵ The form of the organization (i.e. coercive, etc.) may well derive, in non-homeostatic cultures, from the place of the organization in the industrial life-cycle (see Beck, 1992).

²⁶ Of course, neither of these is a "natural law", since polygamy is seen as "mandatory" in a number of cultures (or at least desirable), while the circumcision of teenagers, both male and female, is frequently held to be repulsive in many cultures.

For Van Gennep, this was not problematic. He saw the function of rites of passage as a way reducing the harmful effects of changes between various states. But, while such an explanation is plausible in a number of cases, it is not sufficient to account for changes in the very nature of the states themselves (i.e. changes in social structure that cause changes in the states). In order to account for these changes in the nature of the specific states, we must expand beyond Van Gennep's explanation.

I would suggest that in addition to the mandatoryness of the rituals, the difference lies in the reinforcement of the effects of the ritual in "everyday life". Thus, for example, regardless of how much a given ritual reinforces a particular organization and is obligatory, if the organization itself is not valid on a day to day basis for its members, then that ritual is no longer "liminal" but has become "liminoid". In effect, the proof of liminality is in the living (see also 5.6).

If this is so, then what does this say about our two hypothetical states A and B? We can say that the state components of a rite of passage draw their transformative power from two distinct sources. First, they draw on both the social legitimacy (Chapter 5) and the experiential legitimacy (Section 5.6) of particular institutions in which they are encapsulated. The second source of the transformative power of these rituals stems from the ability of the ritual to produce changes in individual consciousness at both the immediate (i.e. experiential; see 5.3) level and on a long-lasting basis (i.e. at multiple levels - neurological, perceptual/phenomenological, social).²⁷

²⁷ Most rituals are designed to produce altered states of consciousness (ASC's) which reinforce the validity of the ritual via the experience of the participant. For more on the neurological effects of rituals, see Laughlin; 1989b, and Laughlin et al., 1990.

1.1.2.4 The “sacred”

This brings us, in a somewhat roundabout way, to the fourth problematic: the nature of the relationship between rites of passage and “the sacred”. For Van Gennep, this relationship was not problematic in that he held, following Durkheim, that the increasing separation of the sacred and the profane had changed the nature of what required rites of passage. For Turner, the answer was to accept that similar processes were involved in both “sacred” and “secular” rites of passage, but to hold that the social and individual effects were different (e.g. liminal verses liminoid).

If, however, we take the position that I argue for above, that “liminality” is dependant upon a combination of sources both experiential and authoritative, and, hence, must be defined by its subjective effect, then the “sacred” must be something other than the “supernatural” and/or the social structure. I would suggest that the “sacred” is that which: a) stands behind the cognized environment; b) producing a reconciliation between the observed paradoxes of everyday life and existence; and c) providing a subjectively meaningful interpretative schema²⁸ for observed reality.²⁹

This definition of the sacred draws on Laughlin’s (1989b) definition of the transcendent where the cognized environment is “... never more than a model, a point of view, a system of knowledge about the operational environment.”. This model includes

²⁸ I use the term “schema” in the sense used by Piaget (1971) where a schema is considered to be a interpretation and response sequence which may be quite complex. In biogenetic structuralist terminology, a “schema” is a phase of consciousness which is defined by one or more neurognostic components. An alternate, although more limited and subjective term, would be a state of consciousness.

²⁹ This definition of the sacred draws in many ways on Geertz’s (1973:90) famous definition of religion as “(1) a system of symbols which acts to (2) establish powerful, pervasive, and long-lasting moods and motivations in men by (3) formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and (4) clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that (5) the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic.”

an inevitable “zone of uncertainty” between the cognized and operational environments which is defined by the existence of perceived effects without perceived causes.³⁰ In drawing on these definitions, I would argue that the “sacred” operates within both the zone of uncertainty (hence point b) and the world of everyday reality (hence point c). That the sacred “stands behind the cognized environment” is a necessary condition since any cognized environment that is completely rigid will be breached within short order unless there is some provision for adaptation or “continuous revelation”.³¹

One specific reason for defining the sacred in this way is that it specifically includes what has come to be known in Anthropology as “secular ritual” (e.g. Moore and Myerhoff, 1977) and in Sociology as “civil religion” (e.g. Bellah and Hammond, 1980). As Moore and Myerhoff (1977:3-4) note:

If the realm of the religious and the realm of the sacred are not treated as coterminous, then it is possible to analyze the ways in which ceremony and ritual are used in the secular affairs of modern life to lend authority and legitimacy to the positions of particular persons, organizations, occasions, moral values, views of the world, and the like.

In a later work, Myerhoff (1987:261) notes that “[o]ne of the most persistent but elusive ways that people make sense of themselves is to show themselves to themselves, through multiple forms...”. This act of social reflexivity produces a mirror of that which “stands behind the cognized environment” and allows individuals to interact with it in a

³⁰ To be more accurate, the causes are unperceived by the vast majority of a given population. It is usually assumed that certain “specialists”, which I later refer to as “zone of uncertainty” professional, have models of these causes. These specialists include magicians, shamans, research scientists, some types of doctors, mystics, etc. For more on the zone of uncertainty, see 4.2.4.

³¹ Another way of explaining this is that every cognized environment must include a recursive element where the responsibility for the failure of the cognized environment is placed anywhere but on the system.

way that is both temporally “obligatory” and ludic and which can easily produce a “meaningful schema for observed reality”.³²

1.1.3 Distinguishing characteristics of various passage rituals

Given the discussion so far, what can we now say about rites of passage and passage rituals in general? First of all, we can distinguish between various rites of passage based upon the subjective effects of the liminal phase. Thus we have passage rituals that are liminal, creating long-lasting changes in consciousness, and those that are liminoid, which create short term changes in consciousness. The operational precondition for this distinction lies in the degree of social requirement of the ritual for operations within a given state.

I would suggest that we can also distinguish a third category of passage rituals, which might be termed as “hyper-liminoid”, which are between pre-existing states already “known” to the individual.³³ An example of such hyper-liminoid rituals would be basic role taking patterns which are “controlled” via an interaction tonus (cf Goffman, 1963) and are part of a basic cultural knowledge.³⁴

A second distinction we can make is based upon the social stability of the states involved in the passage. Since the stability of these states is determined to a large degree

³² In addition to Myerhoff (1987), good examples of the “sacred” quality of a supposedly “secular” event can be found in Given (1993) and Scholl (1995).

³³ At its core, this distinction rests on differences in the relative “learning” value of the passage where “learning” is conceived of as producing neurological change. Thus the temporal “quality” of the distinction rests upon a) the experiential effect of the passage ritual, b) the future utilization of that which is experienced (i.e. the ongoing entrainment of neurognostic structures produced) in everyday life, and c) the subjectively defined relative importance of the situations in everyday life where this “learning” is utilized.

³⁴ This third category would include many of the so-called “status passages” noted by Glaser and Strauss, 1971.

by the stability of the social system, we can use distinctions based on equilibrium states within the social system. This would give us three major categories of states: homeostatic, states under orthoselection pressures, and states in transition.³⁵

The third, and final, distinction we can make is based upon the relative importance of the states and passages to the replication of the current institutions or, in other words, the "sacra" of the society or organization. This "relative importance" is based not only on the centrality of the states and passages to the support of the institution, but also upon the current needs fulfilling effectiveness of those states and passages within the operational environment.

In addition to these criteria, it is quite possible that a given set of states and passages may be antithetical to particular ideologies and institutions.³⁶ In general, we can distinguish between extremely important states and passages, moderately important states and passages, and unimportant states and passages. In many ways, this distinction is the memetic counterpart to the liminal - liminoid - hyper-liminoid distinction that I noted originally.

³⁵ A homeostatic state is relatively "unchanging", at least in as much as radical change is not subjectively "apparent". States under orthoselective pressure are involved in competition to maximise a particular characteristic, while states in "transition" are near or have hit a catastrophe point where there is overt competition between multiple options, many of which are mutually exclusive.

³⁶ In this case, "antithetical" should not be read as equal to "anti-structural" as that term is used by Turner (1969). The term antithetical is used to designate states and passages that aim, either directly or indirectly, at the dematerialization of particular ideologies and/or institutions, and their replacement with other ideologies and institutions. These states and passages may include 1) "protective" states and passages such as the creation of taboos and social categories as "deviance" (cf Douglas, 1966, 1986); 2) attempts to replace or overthrow a particular ideology or institution (e.g. the relationship between various Islamic fundamentalist groups and governments in the middle east), or 3) states and passages that promote the "irrelevance" of an ideology or institution.

The purpose of this section was to develop a set of criteria in order to distinguish among various types of passage rituals. Three major distinguishing criteria were presented: a) the subjective effects of the liminal phase and importance of the passage ritual; b) the relative stability of the states involved; and c) the relative social centrality of the passage ritual. In the next section, I use these criteria to develop a typology of passage rituals.

1.1.4 Towards a typology of passage rituals

In the previous section, I argued for the existence of three major criteria that distinguish between types of passage rituals. In this section, I use these criteria to develop a typology of passage rituals in general. Given the potential size of such a typology, I have limited myself to a general description of many of the specific types. Given the area of concern of my current research project, I have concentrated my examination on passage rituals in transition states.³⁷

³⁷ This has meant that I do not deal with most of the situation-specific material on theatre or play (e.g. Turner, 1982, 1987; Turner and Bruner, 1986), or "ritual" as a general category (e.g. Grimes, 1985). The decision to exclude most of the material on theatre, play, and "ritual" stems from the fact that much of the material has no direct relevance to the subject at hand dealing, as it does, with specific instances of theatre, play and/or ritual. Where there are general observations which are relevant, they have been included.

One particular decision I have made is to exclude most of the Sociological literature on religion since, with some exceptions (e.g. Bromley and Richardson, 1983), most of the literature cannot, given current size constraints, be assimilated into this analysis due to radically different conceptualizations of "religion". There is, however, a linkage between the work presented here and the phenomenology of Peter Berger (1967) and, to a lesser degree, with the secular religion arguments of Robert Bellah (e.g. Bellah, 1967, Bellah and Hammond, 1980).

The core elements of this difference lie in two areas. First, much of the literature in Sociology of Religion relies on the cult/sect typology of Stark and Bainbridge (1985) and, as a consequence, tends to examine the organizational forms of formally "religious" groups. By concentrating on organizational forms, they have neglected the experiential and transformative elements of rituals that are at the core of rites of passage. Second, given the emphasis on organizational forms, even the works that attempt to deal with transformative experience (e.g. Greeley, 1975) present "facts" that are culturally specific and probabilistic without linking them into a species specific whole.

1.1.4.1 Passage rituals based on the life cycle

A number of life cycle passage rituals were examined by Van Gennep (1960) in his initial formulation of the concept of rites of passage, and the vast majority of these circumstances are still considered to involve rites of passage. Indeed, as Turner (1982:24) notes

Although Van Gennep himself seems to have intended that his term "rite of passage" should be used both for rituals accompanying an individual's or a cohort of individuals' change in social status, and for those associated with seasonal changes for an entire society, his book concentrates on the former type; and the term has come to be used almost exclusively in connection with these "life-crisis" rituals.

I have attempted to reinsert this "lost" meaning to the term indirectly by identifying the relative social importance of a particular passage ritual. Thus, by way of example, seasonal rituals would be extremely important to a culture based on agriculture such as the various Sumerian city states (cf. Wolkerstein and Kramer, 1983). This importance is not merely for marking the turning of the seasons but, rather, to create specific ceremonial situations whereby an entire complex of perceptions and social relationships would be moved from a state of potentiality to a state of immediacy.³⁸ Similar, modern, examples can be found in a number of areas such as carnivals, pilgrimages, the start of the new television season, the start of a new academic year, etc.

³⁸ A similar use of seasonal ceremonials has been noted by John Cove amongst the Tsimsan and other groups of the north-west coast of British Columbia (personal communication). I identified a similar shift in the potentiality of neurognostic structures in relation to seasonal rituals in my examination of modern Witchcraft in Ottawa (Tyrrell, 1992. See also, Tyrrell, 1994).

(cf Stewart, 1986; Turner, 1979, 1987). What has changed is: a) the relative social importance of the passage ritual; and b) the defining source of a "season".³⁹

Turner's comment (quoted above) that the term rite of passage has come to be interpreted as rites concerning various life crises is, on the whole, quite correct. And, while there has been some examination of "a cohort of individuals' change in social status",⁴⁰ the majority of research has concentrated on individual, life crisis rituals.

These rituals concentrate on the ceremonialization of aspects of birth, social puberty, marriage, loss of reproductive ability, death and sickness/healing (cf. Grimes, 1985, 1995). All of these various "life crises" are strongly rooted in biological development and, at least in modern North American societies, are not controlled by a single, unifying "sacred" (cf. Grimes, 1995). In a number of cases, especially in areas such as addictions and "at-risk" children, it has been argued that these social problems exist because of a specific lack of rites of passage for which these "deviant" behaviours have become substitutes (e.g. Becker, 1963).⁴¹ In other instances, a lack of a rite of

³⁹ Consider, by way of example, the importance of various non-ecologically dependant "seasons" for social action: various sports seasons, the "social" season, the academic year, the opening of parliament, etc.

⁴⁰ E.g. Myerhoff (1978). See Goldschmidt (1990), Trice (1993), and Grimes (1985:68-116) for recent reviews of the literature. For a more "informal" view, see Grimes (1995). Most of the sociological research that deals with the same topic areas has not been informed by a rites of passage model, with the notable exception of Willis (1977). By way of example, in discussing the research for his book *Street Corner Society*, William Foote Whyte (1994) talks about his "acceptance" ritual into the group, a baseball game, and his later "discovery" of the social structure of the group in action at the bowling lanes. One has to wonder what he would make of the entire "sports" experience now.

⁴¹ If this is so, then it would imply that there is an epigenic requirement for certain life cycle rituals; an interesting implication, but beyond the scope of the current work.

passage is assumed to be problematic, and a ritual is specifically created in order to alleviate this problem.⁴²

One particular form of ritual that has caused researchers some problems is “initiation” rituals. The source of the problem with initiation rituals is that every rite of passage is, *de facto*, an “initiation”. In order to circumvent any problems, I would suggest that we can distinguish three major forms of initiations. First, we have initiations concerned with “normal”, everyday operations (e.g. getting a driver's license, performing a bar mitzvah, an apprenticeship, going to university, etc.) where the initiation provides the individual with the social legitimacy to perform certain actions and/or function. Second, we find initiations concerned with specialized sub-cultural roles (e.g. initiations into specific technical professions, secret societies, etc.). Third, we find initiations in “other-worldly” social roles which routinely operate in the zone of uncertainty between the cognized environment and the operational environment (e.g. initiations into mystical and magical organizations such as the Masons and modern Witchcraft, initiations into the non-technical and trans-technical professions -e.g. spiritual counselors, “pure” research scientists, etc).

In summing up this sub-section, we can see that there are four major forms of life-cycle rituals, any and all of which may be rites of passage rituals. These are seasonal rituals, rituals which change the status of an entire cohort, rituals that concern the social recognition of and response to individual biological changes, and initiation rituals.

⁴² See, for example, the material on the Children of the Sun School and their Rites of Passage model (Trust for the Development of African-American Men, 1996a and 1996b).

1.1.4.2 Passage rituals in homeostatic and orthoselective cultures

In general, most recent authors have followed Turner's (1969, 1987) model of the function of rites of passage in homeostatic cultures. In this model, rites of passage have three major functions: a communication of the "sacra", the ludic recombination and inversion of social norms, all of which function to a) reconfirm the absolute authority between social categories, and b) to create "communitas" within social categories. As such, a rite of passage reconfirms the knowledge systems of the culture, creates social unity, and allows for the slight modification of cultural knowledge via the "ludic recombination".⁴³

The case is similar, but somewhat more complicated in cultures operating under orthoselective pressures. By "orthoselective pressure", I mean a culture which is subject to an incremental increase in the effects of one or more selection pressures, including technological pressures). While rites of passage still have all of the characteristics present under homeostatic cultures, there is an added situation of internal competition both within and between social categories where that competition significantly changes the operational environment in a way that is not restorative of the immediately previous homeostatic balance (the "Ratchet Effect", Calvin, 1991). Examples of cultures under this type of pressure would include the early modern European nations being drawn into what Wallerstein (1974) has termed the modern world-system, changes in internal economies of native American groups in response to European colonization (cf Innis, 1956, Given,

⁴³ The term "ludic recombination" is meant to capture the effects of "play" on categories and meanings. As with many of Turner's terms, it includes a play on words. In this case, the word "ludic" is used to refer to "play" or "game", but it also has ties into another sense of "game" (i.e. animals) and into the blending and melding of human and natural worlds that took place in certain mystery religions.

1994), competition for grazing lands as a result of changing weather patterns amongst pastoralists, and the modern medical establishment (Abbott, 1988).

In many ways, a culture under orthoselective pressures is undergoing a communal rite of passage where the final ordeal of that ritual process is either a transitional period or a new homeostatic balance.

1.1.4.3 Passage rituals in transitional cultures

Passage rituals in transitional cultures are, perhaps, the most complex situation of those we are examining. First, there is usually a breach in what Berger (1967) has termed "the sacred canopy" that cannot be healed. The old ideologies, institutions and organizations are no longer meeting the needs they were created to fulfil. Transitional cultures are marked by a increasingly sharp conflict between people over the relative merits, the "truth", of differing ideologies, institutions and organizations.

Second, this conflict is markedly similar to that examined by Turner (1969, 1987) under the rubric of a "social drama" (or "schismogenesis", Turner, 1957). However, unlike the social dramas of many homeostatic societies, the "redressive" mechanisms called into play include not only the liminality of "social theatre",⁴⁴ but also the potential of all out, violent combat at the level of society and the concomitant "survival of the fittest".⁴⁵ In some few instances, there may be a complete and utter breakdown in all forms of social bonds.

⁴⁴ I use the term 'social theatre' to refer to the public performative genres of a social drama.

⁴⁵ I have specified it in this manner, using Spenser's phrase, since many homeostatic societies (e.g. the Nuer, the Scottish Highlanders, etc.) developed socially acceptable redressive mechanisms ("social theatre") based on individual and small group combat (i.e. the code duello, cattle raids, blood feuds, etc.).

There appears to be a sort of "halfway point" between all out collapse and "normal" orthoselection, where the "old" social contract breaks down and a new one evolves without a violent "revolution", even though violence may happen. This "halfway point" centers around the idea of a culture and/or society having time to adapt to the new conditions, albeit in a "satisficing" (Simon, 1956) rather than optimal manner.⁴⁶ I use the term "temporal event horizon" to describe this point.⁴⁷ The term "transitional culture" may be applied to cultures/societies operating both within a temporal event horizon and those that are in complete breakdown.

I would suggest that any rites of passage that are operative in these extreme situations belong either to the class considered under orthoselective cultures if within the temporal event horizon, and probably do not exist in the case of the total breakdown of social bonds. Social dramas, on the other hand, are a completely different matter.

The only difficulty with social dramas in transitional societies is that the "sacred" which supports them in homeostatic and orthoselective cultures is itself under attack. As long as this attack is at the level of individual institutions, then there is a likelihood that specific forms of social theatre will have been developed. An example of this in modern society is the development of the type of ceremonial known as a "government public

The type of combat I am referring to here is more akin to that of a religious civil war which subordinates all other social ties to those of shared ideology.

⁴⁶ The concept of "satisficing" relies on the operation of a "bounded rationality" which allows people to make decisions based on setting an aspirational level and ending the search as soon as an alternative that exceeds that level is found (see Simon, 1956)

⁴⁷ Drawn from celestial mechanics. In general, the gravitational attraction of an object will affect the vector through space-time of an object. The concept of an event horizon comes from examining the intense gravitational pull of a black hole, and the term is used to mark the point at which an object cannot escape from the black hole. This does not mean that an object approaching the black hole cannot use it to achieve a "slingshot effect", i.e. a rapid change in vector, without getting caught in the black hole.

hearing”⁴⁸ or the “court case”. If the conflict is at the level of ideologies, and especially those that define the mode of integration in an entire society, then general conflict is more likely.⁴⁹

Within the temporal event horizon we find an intriguing situation appearing, at least as far as individual rites of passage are concerned. First, passage rituals based on the life-cycle appear in any number of (often) conflicting forms. This multitude appears not only as a result of any “multi-cultural” component in the society, but also as a result of speciation amongst ritual specialists and the conflicting claims between them. In effect, the breakdown of the “sacred” creates a “boom” environmental niche for competing players.

Second, a “new” genre of individual and, sometimes cohort based, passage rituals appears which is designed to transform people from one competing institution to another. This “new” genre of passage rituals is usually concerned with the transformation of linkages in core neurological structures (see section 2.2) of the individual via the inculcation of a new M-form (a quasi-stable collection of perceptions, beliefs and responses; see section 4.1).⁵⁰ In keeping with this particular function of the genre, we might term these passage rituals as “re-education” rituals.

⁴⁸ And all of its sub-genres: the Royal Commission, the Congressional Investigation, etc.

⁴⁹ A good example of this is the militia movement in the US which believe that the Ideology defining the mode of integration of society has replaced the original Ideology envisioned by the founding fathers. Similar examples would include religious fundamentalist movements of all flavours (sacred and “secular”) and other types of revitalization movements.

⁵⁰ I have put the word “new” in quotation marks, since the form itself may be quite old. It is based on the isolation of an “impure” group or individual until they can be made “pure” (cf Douglas, 1966). Other instantiations of the genre include conversion/missionizing programs, “deprogramming” and/or “brainwashing” (cf Bromley and Richardson, 1983), and purification rituals.

Over the past twenty-five years, Canadians have seen a variety of organizations which have attempted to fulfil the mandate of this genre regarding the current restructurings of the economy. The organizations that have materialized this genre range from self-help groups, to government retraining programs, to the outplacement industry. In effect, the sharp increase in both corporate instability and in the overall number of the unemployed have created an abundant environment for organizations that "serve" them (i.e. see the unemployed as a "resource").⁵¹

Third, this new genre of passage rituals will only last, as "special" organizations, until such time as the conflict between M-forms and/or institutions is relatively resolved and the dominant Ideology gains control of the primary institutions of enculturation (i.e. is able to define the expectations of most individuals in regard to its "role"). Good examples of this process can be seen in the professionalization of new technologies (cf Abbott, 1988), and in the changes to the north American educational system at the end of the 19th century.

1.1.4.4 Summation

The purpose of section 1.1.4 was to produce a typology of passage rituals, and this is presented in

Table 2 (below). While the typology is "fuzzy" this stems from the fact that passage rituals are themselves "fuzzy" in everything but general structure.⁵²

⁵¹ And this operates not only in the "helping" sector. Consider, by way of example, the uses to which the unemployed, as a category, have been put by politicians of the New Right.

⁵² And, even in the case of general structure, Van Gennep (1960) noted that the emphasis of one component of the ritual process would usually outweigh the others.

Table 2: A Typology of Ritual Passages

Type	Homostatic and orthoselective cultures	Transitional cultures	Notes
Life Cycle Rituals: - birth, social puberty, marriage, loss of reproductive ability, death, sickness/healing	usually present in orthoselective cultures, competition may be a key component	sometimes present, sometimes absent. if absent officially, alternate "deviant" forms may well be present multiple forms may be present which represent competing ideologies and institutions	based on the social recognition of biological reality highly subject to variation
Seasonal cycle rituals	dependant upon the "season" of importance	dependant on the "season" of importance	typically under-developed in the literature outside of specific "tourist" aspects
Cohort movement rituals	usually important	importance varies	
Initiations:			
- social legitimation	usually important defines general "position"/role in society	moderately important, since social conflict produces increase "uncontrolled" opportunities	the legitimacy of the ritual depends upon the legitimacy of the Ideology and/or institution
- specialized sub-cultural roles	usually crucial serves to define and reinforce the division of labour	moderately important (see above)	since technical specialities are usually in a state of conflict, "importance" may be measured by effect
- "zone of uncertainty" of professions	absolutely crucial always stand somewhat "outside" of "normal" society	absolutely crucial usually the leaders of various competing factions	these people are "dangerous" in that they stand both within and outside of society they are also the necessary interface between society and the "sacred"
Social Dramas	crucial inasmuch as they are the containment mechanisms for social conflict	importance varies with degree of conflict	important in that they a) force a recognition of the zone of uncertainty, and b) reinforce the sacred. In situations of conflict between ideologies, they act as a "test" of the relative "strengths" of the competing ideologies
Re-education rituals	rarely used. if used, tend to be limited to extra-group adoptions and rules of extra-group hospitality more important in orthoselective	highly important. act as a "stop-gap" measure until the conflict between ideologies is over and the winner gains control of the primary enculturation systems	possibly exapted from rituals of purification. Tend to produce interim organizations which disappear quickly in transitional cultures

	cultures than in homeostatic cultures		
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In general, we can state that rites of passage theory is quite well developed along the lines of subjective experience (e.g. Turner, 1969, 1982, 1987; Turner and Bruner, 1986; Grimes, 1995). Rites of passage theory is weak, however, in three core areas. First, there is a serious lack of connection between the theory and current neurophysiological knowledge. Turner (1982:10, 58) appears interested in extending the analysis in this direction, given adequate technology, but he died before this could happen and the extension has never taken place.⁵³ In light of the significant advances in neurobiology over the past 30 years, there is a clear need to establish these links in a general systematic manner. The necessity to do so arises from the need to update the bases of sociological theorizing in light of new understandings of brain functionings. If "it is a capital crime to theorize in advance of the data" it is even more serious to ignore new data to retain old theories, a point well recognised by Turner (1982:58).

The second great weakness in the theory is the relationship of rites of passage to social structures in situations of rapid structural change. Turner's (1982:20-60) "solution" of terming these "liminoid" and, hence, beyond the range of rites of passage theory is not a solution at all: it is a "sweeping under the rug" of inconvenient data that will not fit the current model. Even within the constraints of current rites of passage theory, it is possible to extend the analysis somewhat (e.g. sub-sections 1.1.2.2, 1.1.4.3, and the concept of a temporal event horizon). However, this extension is not, in and of itself, sufficient, especially in situations of fluctuating social states. Making the linkages more

⁵³ Charles Laughlin has integrated neurobiology into ritual theory as a whole, but has not used it as a basis for a systematic extension of rites of passage theory.

exact, and extending the model to include situations of rapid structural change is the second goal of this dissertation.

The final great weakness of rites of passage theory lies not so much in the theory itself but, rather, in the meta-theory in which it is embedded. In particular, there is no clear formulation of the linkage between 1) subjective experience, symbolization, and "thought", and 2) social structure and 3) the functions played by rites of passage in this link; at least for non-homeostatic societies.⁵⁴ Again, some refinement is possible within the current theory but, in order to produce a processual model, the theory needs to be heavily reformulated and embedded within a meta-theoretical model that can account not only for these linkages but also for changes in these linkages.

1.2 The search for a meta-theory

The problem with using rites of passage theory to examine the outplacement industry is that it stretches that theoretical model well beyond its limits. The extension of rites of passage theory is not, in and of itself, problematic. What is problematic, however, is the choice of how to extend the theory in such a manner that new problems are not immediately apparent.

As I noted in the final point of the last section, the great weakness of rites of passage theory lies not in the theory itself but in the meta-theory in which it is embedded. While the overall problem of linkages is apparent between the three conceptual nodes of subjective experience (including symbolization and "thought"), social structure, and the

⁵⁴ This in spite of the fact that it is the core argument of rites of passage theory in homeostatic cultures!

functions played by rites of passage in this link, the central problem is that, with respect to social structure, rites of passage theory is a taxonomic theory, i.e. it is static.

If we are to transform the theory into a component of a dynamic meta-theory, then the focus of the analysis must, of necessity, concentrate at the level of meta-theory rather than on rites of passage theory *per se*. Of necessity, this requires selecting a meta-theoretical model that can accommodate rites of passage theory while, at the same time, allowing us to identify the historically situated and developing factors that will impact on the particular rite of passage.

These requirements mean that we must use a dynamic meta-theory that allows for the emergence of new forms of social organization. In sub-section 1.2.1, I review a number of the major meta-theoretical models in Sociology that link consciousness and social structure together. While many of them have proved useful in various situations, I argue that none of them contains all of the components necessary to successfully meet all of our requirements. Indeed, the sole meta-theoretical model that comes close is neo-evolutionary theory, which I discuss in sub-section 1.2.2. In particular, neo-evolutionary theory is able to make linkages to the biological bases of humans and, at the same time, propose general laws governing change in social environments. In other words, neo-evolutionary models developed in biology can, with some minor changes, operate at the social level since, at its core, evolutionary theory deals with the laws surrounding the maintenance and modification of patterns of information be they biological (i.e. DNA), cultural (i.e. language) or social (i.e. institutions; see Dawkins, 1986).

1.2.1 Meta-theoretical models of consciousness and social structure

Most meta-theoretical models in Sociology are based on one of three different, yet linked types: *phyletic*, *ontogenic*, and *functional*. The key differences between the models are the level of analysis and the necessary components. Phyletic models are concerned with changes at the level of genotype (core patterns/elements of the organism/species) over time whereas ontogenic models are concerned with changes at the level of phenotype (observable organism/entity) over time. Functional models, on the other hand, are concerned with the inter-relationships between an organism/entity and its environment at a particular point in time and may or may not include a diachronic perspective.

Phyletic models examine the evolutionary history of an organism or a socio-cultural entity. By way of example, Marx's model of stages of development is a phyletic argument, as are all of the other unilineal evolutionary models.⁵⁵ Other examples would include the extended phenotype argument of Dawkins (1989), the sociobiology of E.O. Wilson (1975) and Jerome H. Barkow (1989; Barkow et al., 1992), and the evolutionary psychology of Cosmides and Tooby (1992, 1994a, 1994b, 1994c).

In addition to modeling an evolutionary history, phyletic models are also concerned with examining the conditions under which changes occur at the level of genotype. Thus any phyletic argument must include components which deal with questions of heritability and mutation (the acquisition and inheritance of new genotypic

⁵⁵ Phyletic models are usually presented in a form resembling $A \Rightarrow B \Rightarrow C$ this is often misleading since the conditions under which "A" will lead to "B" etc. are not named. This habit of presenting phyletic models in the $A \Rightarrow B \Rightarrow C$ form has lead to an assumption on the part of many people that state C is an inevitable outcome of state A and, furthermore, that states A, B, and C are homogenous (cf Gluckman, 1968).

components), and speciation (the creation of “new” genotypes which are reproductively incompatible with the previous population).

Ontogenic models examine the development of a particular organism or socio-cultural entity from conception to death. Examples would include Weber’s (1947) arguments about the process of institutionalisation via the routinization of charisma, the developmental psychology of Jean Piaget (1971), and the Social Constructionist arguments of Joel Best (1987). Ontogenic models do not require components that deal with heritability, mutation or speciation. They do, however, require components that model the interaction between the organism/entity and its environment over time.

The third type, *functional* models, examines the interworking of various components of an organism/entity. Functional models may be extracted from either phyletic or ontogenic models, or they may be created independently. Examples of functional models would include the various forms of functionalism (e.g. Durkheim, Malinowski, Radcliffe-Brown, Parsons, etc.). Functional models require a component that models the interaction between the organism/entity and its environment only insofar as the environment is actually considered in the model.

One frequent criticism of functional models that is made is the observation that if “X” exists, it must have a functional reason for being there. This is a “common-sense” argument that makes two critical, and unwarranted, assumptions. First, there is an assumption that the “function of X” is defined by its place in the “organism” which contains it: an “organo-centric” viewpoint that is unsupported in nature (cf. Dawkins,

1986). From the viewpoint of “X”⁵⁶, its sole function is to replicate itself before it destroys its host organism. The second assumption stems from the first. Since “X” must be “functional” (in the sense of providing an organo-centrally “positive” benefit), it must also be “moral” in the sense that it either promotes the survival of its host or the quality of life of its host. Such a position is, of course, patently ridiculous.

Each type of model has been used at various times in sociology, although they have rarely been identified by type.⁵⁷ This is, perhaps, understandable given the intense distaste held within the disciplinary culture for anything relating to biology and the racist overtones of some work in the area (cf Tooby and Cosmides, 1992). The difficulty, however, is that regardless of how much a discipline may not wish it so, human societies are formed from biological entities (humans and other species) which interact in an ecosystem. As such, human societies, their members, and constituent institutions are subject to the evolutionary pressure of natural selection.

This habit of not identifying models by type in social theoretic literature has also been compounded by a conflation of analytic levels; especially in regards to the “nature-nurture” debate, and the “mind-body” problem. Various social theoreticians have assumed the operational primacy of one distinct level, especially in discussions of the “causes” of consciousness. For example, in his preface to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* Marx (1970:181) argued that “It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their

⁵⁶ This is a linguistic convenience, and a convention from biology, that should in no way be taken as an assumption of conscious intent on the part of “X”.

⁵⁷ The major exception, of course, being functionalist models. Even here, however, the concept of “function” differs radically. See, for example, Cosmides and Tooby (1994c).

consciousness.” (see also Marx, 1959) In effect, consciousness derives from the interaction between people and the means of production (i.e. artefacts). This produced bonds of similarity between individuals whose relationship to the various means of production was similar which, in turn, gave rise to the concept of “class consciousness”. The (social) “existence” and recognition of class boundaries produced the characteristic forms of social “evolution” which he termed Modes of Production. In effect, operational primacy is granted to artefacts (including social constructions - e.g. the principle of economic determination in the least instance).

On the other hand, numerous social theorists have stressed the primacy of the “I – Thou” (or “ego – alter”) relationship for the construction of consciousness (e.g. Schutz, 1967; Berger, 1967; Berger and Luckman, 1967; Husserl, 1970). This relationship produces a “natural attitude” which, in turn, incorporates knowledge schemas that produce behaviour. These knowledge schemas are “stored” in an overlapping series of sets (“life-worlds”) which are passed on to other members of the social group. Operational primacy is granted to a culturally defined combination of perception, expectation, and memory.

Several authors have proposed “bottom-up” or “emergent level”⁵⁸ explanations that clearly distinguish between various “levels”. The most prominent are Malinowski (1944) and Parsons (1951; Parsons and Shils, 1951)⁵⁹ who both argued that social theory

⁵⁸ The term “emergent level” refers to an analytic level that, while drawing on the “natural laws” of the previous level, is “stable” in terms of its’ own “natural laws” (cf. Calvin, 1997).

⁵⁹ Malinowski’s theory preceeded and influenced Parsons. This is not surprising, since Parsons studied with Malinowski in 1927 at the LSE (Parsons, 1957).

required a solid grounding at both the level of biology and of psychology. Malinowski (1944) drew on behaviourist research as his psychological “ground”, while Parsons and his colleagues drew on a variety of sources, and present a very detailed model (Parsons and Shils, 1951:8-20). One comment in particular is worthy of notice (Parsons and Shils, 1951:9):

We assume then a set of needs which, although initially organized through physiological processes, do not possess the properties that permit these physiological processes to be exclusively determinative in the organization of action.

This assumption is quite significant since it lays the basis for theorising social and cultural systems as separate, emergent levels, and for unifying the social sciences with the physical sciences. This attempt at unification “failed”,⁶⁰ and much modern social theory has returned to philosophy as its source of consciousness.⁶¹ Such a return to philosophy and the concomitant disregard of the explosion of new knowledge in neuroscience has, however, meant that Sociological meta-theory is in danger of being relegated to the status of any other theology that ignores reality (see Andreski, 1972, for early warnings).

⁶⁰ On this “failure” within sociology, see Gouldner (1970). For a somewhat different view on this in relation to the social sciences in general, see Tooby and Cosmides (1992).

⁶¹ A good case in point is Giddens (1991). One comment in particular, along with discussion that follows, is indicative of just how far away from “emergent level” theorising Giddens (1991:35) has moved.

We begin from the premise that to be a human being is to know, virtually all of the time, in terms of some description or another, both what one is doing and why one is doing it. The logic of such a standpoint has been well explored within the perspectives of existential phenomenology and Wittgensteinian philosophy.

In the following discussion, Giddens (1991: ch. 2) removes all trace of even the possibility of emergent levels. His work may be seen as a radical re-affirmation of the mind-body dualism that has permeated philosophy since Descartes.

The major trend inside Sociology that has accepted biological and neuroscientific reality is Sociobiology (e.g. Wilson, 1974) and, more recently, Evolutionary Psychology (e.g. Barkow et al., 1992). While offering a much needed linkage to biological and neuroscientific discoveries, these approaches have been hampered by the lack of a simple, parsimonious meta-framework capable of extrapolation to a broader social level. This meta-framework is only just starting to emerge in certain forms of neo-evolutionary theory which are mapping the specific rules governing social evolution (e.g. Laland et al., 1999).

1.2.2 Neo-evolutionary theory as a general framework

As a result of this situation, I have decided to use a "minimalist" version of neo-evolutionary theory that derives from Dawkins (1989), Barkow (1989; Barkow et al. 1992), Cosmides and Tooby (1992, 1994a, 1994b, 1994c), and Calvin (1991, 1996, 1997a). While related to Sociobiology (e.g. Wilson, 1974), neo-evolutionary theory, especially in its newer forms (e.g. Calvin, 1991, 1997a) is much less deterministic and, at the same time, less complex.

In order for a theory to be considered as "evolutionary", it must have, at a minimum, four core components: a theory of heritability, a theory of mutability, a theory of variation, and a theory of selection (cf. Thompson, 1989:). These requirements are minimal, and it is quite possible that other, additional mechanisms will be required to explain any particular instance. In the following sub-sections, I look at each of these requirements.

One further requirement that needs to be made clear is that evolutionary theory makes a strong conceptual distinction between the individual level and that of the group or population. In order to produce a theory that operates for humans, each requirement must be considered at both the individual and population levels. Indeed, there is also a requirement that what constitutes a "group" must be both flexible and nested, since human groupings follow this pattern. Given this, it is possible for a group to be considered as an "individual" within a larger population grouping.

This creates some situations that are unaccounted for in standard (i.e. biological) evolutionary theory which only contains individual and species levels. One particular example of this would be treating individual organizations as if they were individual members of a species even though they are collections of individuals. Another example would be treating institutions as competing individuals within a limited environment.

1.2.2.1 Heritability

The concept of "heritability" asks one simple question: how is a characteristic passed from a progenitor to a descendant. When we consider the question of heritability at both the social and biological levels, however, there are two clear problems with the available models. The first problem is exactly what is passed from a "progenitor" to a "descendant". In the original, biological, formulation the question is answered by pointing to deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA). At the social level, the "what" is somewhat more complex, although most suggestions center around the idea of "memes" (see Dawkins, 1986; Thompson, 1989:ch. 5 and 6; section 2.4). In general, however, we can follow Calvin's (1997a) dictum that what is "passed" is a "pattern".

The second problem with the available models of heritability is the question of how it operates (i.e. the mechanism). Again, at the biological level solely, the mechanism is well known as a form of Mendelian inheritance (i.e. genetic recombination). At the social level, however, there is quite a mixture, with both Mendelian, Lamarkian, and other characteristics showing up.

At the level of the individual human being, biological heritability is Mendelian while cultural heritability appears in two forms. For the very early period of the child's life, they "inherit" cultural characteristics from their primary caregiver(s), and the form is Lamarkian (i.e. an inheritance of acquired characteristics). This form of heritability I refer to as "enculturation". In later periods, the person "inherits" social and cultural characteristics from their primary and secondary groups (an acquisition of socially constructed characteristics), and I refer to this form as "socialization".

For the individual, then, there are three mechanisms of heritability: biological (Mendelian), enculturation (Lamarkian), and socialization. This final form, the acquisition of socially constructed characteristics, is also one of the mechanisms which allows for the production of variation (see section 1.2.2.2).

At the level of a group, we see all three forms of inheritance, at least if our unit of transmission is a pattern of thought/interpretation. Thus we see a form of pseudo-Mendelian inheritance operating as "traditional" thought: the "received wisdom" of a group. We also see a form of Lamarkian inheritance, especially in cases of the routinization of "new" thought patterns. Finally, we can see many situations of the acquisition of socially constructed thought/interpretation characteristics, both from within

a population (i.e. imitation), and from populations operating in different niches (i.e. diffusion).⁶²

1.2.2.2 Mutability and Variation

In biology, mutability refers to shifts in the genetic structures within a species, while variation refers to the potential for a species to split into multiple, non-interbreeding, species. When we consider social groups, there is certainly evidence of both processes although, with some few exceptions⁶³, they do not involve changes in genetic structures.

At the social level, mutability appears to be the result of an ontogenic process or, in other words, as a result of the unfolding of a characteristic in a particular environment or niche. Variation, on the other hand, operates using the same mechanisms (i.e. social construction), coupled with niche specific selection factors, in such a way that it a) creates and maintains niche barriers, and b) defines which niche "belongs" to which population.⁶⁴

⁶² The use of the terms "traditional" and "routinization" derives from Weber's (1947) types of authority. As they are used here, they refer to the length of time which a particular pattern of information has been held within the "mind" of the group. Given this, "traditional" would loosely translate as "since time out of mind" and "we have always done it this way!", while "routinization" would refer to a memory of the change. Both operate in what Schutz (1967:207-214) terms the "world of predecessors" (*vorwelt*), and the distinction surrounds how the memory is held: as an act of "foundation" or as an act of volitional change.

⁶³ Genetic mutations may arise as a result of isolation of a group from others, while socially constructed, artificial speciation may operate to shift genetic frequencies. The sole, biologically "true" form of speciation in *Homo Sapiens Sapiens* is in blood type incompatibility.

⁶⁴ A good example of this would be the splitting of a profession into different task-based niches marked with linguistic barriers, e.g. the concept of medical specialization. Speciation has occurred when the authorizations to perform certain tasks are sufficiently different between groups that they are no longer able to operate in the same niche, e.g. anesthesiologists versus neurosurgeons.

1.2.2.3 Selection

There are two central points that must be made when talking about selection since "selection" is a short form for two different processes: Darwinian natural selection and mate selection (i.e. genetic recombination). First, as a process, natural selection effects a change in the frequency distribution of one or more units of information within a population by a mechanism based on a) survival to recombination and/or b) selection for recombination.⁶⁵ The second point is that survival to recombination does not necessarily translate to selection for recombination.⁶⁶

Strategies for survival to recombination tend to be genetically based, and are referred to as the *r*-K spectrum (Calvin, 1991:136), where the *r* refers to a strategy with little or no progenitor care and many progeny, and K refers to extensive progenitor care and a low reproductive rate. The *r*-K spectrum may be thought of as a "quantity verses quality" spectrum.

While there is some evidence that humans undergo an *r*-shift in boom environmental times (i.e. a shift to the quantity end; see Calvin, 1991:135-140), we are primarily concerned with *r*-K spectrum shifts at the social level. In general, an *r*-shift takes place in environmental "boom" times (i.e. abundant resources), while a K-shift takes place during environmental "lean" times. It may seem fanciful to talk about *r*-K spectrum shifts in groups, but consider the way new, variant groups proliferate in

⁶⁵ Usually referred to as survival to maturity and mate selection.

⁶⁶ There are also a number of other, more philosophical, points that should be kept in mind. Primarily, the term "selected for" is a short form that refers to a particular strategy that guarantees a greater number of descendants than other strategies; there is no implication of external agency directing the selection process.

"resource rich" environments (e.g. Internet stock trading companies), while in groups operating in "lean" environmental niches are subject to downsizing, mergers, and takeovers (cf. Beck, 1992:93-96).

This brings us to the second point about selection: survival to recombination does not guarantee recombination or, in other words, just because a group exists does not mean that anyone will "buy" what they are "selling". Recombination, at the level of a social group, is based on adaptation to their niche and growth either by invention, imitation, or diffusion. If the niche is stable, then the groups competing in that niche will develop competition based around one or more specific attributes. These attributes are the intra-niche selection pressures and are termed "isomorphic vectors" or "selection vectors".

Groups operating within a niche are subject to extra-niche selection pressures as well as intra-niche pressures. In the case of most biological populations, these extra-niche selection pressures operate at the level of survival (e.g. climate change, etc.). In the case of human groups, however, these extra-niche pressures may be created from within the niche based competition, taken outside of the niche, and a new selection pressure initiated from without the niche.⁶⁷

1.2.2.4 Niches

In most biological models, the definition of a "niche" is simple: a particular territory of sufficient resources to allow for species replication. In extrapolating the concept to deal with social groups, the definition is much more complex and less

⁶⁷ By way of example, consider the effects of the so called "whistle blower" laws on the operation of the tobacco industry. The industry has had to adapt to selection pressures brought on it by a variety of court decisions and public pressure campaigns.

definitive. In general, I use Malinowski's theory of culture to provide the framework for niche construction, since there is such a variety of niches in human cultures (see Chapter 3). The central difference is that social groups are able to consciously construct both the components and boundaries of particular niches, thereby modifying niche availability and selection pressures (see Laland et al., 1999)

In addition to niche construction, we also have to consider the concept of niche boundary porosity or, in other words, the fact that niches bleed into each other, and ideas filter back and forth between them. This is especially true when we consider niches that are the province of professional groups who are engaged in "boundary disputes" over tasks and resources (see Abbott, 1988; Chapter 5).

1.2.2.5 Catalysts and Stabilizers

Calvin (1997a) has argued that there are five features that, while not required by evolutionary theory, certainly influence the rate of evolutionary change. These features are worth quoting directly (Calvin, 1997a:6-7).

Stability may occur, as in getting stuck in a rut (a local minimum - or maximum -- in the adaptational landscape). Variants happen, but they're either nonviable or backslide easily.

Systematic recombination (crossing over, sex) generates many more variants than do copying errors and the far-rarer point mutations.

Fluctuating environments (seasons, climate changes, diseases) change the name of the game, shaping up more complex patterns capable of doing well in several environments.

Parcellation (as when rising sea level converts the hilltops of one large island into an archipelago of small islands) typically speeds evolution.

Local extinctions (as when an island population becomes too small to sustain itself) speed evolution because they create empty niches.

Each of these features may have an impact on both biological and socio-cultural evolution. Of particular interest are the concepts of local extinctions and

parcellation in relation to memetic complexes (see Section 2.4.4) governing concepts of career and unemployment (see Chapter 7).

One particular mechanism that Calvin does not include in this list but does mention elsewhere (Calvin, 1991:87-92) is a "pumping mechanism". This mechanism refers to the effects of stronger selection pressures in a fluctuating environment which becomes hostile and forces the population into a less hostile environment where they enjoy an advantage. Calvin's model was proposed to account for changes in hominid evolution as a result of the ice ages, but the mechanism would also appear to operate in other areas.

1.2.2.6 Convergent Evolution

The final concept we need to discuss is the concept of "convergent evolution". In general, the concept refers to the process whereby two or more separate species evolve towards a similar phenotypic end point or, to use another term, when "form follows function". While this type of mechanism has usually been noted in relation to material culture, there are also cases where it appears to operate in general cultural terms (i.e. "cultural ecology"; White, 1959; see also Chapter 9).

1.2.3 Summation

Neo-evolutionary theory, or at least the minimalist version presented in section 1.2.2, provides us with a meta-theoretical model that encompasses our examination of rites of passage and the outplacement industry. In particular, the concepts of niches and niche construction, parcellation, and local extinction are of great use in understanding how, and why, the outplacement industry was able to develop (see Chapter 7).

1.3 The Method of Study

At the start of this chapter, I gave a general overview of the plan of the dissertation. After the examination of rites of passage theory presented in section 1.1, and the discussion of neo-evolutionary theory presented in section 1.2, the time has come to lay out the exact structuring of the dissertation. This structure, together with the major linkages, is graphically presented in Figure 1-I.

The discussion of rites of passage theory in section 1.1 concluded with the observations that the theory was weak in three major areas: links to current neuro-physiological knowledge, links between rites of passage and social structure in times of rapid change, and embedding the theory in a meta-theory. The first of these weaknesses will be dealt with in Chapter 2, which produces a tri-partite model of consciousness. The first part of this model describes current neuro-physiological and evolutionary psychology models (2.2). This is followed by an examination of the linkages between individual consciousness and cultural artifacts (2.3), since consciousness does not operate in a cultural vacuum. Finally, I draw on Richard Dawkins (1976, 1989, 1993) concept of "memes" to argue for a link between individual consciousness and cultural content.

While I argued in section 1.2 that embedding rites of passage theory in neo-evolutionary theory was useful, there are still a number of problems that must be taken up once this embedding is decided upon. The chief problem is to define just exactly what the specific environments are which are connected to rites of passage. Since rites of passage affect both individuals and larger social groups, it is apparent that there are both "cultural" environments (3.2) and individual or "interior" environments (3.3) that affect the outcome of any particular rite of passage.

Figure 1-I: Linkages in the dissertation

In section 2.3, I discuss the basic model of linkages between individual consciousness and cultural artifacts operates, and this, together with the model presented

in section 2.4, becomes the basis for Chapter 4. Chapter 4 is concerned with the various interface systems between individual consciousness, social structure and cultural artifact. There are two main reasons behind examining these systems. First, if a rite of passage becomes integrated into a social structure, then it does so via the use of interface structures. The second reason centers on the interplay between technology, in its broadest sense, consciousness, and knowledge systems. Rites of passage are the cultural "tunnels" between social structures and, as such, they are conditioned both by the structures themselves and by the knowledge needed to navigate between these structures. Sections 4.2 and 4.3 describe models of how the interplay operates, and the particular place of professional knowledge.

Chapter 5, deals with the "nuts and bolts" of constructing social structures. In neo-evolutionary terms, it details how structures come into being, mutate, and decline. The reasons for this chapter are twofold. First, rites of passage rely on the existence of structures, since they are the "tunnel" between structures. And, while there is no requirement that these structure be social structures, they must at the minimum be culturally recognized as structures that can be mediated. A good example of this would be seasonal rites of passage. The seasons themselves are not "social" structures, but the recognition of their differences and the differing actions and perceptions required by them are cultural constructs.

Chapter 5 sets the scene for examining how the outplacement industry came into existence by describing the necessary processes. In Chapter 6, the general, macro-social processes which pre-condition those discussed in Chapter 5 are described in some detail. In particular, I discuss certain macro-social selection pressures in section 6.1, and follow

this with a general discussion of specific selection pressures in sections 6.4 to 6.7. Section 6.7, dealing with the Early Silicon Age (~1960 to the present), is left somewhat incomplete since the outplacement industry develops very early on in the period. Indeed, the pre-eminent (so-far) characteristic of the Early Silicon Age, the development and deployment of the Internet, happens in the ESA 3 period (~1993 to the present) at a time long after outplacement has been firmly established.

Chapter 7 deals with the rhetorical construction of outplacement in Canada by drawing on the models presented in Chapter 5, and material from the media and the Canadian courts. Of particular note are the discussions of the Late Industrial Age 4 meme complex (see 2.4.4 and 7.2) and the subsequent development of an Early Silicon Age meme complex (see 7.7) in response to the broad social changes of the period from 1968 to 1982.

In Chapter 8, the analytic level is shifted to examine the actual operations of the outplacement industry as a rite of passage. The material presented comes from a variety of sources including field observations, company manuals and interviews (see 8.1). One interesting point is that, with a few limited exceptions such as the use of the Internet for job searching, the material in the manuals has been fairly consistent since the industry stabilized in 1982.

I mentioned earlier that the examination in Chapter 6 of the Early Silicon Age was somewhat limited, since outplacement developed early on in the period. Indeed, the pre-eminent shift of the period, the development of the Internet, did not happen until the start of the ESA 3 period (1993 to the present). But, even though the Internet developed generally after the development of the outplacement industry, it has had numerous effects

on that industry, and this is the subject of Chapter 9). Some of these effects are examples of convergent evolution, particularly the parallel development of reciprocity systems (see 9.1), while others such as shifts in Human Resources are the direct result of the emergence of the Internet (see 9.3). Indeed, the Internet appears to be establishing a new evolutionary vector that is quite different, both from that of the Late Industrial Age and of the earliest parts of the Early Silicon Age (see 9.5).

While the material presented in Chapter 9 brings the saga of outplacement up to the present day and argues for the emergence of a new evolutionary vector, it is not, by any means, the "final word" on the industry. Indeed, we are only starting to see the very tip of the iceberg, as far as the effects of the Internet and related technologies are concerned. The arguments in Chapter 9 are there to show some of the effects, and to point towards future areas for research. Chapter 9 concludes the analysis part of the dissertation, and leads into the conclusions section presented in Chapter 10.

2 Consciousness and Experience

The purpose of this chapter is to present a model of “consciousness” that can make linkages between the micro-, mid-, and macro- levels of social analysis. This type of “preliminary theorising on consciousness” is not, by any stretch of the imagination, “new” in sociology and many examples come readily to mind (e.g. Karl Marx, 1959 [1846]; G.H. Mead, 1934; Talcott Parsons, 1951; etc.). And, with the exception of Mead, none of these authors were “experts” in psychology or consciousness: they merely tried to use the best models of consciousness currently available to them as the basis for their further theorising. I find myself in the same position. I am not an “expert” in psychology or consciousness but, given current advances in these fields, I find it necessary to attempt an inclusion of these new models.⁶⁸

The model I present derives from an amalgamation of evolutionary psychology (e.g. Cosmides and Tooby, 1992, 1994, 1997; Hirschfeld and Gelman, 1994; Baron-Cohen, 1995), biogenetic structuralism (Laughlin and d’Aquila, 1974; Laughlin et al, 1990), cognitive science (Ornstein, 1986; Gazzaniga, 1985; Calvin, 1996), and memetics (Dawkins, 1986, 1993; Brodie, 1996; Blackmore, 1996). The goal is to not only produce a functioning model, but to elaborate on the ontogenic and phyletic arguments. While it is not a “true” model in any transcendent sense of the word, I believe that it is a more “plausible” model than that which underlies most current social theorising. At the least, it appears to include, consider, and generate hypotheses about more observations than most other models currently available inside sociology.

2.1 Basic Assumptions on the nature of "consciousness"

In order to produce a working model of consciousness, several basic distinctions must be drawn and a specific viewpoint established. I start with the assumption that the "nature-nurture" debate in all its various incarnations is the result of a conflation of a number of different analytic levels, the existence of which requires models which are "level appropriate" (cf. Tooby and Cosmides, 1992; Calvin, 1997).⁶⁸

What then are the minimum levels required in order to model consciousness in such a way that it will help explicate rites of passage and outplacement? Before we even begin to speak about levels, at least in the sense of quasi-stable emergent levels, we need to develop an area based typology. By this, I mean that we must produce a typology of *systems* or *areas* that cross-cut emergent levels in a manner similar to such concepts as "the visual system", etc.

First, I take it as axiomatic that in any scientific discussion of "consciousness", we can only talk about "incarnate" consciousness. The term "incarnate" (literally "in the flesh") is used here to refer to the "vehicle" or "medium" in which a given component of consciousness is operative.⁷⁰ Second, if consciousness is incarnate, then the expressions of consciousness that are examinable will, in part, be dependant upon the medium

⁶⁸ In particular, I have been impressed by Cosmides and Tooby's (1992) and Laughlin and D'Aquili's (1974) critiques of the conceptualisation of consciousness in most social science.

⁶⁹ Since these levels *appear* to operate within common-sense units of sociological analysis (the "individual", the "group", the "institution", a "culture", a "society", etc.), there has been little reason to separate them out. Attempts at level separation, and level specific analysis, tend to a) be accorded the status of "sub-disciplines" or "traditions", b) meet with hostility, or c) be derided as "overly complex". See Tooby and Cosmides (1992) for a discussion of this within psychology, anthropology and sociology.

(“vehicle”) in which they incarnate. The medium is not so much the message, as it is a message and a conditioning factor (a “massage”) on transmission (McLuhan and Fiore, 1967). These axioms require that we consider two separate systems: a system of “vehicles”, and a system of “content”.⁷¹

But to speak of a “system of vehicles” is somewhat simplistic and misleading. The vehicles of consciousness, in and of themselves, are composed of many different levels, types and forms, each with their own operational laws. For the sake of simplicity, we can reduce these to two major categories:

1. vehicles that are genetically determined (i.e. the “brain”, CNS, physical systems of perception, etc.), and
2. vehicles that are socio-culturally determined (i.e. television, newspapers, songs, stories, myth cycles, etc.)

This illustrates the need for, at a minimum, three distinct systems or area typologies.⁷² Following Cosmides and Tooby (1994c: 44-46), we can say that most social theory has been concerned with “how” questions (operations), rather than with questions

⁷⁰ This is not to say that the effects of what is conceived by some as a discarnate consciousness may not be observed and, hence, taken into consideration. Rather, this conception must be treated as a “social fact” (Durkheim, 1964), rather than as a form of consciousness.

⁷¹ Following Bateson (Bateson and Bateson, 1987), we might say that “content” is an inhabitant of *pleroma*, while the medium of consciousness is part of *creatura*.

⁷² By “distinct”, I do not mean “wholly separate and non-overlapping”. Rather, I would suggest that the “boundaries” between these levels are “fuzzy” rather than “crisp”. The terms “fuzzy” and “crisp” derive from set theory. “Crisp” sets have members who are either part of the set or not part of the set – a binary “either/or” statement. “Fuzzy” sets have members who, in addition to being “full” members of the set, may also be “partial members” of the set. Laughlin et al (1990) also use a three category construction which is somewhat different: a) structural information, b) behavioural information, and c) experiential information. The model presented in this chapter is clearly within the realm of their first category, structural information, as a conditioning, non-determinative, precursor to the second category of behavioural information.

of “what” and “why” (structures and specific adaptive mechanisms). The “what” and “why” pertaining to the specific system (the vehicle) is confused with the “what” and “why” of the content. This situation arises from two distinct problems:

most systematic examinations of social phenomena rest on unsupported assertions about rationality and motivation (cf. Cosmides and Tooby, 1994b), and

most social theory does not ground social behaviour in neurological operations (i.e. does not treat it as an emergent level. cf. Tooby and Cosmides, 1992; Laughlin, McManus and D’Aquili, 1990).

This results in models of social action which use biased perceptions of behaviour to explain all behaviour.⁷³ Laughlin et al. (1990) suggest using a triangulation strategy based on structure, behaviour and experience to counter this bias. While I agree with many of their arguments, the model I present in this chapter relies on specific identification and grounding in perceptual systems to control for bias. I conceive of these perceptual systems as containing three major components: biological “hardware”, socio-cultural “hardware” (the two “vehicles”), and content “software” (“meaning”). “Consciousness”, as it is experienced, I hold to be an emergent property of the interaction between these perceptual systems.

The first area typology is that of neurophysiological “hardware”. This area is concerned with the genetically pre-determined pre-cursors of “consciousness” and with

⁷³ This is a logical fallacy based on the assumption that a member of a set is equivalent to the entirety of the set (if P then Q, therefore P = Q). This operation only becomes a logical fallacy once the equation P = Q moves beyond the form of an hypothesis, and becomes the sole explanation. This is the type of fallacy that many critics levelled at functionalism (cf. Gouldner, 1970): if X exists, it must be functional, therefore since X exists, it is functional. The problem with this formulation, of course, is that the meaning

the operations of sensory perception, thought, memory, etc. It is imperative to stress that the use of the phrase “genetically pre-determined” does not mean “the inevitable appearance of....” All too often, there is a confusion of the level of genotype (DNA instructional codes) with the level of phenotype (the specific result of the interaction of the genotype with the environment). I address this area in section 2.2 (the personal “hardware” of consciousness)

The second area typology I address is socio-culturally determined vehicles (section 2.3 – the social “hardware” of consciousness). This area deals with the storage, transmission, and “massage” (McLuhan and Fiore, 1967) of “content” as contained in both intersubjective vehicles (e.g. spoken language, story-telling, etc.) and transsubjective vehicles (i.e. technological/artefactual systems; this is expanded in sections 4.1 and 4.2). The division of social “hardware” into intersubjective and transsubjective forms is somewhat artificial. I have chosen to use this distinction to highlight the differences in structural properties between these systems. In general, “transsubjective” systems *tend* to make use of intersubjective systems but serve to mediate the locus of intersubjectivity. For example, a written work would be considered as transsubjective, while a dialogue would be considered as intersubjective.

The third area typology deals with “content”. This is, perhaps the most difficult area in all of the social sciences to deal with (see, for example, Gouldner, 1970). Attempts at producing a “reflexive sociology” have, to my mind, led sociology away from science and into the realm of philosophical aesthetics (e.g. Gouldner, 1970). Other

of “functionality” is assumed to refers to something similar to “for the good of the organism”, rather than “for the good of (i.e. continued replication of) X”.

attempts at “grounding” content in social action (e.g. Spector and Kitsuse, 1987) have produced plausible explanations but, due to a lack of grounds for the social actions themselves in lower emergent levels, are somewhat unstable. In section 2.4, I draw on the meme theory (e.g. Dawkins, 1989; Brodie, 1996) and Calvin’s (1996) concept of the Cerebral Code to ground “meaning” content in both neurophysiological and soci-cultural of vehicles.

2.2 “Mind” and Brain

“Consciousness” is not a unitary, observable, “thing”. Rather, following a number of authors⁷⁴, I would argue that what we refer to as “consciousness” or, to be more specific, the individual, neurophysiological vehicles of consciousness, are:

1. an adaptive response to environmental conditions (Cosmides and Tooby, 1992, 1994); and
2. a collection of various “neurognostic structures” (Laughlin et al., 1990), or “domain specific” structures (Hirschfeld and Gelman, 1994, Baron-Cohen, 1995) which evolved to meet these environmental conditions;⁷⁵
3. a series of reflexive, recursive, and reactive processes (meta-structures) which mediate the operation of various domain specific structures; and, hence
4. an emergent property of a complex system;

⁷⁴ E.g. Ornstein (1986), Gazzaniga (1985), Laughlin and d’Aquila (1974), Laughlin et al (1990), and Cosmides and Tooby (1992, 1994, 1997).

⁷⁵ The terms “neurognostic structures” and “domain specific structures” are not synonymous. The latter is a sub-set of the former. “Neurognostic structures” includes not only domain specific structures, but also a) neurological “superstructures” that have evolved to co-ordinate between domain specific structures (cf Sperber, 1994 for one possible way in which this could happen), and b) information on the ontogenic deployment of domain specific structures (cf Baron-Cohen, 1995; Laughlin et al, 1990; Piaget, 1971).

I believe that we are safe in assuming that the development of domain specific structures, which at the simplest level are stimulus response sequences, is phyletically prior to the development of "consciousness". We can further assume that any domain specific structures that are heritable (i.e. DNA codes) will only be inherited over evolutionary time if they have a higher "inclusive fitness" than other, competing structures (cf Barkow, 1989; Cosmides and Tooby, 1992).⁷⁶

A corollary of this would be that the ability to discard and/or modify contra-survival neurognostic structures would also increase the organism's ability to survive, compete, and reproduce. We can also assume that the abilities to rapidly select among available neurognostic structures, and to develop new ones and pass them on to future generations, are also pro-survival traits.⁷⁷

This may sound as if I am advocating a form of Lamarkian "inheritance of acquired characteristics". This impression, however, is incorrect. Lamarkian inheritance requires that acquired characteristics modify the DNA structures of the organism and this ability is not a necessary condition for elimination and/or modification of neurognostic

⁷⁶ NB: this does not in any way imply that they are "better" for the individual who has them. It merely notes that the DNA coding is better at replicating itself than other code groupings in the same area. A good example of this comes with the development of oil sacks in Sperm whales. Female Sperm whales appear to have mate selection codes for males with larger apparent head sizes. The code for the oil sack increases the apparent size of the head while, at the same time, reducing the ability of the individual whale to swim. The oil sack code increases the chance of mating, while reducing the chance of individual survival. The code for oil sacks has a higher "inclusive fitness" than other codes and, as a result, is now part of the species genotype even though it does not benefit individual survival.

⁷⁷ This is all fairly standard evolutionary theory, at least as it is currently understood. See, for example, Thompson, 1989.

structures. Evolution, as Brodie (1996:74) notes, favours “the kludge”⁷⁸ (a form of satisficing behaviour; Simon, 1956) and natural selection can account for modifications and development over time (cf. Dawkins, 1986). The ability to modify and develop new neurognostic structures, and to pass them on to future generations, is present in humans as a result of several evolutionary kludges: “neuronal plasticity” and long term potentiation.

The term “neuronal plasticity” refers to two abilities: a) the ability of neurons to reshape their patterns of connection within the brain, and b) the ability of individual synapses to change their “charge” weight (cf. Churchland and Sejnowski, 1992). These properties of neurons may have evolved in response to a requirement for longer development time within organisms (as opposed to a longer *in vivo* process) or, possibly, as a way in which new organisms can adapt to the immediate environment. Regardless of its origin, neuronal plasticity is one of the core neurological properties that allow for “learning” and “development”. In some areas, neuronal plasticity is time dependent in such a manner that structure X must develop within time span Y, or else the property associated with structure X will not be available to the organism (cf. Piaget, 1971; Laughlin et al, 1990; Baron-Cohen, 1995).

The term “long term potentiation” (LTP) refers to an increase in the excitability of neurons in certain areas of the brain (entohinal cortex and the hippocampus) in response to specific stimuli. While there are restrictions on the type of sensory input which will

⁷⁸ “Kludge” is a term from the software industry to designate a patch that works around a particular problem. “Kludges” are clear indication of natural selection in operation. In speaking of the design of the human eye as a kludge, Brodie (1996:74) notes “It’s difficult to imagine an engineer, let alone God, designing something this way.” (see also Dawkins, 1986)

activate LTP, depending on which sensory system is involved, it is also apparent that at least some areas of the brain act as general potentiation sites which allow for cross modal sensory associations and LTP.⁷⁹ This was clearly established in the classical conditioning experiments of Pavlov where behavioural output (dog drools) is associated with an audio (bell rings), rather than an olfactory, sensory input. For our purposes, the importance of LTP is in two facts. First, at least in some areas, LTP appears to be content independent and situationally constructed including via soci-cultural input.⁸⁰ Second, it appears that in other areas, LTP is content dependent and some of these areas are "social" (cf. Baron-Cohen, 1995; Cosmides and Tooby, 1992; Buss, 1994).

The existence of these two evolved kludges, neuronal plasticity and long term potentiation, side-step the problem of the inheritance of acquired characteristics, since what is inherited is the ability to acquire characteristic behaviour from the operational environment. Furthermore, this ability to acquire characteristic behaviour is in addition to domain specific structures that are content specific. As such, an individual may "inherit" acquired characteristics via cultural transmission without these characteristics changing the genetic code. Indeed, there are a number of instances of this "adaptation of function" (aka exaptation) whereby a neuronal structure plays multiple roles (e.g. throwing

⁷⁹ In effect, these areas act as general areas that serve to interconnect two or more different sensory systems. See Churchland and Sejnowski (1992: chap. 4) and Calvin (1996) for more details.

⁸⁰ This content "independence" may stem from a conflation of too many differing modules giving input into the area. We can not dismiss the possibility that content independence is an illusion, and that its appearance may be an emergent property of a system of content dependent modules. Given the relative potential for generating research hypotheses (cf. Cosmides and Tooby, 1994c), I have followed the "assumption" that LTP is never fully content independent (cf. Laughlin et al, 1990).

behaviour to predictive abilities; cf. Calvin, 1991). In the next three sub-sections, I consider each of the points outlined at the start of this section.

2.2.1 an adaptive response and a collection of domain specific structures

Once one realizes that psychology is a branch of biology, inferential tools developed in biology – its theories, principles, and observations – can be used to understand psychology.

Cosmides and Tooby, 1997

The recent development of the field of evolutionary psychology has produced a number of innovative examinations of neurological systems that directly relate to the study of consciousness and social action.⁸¹ This has been accomplished by applying five “principles” drawn from biology. It is worth examining these principles in some detail, since they serve as the basis for my first two points concerning consciousness. The examination of these principles draws directly from Cosmides and Tooby (1997:4, 5, 7, 8, 11).⁸²

The brain is a physical system. It functions as a computer. Its circuits are designed to generate behaviour that is appropriate to your environment.

Our neural circuits were designed by natural selection to solve problems that our ancestors faced during our species’ evolutionary history.

Consciousness is just the tip of the iceberg; most of what goes on in your mind is hidden. As a result, your conscious experience can mislead

⁸¹ It is perhaps unfair to characterise the development of evolutionary psychology as “recent”. It draws on a comment made by Darwin in *The Origin of Species* and James in *Principles of Psychology* [1890] (cf. Cosmides and Tooby, 1997:1). The same view also served as inspiration for the Second Torres Straits expedition in 1898, and for much of the work of W.H.R. Rivers, C.S. Myers and W. McDougall (cf. Haddon, 1935). But while the viewpoint served as an inspiration, it also lacked the grounding in brain neurology which has been available only in the last 40 years (e.g. the discovery of neurotransmitters and the development of non-invasive testing techniques such as Positron Emission Tomography [PET scans] and Magnetic Resonance Imaging [MRI scans]; cf. Churchland and Sejnowski, 1992).

⁸² The wording on the principles is a direct quote from Cosmides and Tooby (1997:4, 5, 7, 8, and 11 respectively). The discussion draws on the same work but, unless otherwise noted, contains no direct quotes or paraphrases. Any misrepresentation of their position is, therefore, my own.

you into thinking that our circuitry is simpler than it really is. Most problems that you experience as easy to solve are very difficult to solve – they require very complicated neural circuitry.

Different neural circuits are specialized for solving different adaptive problems.

Our modern skulls house a Stone Age mind.

The first principle is self-apparent. The only part of it that might cause any difficulty is the word “designed”. In this case, as in any case dealing with a natural selection based theory, the term “designed” refers to the effect rather than the supposition of a “designer”. It is a “short hand” term (cf. Cosmides and Tooby, 1992, 1997; Tooby and Cosmides, 1992).

The second principle, “design by natural selection”, amplifies the first one, but highlights the temporal aspect of natural selection. In most instances, natural selection operates over a species population over a very long time. The sole exception appears to be in cases of catastrophic changes in the operational environment (Laughlin, 1996b from Rappaport, 1968) which render one or more inherited characteristics lethal,⁸³ however, non-population lethal catastrophic change may encourage the retention of multiple-environment adapted neural circuitry (see Calvin, 1991: ch. 5). The third principle, “most consciousness is hidden”, is really a conclusion from the study of neuroscience. It is, however, a very important point to make, since consciousness seems so effortless to most individuals.

The fourth principle, “different neural circuits for different problems”, stems from the second, and draws on principles of comparative anatomy and botany. Since humans,

⁸³ A good example of this is the change in moth coloration during the industrial revolution in England. Within the space of a few years, the population ration of black moths to white moths reversed itself (a ration of about 1:9) as a result of increased atmospheric pollution (white moths were now more visible than black moths to their predators).

as a species, share some of the same neural circuitry with other species then it is only logical to assume either

1. that we evolved from common ancestors,
2. that the same circuitry evolved independently in numerous species, or
3. that there is only one way to design the circuit.⁸⁴

We can fairly safely exclude the second possibility on the grounds of fossil evidence that, at least for some species, clearly shows the development of two (or more) species from a single species. The third possibility can also be excluded on the grounds that there actual does appear to be more than one way to solve a particular adaptive problem (the design of the iris in humans and cats is a good example).

Another point in the fourth principle is that neural circuits are specialised for solving different adaptive problems. Circuits are “specialized” and, as Cosmides and Tooby (1997:10) note, come with “crib-sheets” – preferential content sensitivity based upon the particular adaptive problem they evolved to solve. This has some startling implications that will be dealt with over the next few pages.

The final principle, that “[o]ur modern skulls house a stone age mind”, stems directly from the other principles. Since the evolution of neural circuitry takes such a long time (barring catastrophic changes in the operational environment) it is logical to assume that the neural circuits which are of most importance to us evolved during the 10 million or so years that our ancestors were hunter-gatherers (cf. Barkow et al, 1992). The human species has only had a mere 12,000 years of agriculture, and a mere 200 years of

⁸⁴ A fourth possibility, that all species were designed by some external agency (i.e. God), is excluded on the grounds of lack of evidence. In biology, textual analysis does not produce “facts”.

industrialisation. This is not enough time for natural selection, except of the catastrophic type, to take place. The only logical conclusion is that “[o]ur modern skulls house stone age [e.g. hunter-gatherer] minds.”

2.2.2 Content specific modules

Content specific modules (i.e. functionally adaptive systems of neural circuitry) have been identified in many areas. A complete review of all known and hypothesised modules is clearly beyond the scope of this work (see Barkow et al, 1992; Hirschfeld and Gelman, 1994; Cosmides and Tooby, 1997; Simpson and Kenrick, 1997 for reviews: for “hardware” details of some modules, see Churchland and Sejnowski, 1992). With this limitation in mind, I wish to examine three module areas that have a particular bearing on outplacement: 1) the “Cheater Module” proposed by Cosmides and Tooby (1992); 2) the “Relational Models Theory” proposed by Fiske (1992); and 3) the “Resource Support” module implicit in Buss’ (1994) work.

2.2.2.1 The “Cheater” Module

Our ancestors have been members of social groups and engaging in social interactions for millions and probably tens of millions of years. To behave adaptively, they not only needed to construct a spatial map of the objects disclosed to them by their retinas, but a social map of the persons, relationships, motives, interactions, emotions, and intentions that made up their social world. Cosmides and Tooby, 1992:163

One of the ongoing questions in social theory has been the question of how social order could have arisen. Hobbes’ belief, expressed in *Leviathan*, that early human organization was a war of every man against every man has come under attack from a number of different disciplines. In anthropology, Marshal Sahlins (1972) showed how

reciprocity systems served to create a web which would protect against such chaos without a “state” providing order. In sociobiology and evolutionary psychology, the concept of reciprocal altruism was developed to show how co-operation could evolve without the existence of a leviathanic state (Barkow, 1996; Goodenough, 1995; Axelrod, 1984).

In *Cognitive Adaptations for Social Exchange*, Cosmides and Tooby (1992) draw on this second literature to show that reciprocal altruism cannot operate unless some mechanism for detecting “cheaters” is available (people who accept a benefit but do not pay the cost for that benefit as expressed in a “social contract” agreement). They review a series of experiments that test a number of possible ways to detect cheaters, and come to the following conclusions, which I quote directly from Cosmides and Tooby (1992:206):

The algorithms governing reasoning about social contracts include inference procedures specialized for cheater detection.

Their cheater detection procedures cannot detect violations that do not correspond to cheating (such as mistakes).

The algorithms governing reasoning about social contracts operate even in unfamiliar situations.

The definition of cheating that they embody depends on one’s perspective.

They are just as good at computing the cost-benefit representation of a social contract from the perspective of one party as from the perspective of another.

They cannot operate so as to detect cheaters unless the rule has been assigned the cost-benefit representation of a social contract.

They embody implicational procedures specified by the computation theory (e.g. “If you take the benefit then you are obligated to pay the cost” implies “If you paid the cost, then you are entitled to take the benefit”).

They do not include altruist detection procedures.

While they are unable to locate such algorithms in specific brain structures, the data presented is highly indicative that such structures exist. The requirement to detect cheating may also have developed out of mate-selection and mate-retention strategies

designed to control sexual activity (cf. 2.2.2.3; also Buss 1994; Barkow, 1989). The implications of the existence of the cheater algorithm are, to say the least, staggering.

Furthermore, the existence and specialisation of such an algorithm enables us to make sense of certain irregularities in the data on reactions to job loss. In particular, the cheater module, if it is a general module, would explain why the content rules of job search/job loss may change such that the "same" circumstance will evoke different reactions. For example, the response to being fired may be anger or relief (see Chapter 7 and, in particular, section 7.7). It is plausible that the cheater module operates on input from "relational models" (see next sub-section) which define the "appropriateness" of any given input.

2.2.2.2 Relational Models

In *Structures of Social Life*, Alan Fiske (1991) argues that four elementary relational structures describe the vast majority of human social relations. According to Fiske (1990, 1991), these four elementary relation structures are communal sharing (CS), authority ranking (AR), equality matching (EM) and market pricing (MP).⁸⁵ Each of these structures is composed of a relational perception and a set of normative actions relating to this perception: actions flow from perceptions and vice versa according to the dictates of each particular relational structure.⁸⁶

Communal Sharing is a relationship based on group membership where individual identity is irrelevant. Fiske (1991:14) notes that the core concepts of communal sharing

⁸⁵ There is also a fifth structure that is a "null"; social action that is non-relational to others.

are encapsulated in the Indo-European word "ginΩ", meaning "to give birth" or "beget". As Fiske (1990:14) notes, Communal Sharing "... is a relationship based on duties and sentiments generating kindness and generosity among people conceived to be of the same kind". The orientation of such a relationship is to a particular group, whether this is a "natural" group (e.g. kinship network) or an "artificial" group (e.g. a cult).

Authority Ranking is a relationship based on a linear hierarchy. Authority Ranking is not to be confused with purely coercive power, although it may appear to consist of that. Commonly, distribution, deference and power are asymmetrical with the higher ranks holding greater amounts of power and status. Equality Matching is a relationship based on the concept of "equal but different". It appears in turn-taking behaviours, exactly equal distribution of a gift to a group and "tit-for-tat" forms of reciprocity.

The market pricing model organizes relationships around ratios and proportions, rather than the interval comparisons of equality matching. Haslam (1997:300) argues that these "[r]elationships are implicitly or explicitly understood in terms of commodities, with autonomous participants seeking benefit through joint trading."

Drawing on previous research that shows that the models are both cross-culturally valid (Fiske et al., 1991; Fiske, 1993) and discrete from each other (Haslam, 1994), Haslam (1997:303-308) goes on to argue that they have clear correlates in primate behaviour patterns and also exhibit a phyletic evolutionary quality. It is the combination of these two qualities, primate correlates and clear indications of phyletic evolutionary

²⁶ This is similar to Parsons (1951:25) concept of the status-role bundle, although Fiske's conceptualization would be the background to Parsons foreground concept.

change, that support the plausibility of the argument that the relational models may be evolved psychological mechanisms.

It is important to point out that, as with most instances of evolved psychological mechanisms, the module does not predetermine the specifics of its cultural application. A module for calculating appropriate patterns of social interaction relating to, for example, communal sharing would not necessarily contain any "hardwired" instructions as to when the module would be activated even though the CS model appears to be the basis of kinship networks in many species (cf. Haslam, 1997:300, 303). It is quite apparent from cross-cultural material that the specifics of application of any model are socially and culturally constructed and supported.

The social construction of specific applications has some important implications. If the behaviour pattern applied to any particular set of stimuli may change from culture to culture and through time, then we should be able to identify the factors that influence that shift. In addition, it means that while response patterns may be biologically coded, at least at some core level, the social application of that code can be redefined (i.e. a biological determination of general patterns of reaction and a cultural determination of what stimuli evoke which patterns).

2.2.2.3 The "Resource Support" Module

The display and use of resources by men has been identified by Buss (1994) as a key strategy evolved to gain and retain mates. Drawing on cross-cultural interview data, Buss has shown that the withdrawal of resources by men to their mates is a significant

factor in the dissolution of mating bonds. The example Buss (1994:178⁸⁷) chose to illustrate this situation with is, for our purposes, highly illuminating.

In no society does a woman's failure at providing resources constitute grounds for divorce.

The seriousness of the male's lack of economic providing is illustrated by the report of a woman in her late twenties who participated in a study of marital separation:

My husband lost a series of jobs and was very depressed. He just couldn't keep a job. He had a job for a couple of years, and that ended, and then he had another for a year, and that ended, and then he had another. And then he was really depressed, and he saw a social worker, but it didn't seem to be helping. And he was sleeping a lot. And I think one day I just came to the end of the line with his sleeping. I think I went out one night and came back and he hadn't even been able to get out of bed to put the children to bed. I left them watching television and there they were when I came back. The next day I asked him to leave. Very forcefully.

Buss' (1994) data is primarily cross-cultural interview data. As such, it lacks the rigorous hypothesis testing shown in the argument for a cheater algorithm (Cosmides and Tooby, 1992). What he has managed to do, however, is to illustrate two points. First, a requirement for resource support is clearly not solely a cultural construct. This is shown by the fact that the effect is cross-cultural and, hence, not culture specific although probably differentially reinforced in different cultures. The second point illustrated is that the withdrawal of such resources will increase the likelihood of a marital break-up. It is quite possible that these "resource support" algorithms are similar to the cheater algorithm, although this remains untested.

Regardless of whether these resource support algorithms are autonomously based in neurophysiological structures, it is clear that they have an impact on people's

⁸⁷ Originally from D.S.Weiss, *Marital separation*. New York, Basic Books, 1975, page 19

behaviour.⁸⁸ It is also clear that they have played a role in how outplacement has been constructed, since the vast majority of outplaced executives in the 1970's were male. In particular, the development of spousal counseling is a direct response to the resource support algorithm if, in no other way, by convincing the wife that "something is being done".

2.2.2.4 A final note on "cheating" and betrayal

In an article entitled *Perceptions of Betrayal and the Design of the Mind*, Todd Shackleford (1997) argued that Cosmides and Tooby's (1992) work on the cheater module was partially flawed. As a result of a series of experiments measuring perceptions of betrayal, Shackleford and Buss (1996; Shackleford, 1997) argue that two or possibly three separate cheater detection modules (one for mates, one for same sex friends and one for allies) are necessary to account for their data.

If we assume that there are specific modules for Fiske's social relations models, however, there is no necessity to postulate additional cheater modules. It is more parsimonious to assume that each social relations module sends a variable signal to a single cheater detection module, and the compound signal strength differences would account for the measure variance in perceptions of betrayal. Indeed, the concept of a compound signal strength based on the application of multiple social relations modules would also account for changes over time in reactions to the "same" event: for example, changes in reactions to being fired.

⁸⁸ If these resource support algorithms do not have an autonomous neurophysiological structure, then they cannot be counted as an "evolved psychological mechanism" (cf. Cosmides and Tooby, 1992, 1997). Given the present state of knowledge in the area, either possibility is plausible.

2.2.2.5 Summary

For our purposes, these algorithms can serve as a basis for a) an explanation of certain reactions to firings and b) an explanation of the development and deployment of "spousal counselling". Indeed, by combining Fiske's social relations models with a single cheater module, we can account for changes in reactions to firing events.

The purpose of examining these three content specific modules has been twofold. First, it was important to establish that certain forms of what we term "social interaction" are, in fact, heavily mediated and controlled by evolved psychological mechanisms (i.e. neural circuitry). While the exact study of these evolved psychological mechanisms is in its infancy, and the placement of operational algorithms into specific neurological sites is limited, I believe that the use of such studies in the development of social theory is imperative. The second purpose for examining these particular content specific modules, is that they all appear to have a specific relationship to behaviours observed in current research on the outplacement industry. As such, they will be of immediate use in the analysis of the industry presented in the later sections of this dissertation.

2.2.3 a series of meta-structures which mediate domain specific structures

In addition to basic evolved psychological mechanisms, consciousness is *reactive*, *reflexive*, and *recursive*: a process rather than a state. These properties of consciousness, however, are highly dependant upon the media in which and through which they act and are acted upon. The process of consciousness is conditioned both by domain specific structures and by the content of that operation, since the domain specific structures are, in part, defined by sensorily defined content.

2.2.3.1 reactivity

The most basic level of "consciousness" is reactivity: the ability to react to sensory stimuli from the environment. In humans, and possibly other animals, reactivity in consciousness can also be seen in the concept of attention. The ability to attend to particular stimuli is not dependent upon a single sensory system, but draws on all of them. Furthermore, attention tends to be focussed in a manner that suggests that it changes sensory input thresholds in response to specific stimuli that activate content specific modules. For example, eye contact has been shown to produce heightened galvanic skin responses and brain-stem activation (cf. Baron-Cohen, 1995).

2.2.3.2 Recursiveness

Recursiveness is a strategy whereby neurognostic structures (e.g. content specific modules and patterns of module activation) may be selected and tested against environmental conditions. As a selection strategy, recursion is far superior to a linear testing model (more parsimonious) such as that of a "hardwired" stimulus response sequence which is characteristic of reactivity.⁸⁹ This leads to the development of what the biogenetic structuralists term a "creode" - a model of interaction with the operational

⁸⁹ At least in situations where immediate action is not required, such as the examination of a new phenomenon, or the classification of an object in the environment. In situations where an immediate action is required, for example in a combat situation, an immediate, "instinctual" reaction will have a higher survival quotient. An indication of this may be seen in the specialized form of training received by people in military "boot camps". But, even in this instance, the evidence is not persuasive that the reaction to the environment is "hardwired" even in the degree of, for example, the ability to detect cheaters.

environment⁹⁰ that is "regularized, recursive and predictable in cognitive content and motor response relative to the intentional object" (cf. Laughlin, 1996b).⁹¹

A creode is defined by Laughlin (1996b) as "... an interaction involving selection of, growth of, entrainment and re-entrainment of, and hierarchization of initially neurognostic structures -- [it] canalizes functional processes relative to particular stimuli in the operational environment." In effect, a creode is a consistent pattern of entrainment of content specific modules in response to consistent environmental stimuli.

2.2.3.3 Reflexivity

The development of a recursive ability has, to some degree, exapted beyond an algorithmic function into a separate "ability" that operates not only on the level of individual creodes, but also at the level of creode "construction" (i.e. reflexivity).⁹² Reflexivity may be seen as a specialized creode that allows for the "conscious" (intentional or unintentional) examination, integration, and "creation" of other neurognostic structures and creodes. It may operate within any domain of the cognized environment and, at the same time, serves to modify both the content and the boundaries

⁹⁰ The term "operational environment" and its cognate term "cognized environment" are used throughout this paper following the definitions of Laughlin (1996b) who borrowed it from Roy Rappaport.

⁹¹ The term itself was originally coined by C.H. Waddington (cf Piaget, 1971:19) to describe "necessary routes for the development of a particular organ. The original spelling, used by Waddington, and Piaget, was "chreod".

⁹² The term "construction" is somewhat misleading in that creodes are not so much "constructed" as the process of unfolding from state A to state B along a limited series of pathways.

of that domain. In effect, I am suggesting that recursion is a necessary but insufficient condition for reflexivity.⁹³

2.2.4 an emergent property of a complex system

The final point, that consciousness is an emergent property of a complex system, is usually considered to refer solely to biological systems. This is, however, misleading. Laughlin (1996a), along with others,⁹⁴ argues that technological components - tools, techniques, and organisation - must also be considered (see sections 2.3 and 4.2). Thus, while the "original" complex system out of which consciousness emerged may well have been the brain and CNS, by the time humans evolved into tool using, myth making, social creatures, the "complex system" had expanded to include "culture".

2.3 Mind and artefact

If consciousness is an emergent property of a complex system that includes not only individual biological organisms, but also technological, cultural, and "natural" components, then where does consciousness "reside"? In keeping with Laughlin and others, I would suggest that there is no "ghost in the machine"; that consciousness is, in part, a function of "brain-as-structure". However, I would expand on this by arguing that

⁹³ This has interesting pedagogical implications. It implies that there are at least two strategies of "learning" that are both operable. First, there is what might be called "behaviourist programming" or "rote learning" which relies on the creation of a stimulus response class of neurognostic structures. Second, there is what might be termed as "reflexive" learning. This is the ability to integrate new "knowledge" (or stimuli from the operational environment) into the cognized environment, without the use of rote learning, and to order this "knowledge" into coherent patterns which serve as the basis for creode formation. This first strategy is referred to by Bateson and Bateson (1987) as "proto-learning", while reflexive learning is the end result of deutero-learning. And these two strategies may correspond to Piaget's concepts of concrete and abstract reasoning, which are, in themselves, an example of an epigenic development of creodes (cf Piaget 1971).

⁹⁴ This extension is at the core of Marx's concept of the genesis of class consciousness.

consciousness is also, in part, a function of system-as-structure, where the brain and CNS are conceived of as local nodes of the systemic structure.⁹⁵

By arguing that consciousness is in part a function of system-as-structure, I do not wish to suggest that consciousness is solely determined by the system: the mind is not a *tabula rasa* (cf. Tooby and Cosmides, 1992). The analogy of the brain to local nodes in a systemic structure is not meant to assume or argue for the existence of some centralized processing unit that "downloads" consciousness to individuals.⁹⁶ Rather, the point of the analogy is to highlight the two content storage systems, other than genetic predispositions and content specific modules, that appear to be highly developed in human societies: material technology, and cultural "knowledge", both of which use storage systems that are external to a particular individual.⁹⁷

Humans (and possibly other species) have developed the ability to encode content into external, non-biological forms or "artifacts" which can be stored, transmitted, and re-encoded into new biological members of the species.⁹⁸ These storage vehicles may be

⁹⁵ A point which Laughlin (1996a) starts to develop in his paper on Cyborg Consciousness and also considers in another paper on technology (Laughlin, 1989a)

⁹⁶ This would be an extreme nurture over nature argument, which I do not believe is warranted.

⁹⁷ The point can, and should, be made that language may be seen as a third storage system that has direct effects on perception (cf Sapir, 1961). However, for purposes of parsimony, I have conflated the category of "language" with "cultural knowledge" in as much as language is a primary vehicle for cultural knowledge as well as a primary parameter of it. An additional point is that while language clearly does have a basis in evolved psychological mechanisms (cf. Pinker, 1994), it is also one of the most extensively "stored" forms of creodes (e.g. books, tapes, songs, stories, etc.).

⁹⁸ This assumes that the "coding" is known or is knowable. Leaving aside for the moment the question of whether it is possible for any individual to "truly know" another, we can certainly see evidence of an ability to recover "lost knowledge" that has been stored in previously encoded extra-human objects. By way of example, consider the various accounts of the "cracking" of "lost languages".

divided into "intersubjective" vehicles, such as language (both verbal and non-verbal), and "transsubjective" vehicles which have an incarnate existence (e.g. books). This division is important for two reasons. First, the nature of the "decoding" process is different, both in the form of individual decoding and for analytic methodologies. Second, the range of sensory stimuli is different, which results in different areas of the brain being activated.⁹⁹

While these encoded "artifacts" are not "conscious" *per se*,¹⁰⁰ two points are readily apparent. First, the media in which these artifacts are incarnated (i.e. stored and transmitted) have a significant effect on the consciousness of individual members of the species which has "created" them (cf Ong, 1982, McLuhan and Fiore, 1967). Second, the re-encoding of an artifact within a biological system appears to include the patterning of neurological sites within the brain and CNS. This repatterning not only gives that artifact an internal, biological, "reality",¹⁰¹ it also serves to illustrate how an artifactual

Needless to say, extra-biological encoding appears to be a highly "pro-survival" trait. Of course, it also creates the interesting situation where biological evolution may be Darwinian, but evolution in response to the social and technological environments is, to a degree, Lamarkian.

⁹⁹ A point well known by the advertising industry. Consider, by way of example, the neurological fact that most of the reasoning areas of the brain go into a form of shock after watching television for approximately 30 seconds. This situation stems from the nature of the visual system that attempts to track the movement of the pixels which go into the production of a "picture". It requires a conscious act of will to disengage the tracking mechanism and retain a critical faculty of the information presented. The same is not true of most intersubjective vehicles which, while they may produce a "mind numbed state", tend to produce sleep instead of a receptive "trance-like" state.

¹⁰⁰ Although a number of authors (e.g. Goodenough, 1995) take the view that the pleromal content of these artifacts are, in fact, Von Neuman machines with some form of "consciousness" and intentionality.

¹⁰¹ A particular form of "biological learning". Examples would include the neurological changes involved in addictive behaviour and the establishment of long term potentiation. There is also some indication that the act of encoding within humans is a necessary condition for the ontogenic development of particular evolved structures. Language is a good example of this, as is second language acquisition (cf. Piaget, 1971).

environment co-produces phenotypic expressions in conjunction with genotypic influence.

The model of consciousness presented so far is a complex system¹⁰² that contains a number of components:

- content specific modules;
- a set of interacting environments ("natural", social, and technological) which pose adaptive problems;
- neurologically, technologically, and culturally stored patterns of action;
- "learning" or "sense making" strategies;
- various storage media which limit the storage of patterns of action; and
- various communicative media which limit the transmission of patterns of action.

This complex system produces a field of experience within individuals which is mediated by what Laughlin (1996b) refers to as a "conscious network" which is "... a continuously changing field of neural entrainments..." of patterns of action. This conscious network may, in turn, be acted upon in a reflexive manner by the individual in whom it exists in such a way that their "experience" is "self"-manipulable - consciousness as a function of brain-as-structure.

In addition, the conscious network of one individual may be acted upon by another in ways that will induce a shift in the conscious network, and hence experience, of the first individual - consciousness as a function of system-as-structure. It is important

¹⁰² It should be noted that I am using the term "complex system" as something less than equivalent to the concept of an operational environment. "Complex system", as I use it here, might better be termed as overlapping with the operational environment, but composed of the individual "reality" of members of the complex system and their immediately perceivable environment, and of the cognized environment of the social group as a whole, regardless of whether or not it is objectively "real".

to note that the "other" member of the complex system does not have to be a human. It is quite feasible that it is an artefact (e.g. a book), a socially constructed system (e.g. "the economy"), an event in the "natural" environment (e.g. an earthquake, flood, or fire), or any other component of the complex system. Certainly the attribution of agency to non-human components of the system appears to be a human universal. And this habit of attributing agency to the non-human components of the system operates both as "superstition" (e.g. "the Gods", "spirits", "ghosts", "witches", "sorcery", etc.) and in the realm of science (e.g. "natural laws of...") and human understanding of and reaction to technology.

Consciousness, in and of itself, has no evolutionary "value" unless it aids in survival and/or replication. Certainly the development of consciousness as a function of system-as-structure aided human survival at the species level (see, for example, Axelrod, 1984 and Lomborg, 1996). However, consciousness as a function of brain-as-structure, makes us as individuals all too well aware of our own finite existence and inevitable end either from "natural" causes (the inevitable dissolution of the body) or from socially imposed situations (war, starvation, etc.). And, if these concerns are not met, then we will tend to seek patterns of action for a new system that will meet them, even if that means the destruction of elements of the previous system.

Given this, consciousness as a function of system-as-structure is inherently unstable, and dependant upon the provision of a series of patterns of action that can either a) guarantee a certain minimum survival chance to individuals and/or their descendants, or b) provide a "meaningful" reason to the individual for the cessation of personal

survival.¹⁰³ Furthermore, these patterns of action must be somewhat coherent and consistent with others in the same system (i.e. they must be part of a paradigm or cosmology).

At the same time, there is a clear limit on how much "thought" can operate at any particular point in time (i.e. an entrainment limit). As neuropsychologist Marcel Kinsbourne notes (quoted in Calvin, 1991:211):

There is no known stuff in the brain that corresponds to attentional resource.... Rather, there are different ways of using the finite neural network. When wide areas of the network are involved in one mental operation ... other operations are deprived of the necessary cerebral functional space In other words, multi-purpose cerebral computing space can be used either for a wide-ranging but shallow encoding, or for a single but difficult mental operation.

This particular limitation of brain functioning has a direct application to understanding the operation of the process of outplacement. Given the frequently highly panicky reactions to being fired, it is not surprising that some mechanisms designed to "interfere" with a "fired:panic" entrainment have been developed by the industry (see x-ref). This brings us to the final component of consciousness: "content".

2.4 Content

The question of content is crucial. Before presenting my own suggestions, it is worthwhile synthesizing the model presented so far, and drawing out specific points where a model of content must, logically, mesh with it.

¹⁰³ In sociobiology, this is discussed under the rubric of the problem of altruism (cf Barkow, 1989). While I find many of the "answers" proposed by sociobiologists to be unconvincing, I believe that they have noted a fundamental question that must be addressed (cf Goodenough 1995 and Barkow, 1989, for a review of sociobiology's "answers").

1. **Evolved psychological mechanisms:** evolved psychological mechanisms appear to come with “cheat sheets” – pre-defined parameters for content and some specific content indicators.
2. **Creodes** (consistent patterns of entrainment of content specific modules in response to consistent environmental stimuli): creodes are, of necessity, hierarchically superior to (i.e. an emergent level from) individual evolved psychological mechanisms. As such, they both draw on the “content” of these mechanisms, and also require “content” to “discuss” these mechanisms.
3. **The conscious network:** hierarchically superior to creodes, the conscious network requires content to “discuss” creodes, and is of a limited capacity.
4. **Artefactual systems** (i.e. systems of non-biological storage): artefactual systems store “content” external to individual humans. The type of content depends on the nature (form) and type (intersubjective or transsubjective) of the storage vehicle. For the individual, artefactual systems require content descriptors for decoding and encoding.
5. **Socially constructed systems** (e.g. “the economy”, “organizations”, etc.): socially constructed systems are hierarchically superior to artefactual systems, and “act upon” both artefactual systems and individuals. Content is required to discuss these systems, but the degree of content varies with the relationship of the individual to that systems (i.e. how much awareness/attention is focused on the system).¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁴ I deal in much more detail with socially constructed systems in chapters 3, 4, and 5.

These five points highlight one of the major problems in talking about “content”: content is dependent upon specific level and context, and “meaning” is dependent upon content. The implication of this problem is that “meaning” is an analytically useless term unless the level and context can be clearly defined. And, given the recursive and reflexive ability of memory, the “meaning” of anything can, and often does, shift through time and context.

Rather than attempt to “solve” the problem of content and meaning by using semiotics or phenomenology,¹⁰⁵ I wish to try a more radical route: memetics. Richard Dawkins (1976) first proposed the concept of the “meme”. He argued that the “meme” was “the basic unit of cultural transmission, or imitation” analogous to the gene. While the analogy between memes and genes is at the level of information structures, genes are defined in three different ways. They are the “smallest hereditary unit capable either of recombination or of mutation or of controlling a specific function” (Toothill, 1988:122). This has caused a number of difficulties in attempting to define memes.

The first problematic in the definition of memes stems from questions surrounding the function of memes. In genes, the control of a single function (the third definition) is defined as the determination of a single specific polypeptide chain of a larger protein molecule. So far, all attempts at locating a homologous function of memes have failed (cf. Lynch, 1991; Blackmore, 1996).

The second problematic in the definition of memes stems from a definition of levels. At present, the vast majority of the discussion of memes has concentrated

¹⁰⁵ These are the two “traditional” routes for solving the problem of meaning within sociology. Unfortunately, for our purposes, neither one of them deals very well with evolved psychological mechanisms, or with the neurological basis of the mind.

1. on establishing memes as “replicants” - i.e. as heritable units of information - e.g. Dawkins (1976), Lynch (1991), and Blackmore (1996), and/or
2. on their conglomerate effect - i.e. at the level of protein molecule or higher, rather than at the level of polypeptide chain – e.g. Dawkins (1993) and Brodie (1996).

These discussions, while useful in elaborating replicating strategies (e.g. viruses), have tended to avoid a detailed examination of levels.¹⁰⁶

The third problematic in the definition of memes stems from the lack of something physical that can be “pointed to”. Recently, Dennett (1995) has argued that a meme is “an idea, the kind of complex idea that forms itself into a distinctly memorable unit. It is spread by vehicles that are physical manifestations of the meme.” The problem, of course, has been to identify those vehicles with particular memes.

Despite these problems, memetics offers an intriguing solution to the problem of content and meaning. In order to use memetics, however, these problems must be overcome.

2.4.1 “Grounding” memes

One of the basic problems is that memes are ungrounded in both function (problem 1) and in vehicle (problem 3). I would suggest that one answer to this problem lies in the very neural circuitry described earlier in this chapter. If, as Cosmides and Tooby (1992; 1997) argue they must, content specific evolved psychological mechanisms come with “cheat sheets”, then it should be possible to identify something related to

¹⁰⁶ Brodie (1996) attempts to provide a rough typology of memes both horizontally (i.e. by functional type), and vertically (i.e. by “dissection” into functional component). This typology, however, is of highly limited use although it can be used as a partial base for further development.

memes. Let us refer to the content of these “cheat sheets” as “proto-memes”: precursors to those identified by Dawkins (1993) as “viruses of the mind”. Following the arguments of Baron-Cohen (1995) in describing his theory of mind module, the structure of these proto-memes should be in a dyadic form of “agent - process/state – object”. At an even more basic level, these proto-memes are composed of object/agent and process/state components.¹⁰⁷

In *The Cerebral Code*, William Calvin (1996) has shown how the neural structure of much of the neocortex forms a hexagonal pattern where when one neuron fires in response to a particular stimuli, other neurons approximately .5mm apart will start to fire in resonance with the first neuron. This sets up a pattern of long term potentiation (LTP) within that area of the neocortex in response to specific stimuli. Calvin (1996, 1997) has argued persuasively for this structure as the seat of mental codes (“representations”) and, given that the cheat sheets postulated by Cosmides and Tooby (1997) must have a neurological base, it is not unreasonable to assume that this is it.¹⁰⁸

If we accept that proto-memes (the content of cheat sheets) occurs in the hexagonal firing sequences show by Calvin, then we have answered at least a part of the third problem - the vehicle for memes. Memes “live” as a “potential” in the pattern of

¹⁰⁷ The form of these cheat sheets or “privileged hypotheses” is examined in some detail in Cosmides and Tooby (1997:10). They point to the clear ability of infants to distinguish between solid objects and the surprise they show when one solid object apparently passes through another.

¹⁰⁸ Parts of the supporting evidence for the plausibility of this assumption stems from the existence of specific connections between areas of the brain that are modules and areas of the neocortex that exhibit this pattern. Additional evidence comes from the fact that areas that exhibit this structure tend to be in contact with only limited sensory input. Calvin (personal communication) has said that this pattern of firing and its possible links to memes is “possible”. It is, of course, impossible to currently test out this idea, but it is plausible and does not contradict any neurological facts currently available. A similar “mosaic” has been noted in the striatum (cf. Gerfen, 1992).

neurons associated with specific brain modules. This does not mean, however, that all of the cerebral tissue is parceled out between various memes but, rather, that non-module areas, Kinsbournes "finite neural network", is shared by all of the modules that make use of it.

We have also made a start on the first problem of identifying specific functions for memes. If proto-memes are the cheat sheets of mental modules, then their "function" is twofold. First, they produce the basic information or "preferred hypotheses" of a specific mental module. Their second function is to provide specific outputs to other mental modules for further processing.

Before we go any further, I want to repeat a point made earlier. "Behaviour" is a phenotypic result: a product of the genetic code, the ontogenic and phenotypic development of that code, and environmental stimuli. The same appears to be true of the production of proto-memes. The coding for certain types of structures (e.g. mental modules, neocortical hexagonal patterns of neurons, etc.) is contained in the genetic coding, but the actual "materialisation" of the encoded pattern depends on environmental stimuli in addition to genetic coding. I have restated this point, since it is quite easy to forget and fall into a reductionist fallacy.

2.4.2 Function and replication strategies

The discussion so far has only operated at the level of evolved psychological mechanisms (mental modules and shared neural processing areas). At this level, we do not have fully fledged "memes" – at least in the sense of mental "viruses" (cf. Dawkins, 1993). What we do have is a form of proto-memes which are composed of agent/object

and process/state components which act as the outputs of some systems and inputs of others.

Proto-memes are “information packets”, to borrow a term from computer science, which are incapable of replication only inasmuch as their pattern is stored as an LTP. They are, when acting as inputs, basic units of “function”. The ability to recombine, mutate, and replicate, however, does not appear to be directly available at this level. In order to examine these abilities we must move “up” to the level of creodes and the conscious network.

Proto-memes are incapable of replication inasmuch as each firing of the basic pattern produces new copies. On the other hand, memes, it is argued, are capable of a different form of replication that is often described as “viral”. Memes are said to “hijack” the replicating ability of one brain in a such a manner that it will produce behaviour which causes the meme to be copied into another vehicle (person or artefact; cf. Dawkins, 1986, 1993; Brodie, 1996; Goodenough, 1995; Lynch, 1991; Blackmore, 1996).¹⁰⁹ This is sometimes referred to as the “selfish meme”.¹¹⁰

If this is the case, then memes must be more complicated than agent/object and process/state codes: there must be something which acts as a “hook” (Brodie, 1996). Both Dawkins (1993) and Brodie (1996) argue some component of a meme operates by stimulating a mental module. Dawkins (1993:9) draws on the work of Zahavi (1975) and

¹⁰⁹ Similar ideas have a rather long history in psychology. See, for example, Baldwin (1896) and James (1880).

¹¹⁰ I have followed the biological convention of speaking about replicators “as if” they were capable of intentionality (cf. Dawkins, 1993). Needless to say, this is merely a convention and there is no requirement for them to be “conscious” or capable of intentionality.

Grafen (1990a, 1990b) to argue that certain handicaps evolve in response to mate selection criteria and that the same model operates in other behavioural areas. Dawkins (1993) example is also quite illuminating, since the “handicap” he is discussing is religious “faith”.

If we accept Dawkins argument, then there is a component that resonates with a pre-existing set of proto-memes. It replicates itself by “hijacking” neocortical “space”, and creating new patterns of LTP association. By itself, however, this is an insufficient, but necessary, component for memetic replication. What is still needed is a mechanism that causes changes in behaviour which force the “infected” organism to spread the meme. At the level of proto-memes, the “spread” mechanism could easily be imitation and natural selection. However, once some form of conscious network is in place, this would not be sufficient.

One possibility is that memes “hijack” more than neocortical space; they may also create links into the production of neurotransmitters that subjectively appear as emotions. Such a connection would derive from the emergence of proto-memes as encoded within content specific modules, and the ties between those modules and emotional reactions (see footnote 108). This is quite possible, since most basic evolved psychology mechanisms (e.g. mate selection mechanisms) are linked to both neurotransmitter and hormonal production. It is quite likely that there are several classes of “replication instructions” that rely on the strategy of providing their hosts with pleasurable (or distasteful) emotions as rewards (or punishments) for replication in other hosts.

A second possibility, mentioned by Brodie (1996), is that some replication strategies rely on “design flaws” in the module interfaces of the mind. Examples of this

sort of strategy would be the purposeful creation of a cognitive dissonance, where the content of the meme serves as the “solution” to the dissonance – a “sense making” strategy. This type of strategy would certainly be capable of producing intense emotional reactions in its host, at least in its more extreme forms. The experience of being “twice born” discussed by James (1902) would be one example of an extreme form of this strategy in operation. Another, less extreme example is an appeal to “experience” when experience differs from expectation.

A third option might be termed “the rule of the excluded second”. This strategy would act to preserve replication potential by denying access to competing memes. In extreme cases, this strategy could result in the destruction of the vehicles of competing memes (human and artefact). In its less extreme form, this strategy would serve to deny the validity of observations, or to exclude them from a discussion as “situationally invalid”. Examples of this would include the “political” manipulation of data, or the exclusion of biological discourse from mainstream social sciences (cf. Tooby and Cosmides, 1992, on the politics of this exclusion). All of these options are possible replication strategies for memes, and it is likely that all of these strategies are used.

2.4.3 Components of a meme

Thus far, we have discussed the components of proto-memes (agent/object and state/process information packets), the mechanisms of replication inside a brain, and various “strategies” whereby a meme can “cause” its host to replicate it in another vehicle. This discussion has actually only described two components which, if we wish to retain the virus analogy, might be termed the “shell” and the “replication instructions”. We have yet to discuss any specific content that a meme may carry.

If we use strict Darwinian criteria (i.e. success at replication), there is no requirement that a meme has any content other than its shell and replication instructions. This type of meme might be termed a “shell meme” or “neutral parasite”: it takes up neurological space and processing power, but does not help or harm its host except for the possible effects of its replication instructions. A good example of this type of meme, in verbal form, would be the “classic” superstition of “knock on wood”, or the nursery rhyme “step on a crack, break your mother’s back”.¹¹¹

Some memes, however, do contain content. Two types described by Brodie (1996) are *discrimination memes* and *strategy memes*. The content in a discrimination meme is in one of two forms:

- a) “X is Y” where “X” is a perceived object in the cognized environment and “Y” is a “name” referent (either categorical or specific);
- b) “X is composed of Y_{1-n} ” where “X” is a perceived object, class, or set and Y_{1-n} are the elements of that set (this form may be inverted into “ Y_{1-n} makes up X”).

The function of discrimination memes is to a) “carve” up the cognized environment into mentally manipulable chunks or “objects”, and b) describe relationships between these objects.¹¹²

¹¹¹ An interesting example of the “knock on wood” meme in operation happened in the early summer of 1997. My wife, who is “infected” with this meme, and I were talking about an expectation we had. I said something on the order of “Well, even if it doesn’t happen we can always...” As soon as I stated the sentence, she told me “knock on wood!” I looked at her questioningly, and she repeated “knock on wood or it [the negative possibility] will happen!” She wouldn’t allow the conversation to continue until I had “knocked on wood”. An example of the “step on a crack” meme came from several years ago when I saw an acquaintance of mine bouncing down the sidewalk, jumping on every “crack”. When I asked him what he was doing, he replied “I hate my mother!”

¹¹² An interesting, although possibly spurious, point is that the proto-Indo-European root word *sci which is the basis of “science”, “consciousness”, “discriminate”, etc. means “to cut” or “to divide”.

Strategy memes describe “cause and effect” relationships in the operational environment. I have put cause and effect in quotations, because strategy memes more accurately describe causal hypotheses: the expected effects of a given “cause” or course of action. Of course, the operational environment may have changed since the inception of the strategy meme, so its application will no longer be appropriate. A good example of this is the “loyalty for security” meme that operated in most large organizations during the 1950’s, and was the “hallmark” of the “Organization Man” (cf. Whyte, 1956; Tyrrell, 1994a).¹¹³

Brodie (1996:44-46) also describes a third type of meme, the *association meme*, which, he argues, links two or more memes. This type of meme, he argues, is used to link disparate sensory input to specific “associations” held in the mind. He uses the example of advertisers linking sexy women and beer (amongst others), and argues that association memes are at the root of “values” (based on the emotional output of the association). I would suggest that he is conflating two similar, but distinct, code groups.

The first of these codes groups is what I term *emotive memes*. These are codings designed to specifically induce set emotional reactions in a host towards particular stimuli (agent/object and/or event/process). A classic example of this type of meme would be the “schoolwork is dull” meme which appears to be pandemic in many undergraduate, especially first year, student populations (at least in Canada). As such, emotive memes

¹¹³ In actuality, the “loyalty for security” meme variant operative in these organisations relied on a series of discrimination memes which identified what, and who, one should be loyal to. The “loyalty for security” meme may well be one of the oldest memes in existence. It is quite plausible that this meme, always bundled with different discrimination memes, emerges from our heritage as “pack” animals – i.e. social animals.

are a distinct class of discrimination memes where the referent is a perceptual/emotional state.

The second code group is more insidious, and serves to link disparate code groups. I term this second type a *linking meme*. Linking memes may connect an emotive meme with a discrimination meme or a strategy meme, which would produce a “value”. They may also connect two, or more, discrimination memes and/or strategy memes. In (probably) rare cases, linking memes may exist on their own. An example of this would be the concept that “If you have a paradox, then you haven’t asked the right questions”. Linking memes are a distinct class of strategy memes.

While this typology is far from complete, it can serve as a basis for a memetic categorisation. The typology presented thus far is summarized in Table 3. So far, the discussion of memes has centred on what might be called “basic types”. The reason for this, is that these types of memes appear to be the basic forms, roughly equivalent to unicellular life forms, which are a) capable of replication, and b) probably operative as the cultural extensions of mental module “cheat sheets”. But, as with genes, memes are not limited to “basic” forms. Even within the forms I have discussed, it is apparent that some form of specialisation has taken place. In the next sub-section, I extend the analysis to cover more complex memetic forms.

Table 3: basic meme categorization

Meme Type	S	RI	Content	Effect
Shell	Y	Y	None	Limited to replication instructions.
Discrimination	Y	Y	X is Y, or X is composed of Y_{1-n}	Cuts the cognized environment into “chunks”.
Strategy	Y	Y	If X then Y, or To achieve Y do X	Causal hypotheses about the operational environment.
Emotive	Y	Y	X is Y, where Y is an emotional state	Cuts the cognized environment into emotional states.
Linking	Y	Y	If X then Y_{1-n} where Y_{1-n} is a series of memes	Creates connections between memes.

2.4.4 Memetic organisms, complexes, and ecologies

If the basic memes considered in the previous sub-section are analogous to unicellular life forms and, in all probability, are also inherent in (i.e. an emergent property of) the construction of the brain, what then of more complex memetic forms? I would argue that the equivalent of multicellular life forms, where the basic memes form specialised “cells” is quite probable. In fact, the vast majority of memetic analysis has concentrated on such “multicellular memes” (e.g. Dawkins, 1986, 1993; Brodie, 1996; Goodenough, 1995; Lynch, 1991; Blackmore, 1996; Benzon, 1996). Rather than continue referring to this type of meme as a multicellular meme, I will call it a “memetic organisms”.

One point that needs to be made at this time is that memes, from proto-memes on upward, are symbionts. To be specific, they exhibit the property of obligatory mutualism at the level of proto-memes, and limited non-obligatory mutualism at higher levels of organisation.¹¹⁴ This property of mutualism operates not only with their human and human produced hosts, but also operates between basic memes when they combine into memetic organisms. In effect, memetic organisms are “colony” creatures similar to coral in their organisation

Given this definition of a memetic organism, we can use the categorisation scheme presented in Table 3 as the basis for assigning code structures for the component memes of any particular memetic organism. This will, in all probability, require an elaboration of the basic types listed in Table 3 (i.e. hyper-specialised variants of basic

memes). Ideally, the coding process should also include pointers to any specific mental modules that ground the meme (i.e. the shell and replication information components), as Dawkins (1993) has partially done with his analysis of “faith” as a “handicap”.

In addition to the type coding, it is also necessary to code the sensory stimuli involved. This is somewhat more complex, since much of the stimuli are not available in written form. This problem can be overcome in two different ways. First, through the use of what Given (1993) terms “thick description”. Second, interview transcripts and written documents can be analysed for language cues in the form of sensory specific words.¹¹⁵

The problem with such a coding scheme is that given the property of mutualism, and specific instantiation of a particular memetic organism could contain an endless chain of linkages. One possible way of avoiding such endless chains is to halt the analysis after the identification of initial linkages. For example, the “loyalty for security” meme which produces the Organization Man, has linkages to sets of discrimination and strategy memes for both “loyalty” and “security”. Given the diverse ways in which this meme instantiates itself, I would consider it likely that it is one of a number of basic strategy memes: a culturally elaborated expression of one of the core proto-memes of the Authority Ranking social relations module (cf section 2.2.2.2).

The property of mutualism may create other difficulties as well as those involved in coding. One problem noted by Dennet (1995:352-360) is that it is often impossible to

¹¹⁴ Mutualism is a property that allows two or more organisms to interact in a way which benefits both organisms. Obligatory mutualism requires that constant symbiosis exist, while non-obligatory mutualism does not require constant symbiosis.

¹¹⁵ This analytic technique draws on the insights of neurolinguistic programming (cf. Bandler and Grinder, 1979, 1982). The technique is also recognised by more “mainstream” psychologists (e.g. Baron-Cohen, 1995) as a valid way of inferring sensory system stimuli from verbal cues.

tell if a given meme is descended from a previous form, or if it has evolved independently.¹¹⁶ This problem is, potentially, quite serious in the case of “new memes” (such as “outplacement”). The problem diminishes, however, once we draw several more distinctions. I have already distinguished between proto-memes, memes (or “basic” meme), and memetic organisms. Two additional distinctions, memetic complexes and memetic ecologies, allow us to complete the series and, at the same time, to partially solve the problem posed by Dennet.

A meme complex is a collection of memetic organisms that are linked together in a quasi-stable formulation. Thus, continuing our “loyalty for security” meme example, the “Organizational Man” is a meme complex which is quite distinct from other meme complexes in which the meme appears (i.e. it is an historically situated meme complex: see sections 7.2 and 7.7). A memetic ecology, on the other hand, refers to the sum of meme complexes (both active and dormant) available within a given environment.

It is still impossible to state whether a particular memetic organism is independantly evolved/produced or is inherited in many cases where the lineage of the meme is in doubt. Even in cases where the lineage is openly stated, this may actually prove to be false for a variety of reasons.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁶ In anthropology, this problem with “units” of cultural transmission has been discussed under a number of headings such as the monogenist - polygenist debate (Wilson and Tylor, 1885), or the case of hyperdiffusionism (Kuper, 1988).

¹¹⁷ For one intriguing example of this in sociology, see Camic (1992)

2.4.5 Summation

The purpose of this section has been to develop a way of analysing the content of consciousness – the “software” of the mind. The reason for choosing memetics over the more traditional routes of phenomenology or semiotics was simple: neither could show how linkages were created between mental software and hardware (i.e. evolved psychological mechanisms).

Furthermore, the work of Cosmides and Tooby (1992), Baron-Cohen (1995), Buss (1994) and others seemed to indicate that some form of content was an emergent property of neurological structure somewhat analogous to “machine code”. If this is true, then it is more parsimonious to expect that “content” would make use of this available coding, rather than evolving *sui generis*. Memetics allows us to describe certain software-hardware linkages and, at the same time, shows how the “machine code” of mental modules can be bootstrapped into the more general code of “content”.

2.5 Conclusions

The purpose of this chapter has been to present a model of consciousness that is a) consistent with current neurophysiological knowledge, and b) capable of defining linkages from the neurological level to the level of behaviour. The model presented in the chapter is composed of three main parts: neurological “hardware”, social “hardware”, and “software”.

The goal of the model is to produce a working model that can illuminate some of the problem areas surrounding the biological underpinnings of rites of passage and related phenomena. Indeed, the mandate for the model stems directly from some of Victor Turner's last inquiries (Turner, 1987:156-178). The model itself has centered on a

developed (adult) consciousness, rather than on ontogenic and life course properties not because the later are not of interest for rites of passage theory but, rather, because they have a limited impact on the substantive area of the current investigation.¹¹⁸

In the next three chapters, I shift to a consideration of intermediate structures in order to make the links necessary to produce a model that will serve to reach the goals laid out at the end of Chapter 1. In particular, in Chapter 3, I rework Malinowski's theory of culture into the form of environments, both interior and exterior. This reworking allows us to apply concepts from neo-evolutionary theory more cleanly while, at the same time, producing a more usable conceptual map.

In chapter 4, the discussion moves to the production of inter-subjective "environments" which stem from the discussion on memes. In particular, I will be examining M-forms (section 4.1), technological extensions of consciousness (section 4.2), and knowledge systems (section 4.3). The discussion in Chapter 5 draws on the material in Chapters 3 and 4 to produce a model of the emergence and operation of social structures.

¹¹⁸ In fact, in order to develop a full biological basis of rites of passage theory, one would have to include ontogenic and life course development models.

3 Structures and Levels

In chapter 1.1, I concentrated on laying out rites of passage theory, developing it as far as possible given its current configurations, and laying out where it needs to go. One of the conclusions is that stronger links must be made between rites of passage theory and both macro level structures and mid-range or "intermediate structures". In keeping with the concept of emergent levels of structure, I want to start this chapter by considering mid-range or intermediate structures first. My use of this concept derives from two sources: Durkheim and Malinowski. In his preface to the second edition of *The Division of Labour in Society*, Durkheim (1984) discusses the role of professional societies in "modern" society. He notes (pp. xxxiii-xxxiv) that the development of modern society has caused a fragmentation in the source of "moral guidance". Speaking of the increasing number of people involved in economic and commercial life, he asks (p.xxxiv):

If, in activities that almost completely fill our days, we follow no rules save that of our own self-interest, as we understand it, how then can we acquire a taste for altruism, for forgetfulness of self and sacrifice?

In his answer to this question, he sees professional societies as providing the main forum for the development of "morality" (i.e. reciprocal altruistic action that increases the probability of successful replication of the larger group).

Durkheim's argument both precedes and influences Malinowski and later systems theorists such as Bateson. The argument, at its core, holds that a functional understanding of any given society may be produced through two different styles of analysis: a "top-down" understanding exemplified by Radcliffe-Brown and Parsons, or a "bottom-up"

understanding exemplified by Malinowski.¹¹⁹ This second type of analysis might well be described as "a road not followed" until fairly recently with the reintroduction of neo-evolutionary theories and the development of dynamic systems theory. At its heart, "bottom-up" functional analysis concentrates on the emergent properties of a given system, the interaction of these properties, and the evolutionary competition of the phenotypic expressions of these properties.

Possibly the most sophisticated theoretical model of this form of bottom-up functional analysis was produced by Malinowski as his Theory of Needs.¹²⁰ While the specifics listed in the theory are subject to debate, many of the attacks against this theory stem from a misrepresentation of it.¹²¹ Furthermore, Malinowski's well known preference for synchronic analyses seriously hampered the utility of his theory. Despite these problems, I believe that Malinowski's Theory of Needs can serve as a basic template for a diachronic, evolutionary theory which can shed light on the current investigation.

Earlier, I described bottom-up functional analysis as "a road not followed".¹²² Two separate, but linked, attempts at such an analysis were made by Malinowski (1960) in *A Scientific Theory of Culture* and by Parsons and Shils (1951) in *Toward a General*

¹¹⁹ See, by way of comparison, Parsons (1957) discussion of Malinowski and social structure.

¹²⁰ "Sophisticated" in terms of range of applicability, parsimony of axioms, and elegance.

¹²¹ See, for example, Lee (1959:70-77) who critiques the concept of basic needs without addressing the more important model in which they are embedded. Her comments that "values", rather than "needs" should be the basic unit of analysis (p.72) disregards the placement of values within Malinowski's model.

¹²² The reasons for this choice are varied, but it is quite possible that the desire to distance social science from the "taint" of biological reductionism, with its inherent racist overtones, was one of the primary motivators (cf Tooby and Cosmides, 1992).

*Theory of Action.*¹²³ Both of these models drew on behaviorist psychology and, to a lesser degree, psychoanalytic thought. The limits of these two schools of psychology, however, are quite apparent in light of current knowledge of the brain¹²⁴, and these limitations affected the operation of the model at "higher" levels.¹²⁵

The term "intermediate level" is somewhat problematic. One classic expression related to this "level" in sociological theory is Merton's (1967) concept of "middle-range theory". Merton (1967:39) notes that

Middle-range theory is principally used in sociology to guide empirical inquiry. It is intermediate to general theories of social systems which are too remote from particular classes of social behaviour, organization and change to account for what is observed and to those detailed orderly descriptions of particulars that are not generalized at all

Middle-range theory operates between the level of micro-descriptive models and the level of macro social theory. While it provides us with a guide to the level of analysis, at least in the sense of level of abstraction, it does not provide us with specific structures.¹²⁶ This is not surprising, since one of the key reasons for deploying middle-range theory is to escape from models deduced from larger, macro-social theory (cf. Merton, 1967:41).

¹²³ On the links between the two attempts, see Parsons (1957).

¹²⁴ For example, while certain areas of the brain had been mapped out (e.g. Broca's area, Wernicke's area, etc.), neurotransmitters were not discovered until 1973 (Franklin, 1987) and the mapping of mental modules was not validated until the mid-1980's (see Hirschfeld and Gelman, 1994 for a review).

¹²⁵ See Chapter 1.2. "Higher" is used in the sense of increased specificity and organization - aka levels emerging from the biological.

¹²⁶ This derives from the specific development of middle-range theory which is concerned with levels of abstraction. It is meant to provide a framework for examining particular structures and patterns of behaviour, rather than specifying structures. As such, the concept of middle-range theory is meant to be generative rather than prescriptive.

While Merton's concept of middle-range theory is useful for defining a level of abstraction, we must also be able to define specific types of intermediate structures in order to carry on this investigation. The initial impetus for the choice of these structures stems from Durkheim (1984:liv) who observed that "[a] nation cannot be maintained unless, between the state and individuals, a whole range of secondary groups are interposed." This observation was later expanded by Malinowski (1960), and became the basis of his *Scientific Theory of Culture*, and it is from Malinowski that I derive the models of intermediate structures presented in this chapter.

3.1 Malinowski's Scientific Theory of Culture

Whether we consider a very simple or primitive culture or an extremely complex and developed one, we are confronted by a vast apparatus, partly material, partly human and partly spiritual, by which man is able to cope with the concrete, specific problems that face him. These problems arise out of the fact that man has a body subject to various organic needs, and that he lives in an environment which is his best friend, in that it provides the raw materials of man's handiwork, and also his dangerous enemy, in that it harbors many hostile forces. Malinowski, 1960:36

Malinowski (1960:36) started his major theoretical work with one basic assumption, upon which he build his entire model:

... that the theory of culture must take its stand on biological fact.... They [humans] are subject to elemental conditions which have to be fulfilled so that individuals may survive, the race continue and organisms one and all be maintained in working order."

This short quote foreshadows the three major areas of his inquiry: individual survival, racial continuance¹²⁷, and organism maintenance.

¹²⁷ The term "race" is used here as "total membership of a social group" rather than in either the biological sense ("species"), or in the ideological sense of differentiation by distinguishing characteristic (e.g. skin colour).

Malinowski (1960) argued that there were three main types of "needs"; each of which derived from a different source. He starts with basic physiological "instincts", and argues that these produce a universal list of processes, or "vital sequences", which all cultures must address. These vital sequences, when considered at the general level of both a group and an individual, give rise to specific "basic needs" which must be met by all cultures.¹²⁸

Each "basic need" is met by a "cultural response". These cultural responses are organized patterns of behaviour which have evolved in response to that basic need and within a particular environment.¹²⁹ Many of these cultural responses are systematized, "named", and given a social existence - they are a societies "institutions".

Within these "institutions", Malinowski noted two types of regularities: 1) a regularity of components or elements¹³⁰ and 2) a regularity in functional type across cultures. These "institutions", in turn, produce a secondary environment and have their own "derived needs" or "imperatives" relating to the survival of the institution (cf. Malinowski, 1960:120-131). While this model is useful, it also can be matched in many non-human species.

¹²⁸ Cf. Piddington (1957:34-38). It is important not confuse the concept of "needs" with that of "causes". Such a confusion happened in anthropology in the 1950's, where certain needs were given the status of prime causes or ultimate goals. This created a situation where the entire concept had to be disposed of due to an obvious lack of relationship to observed reality (cf. Lee, 1959:70-77). "Needs" should not be viewed as either prime causes or as ultimate goals. Rather, they should be conceived of as an environmental context which creates certain perceived minimal conditions.

¹²⁹ As such, cultural responses are phenotypic expressions rather than genotypic determinations.

¹³⁰ Which he describes in his Theory of Organized Behaviour. Cf. Malinowski, 1960, chapter 5. I go into much greater detail on this in section 3, where it forms the basis form my discussion of chartered institutions.

For Malinowski, what sets human cultures apart from non-human is the process of symbolization involved in the creation of "integrative imperatives" - a third environment which is primarily symbolic. As Malinowski notes (1960:132), "... symbolism, in its essential nature, is the modification of the original organism which allows the transformation of a physiological drive into a cultural value." This symbolization must allow for the transmission of cultural knowledge ("the full knowledge of tribal tradition"), coupled with the ability to link emotional states to this knowledge (i.e. the production of "values").

Malinowski's theory of culture suffers from exactly the same key problem as Parson's (1951) theory of the Social System: neither theory includes specific linkages between cultures and systems. While some might argue that this is unimportant in so-called "primitive" cultures, this relies on a mythologized view of pre-modern cultures (cf. Kuper, 1988) and completely ignores the complex networks that have tied numerous pre-modern cultures together.¹³¹

This theoretical "blind spot" is even more crucial if we attempt to apply these theories to current societies. Not only do we see a global economy which has serious impacts on national economies, but we also have the development of numerous multinational organizations (e.g. NGO's, Trans-National Corporations, various religious and professional organizations, etc.), and the deployment of artefactual networks that transcend national barriers.¹³²

¹³¹ See, for example, Frank, 1993; Algaze, 1993; Sahlins, 1972.

¹³² E.g. the Internet, but also the earlier deployment of telegraph and telephonic systems, the spread of specific technological knowledge, etc. For reviews of some of the trans-national artefactual

This problem, however, may be solved with three modifications to Malinowski's model.¹³³ First, if we define the source of a need as an "environment", we end up with a model with three environments: biological/ecological, "institutional" and symbolic, and multi-social.¹³⁴ Secondly, we need to expand our analysis to include "interior" environments. Third, we can split each of these environments into areas of conceptual control, or "imperia"¹³⁵ and relate this control to one or more different chartered institutions (see Chapter 5).

3.2 Sourcing "needs"

While Malinowski's model is, in many ways, viable it is also limited in that it disregards many types of contingent and trans-systemic "needs". I propose that we retain the general model of three source categories, but modify them both conceptually and analytically. First, the categories should be considered as "environments", rather than classes of needs. This conceptual shift allows us to integrate new understandings into each area without having to rework the entire model. By way of example, Malinowski's concept of "hygiene" as a basic need does not cover situations such as epilepsy and the

systems, see Headrick, 1981; Pacey, 1990. For a discussion of one of the earliest trans-"national" artefactual systems, see Schmandt-Besserat, 1992.

¹³³ If we were to use Parson's (1951) model, the required number of modifications would be much larger.

¹³⁴ Each of these environments is an emergent level of the previous environment via the specific responses to that environment,

¹³⁵ Singular - *imperium*; from the Latin: *im* - on, over and *parare* - to make ready, order; connected to the Greek term *πειρα*, a trial or attempt and *τοπος*, a way. For readability, I will use *imperia* as the plural form, rather than the technically correct form of *imperi*.

cultural response to it, even though both are related to bodily "health" and stem from certain biological laws.

The second modification I propose is analytical. Malinowski's model has no analytical category for inter-social and/or trans-social interaction¹³⁶, although many of the examples he uses relate to this area. I would suggest that we modify his analytical schema by combining his derived needs and intra-social integrative imperatives into a single environment, and using the third environment for the arena of inter-social and trans-social interaction. As such, this environment is still concerned with "integrative imperatives" but at the level of multiple social systems (i.e. "world systems; cf. Frank, 1993).

The following sub-sections consider each environment in more detail, and also make a few observations on rites of passage and professions.

3.2.1 Primary Environment

The primary environment is concerned with Malinowski's "basic needs": the biological pre-requisites for the reproduction, development, maintenance and eventual disposal of human beings. The problems with this conception are, of course, many. First, humans live in an ecological symbiosis with other biological creatures, and with their "natural environment" (cf. Rappaport, 1968, 1979). This symbiosis produces certain "needs" that are contingent rather than constant. Several good examples of contingent

¹³⁶ The term "inter-social" is used to denote interactions between different social systems. Analytically, this may be used to examine the interactions between different societies or for the interactions between multi-social polities. The term "trans-social" is used to denote chartered institutions that operate outside of particular societal boundaries (e.g. certain professions, religious groups, etc.).

needs in this environment are plagues, shifts in weather patterns, "natural disasters", and changes in the environment due to human and/or technological "interference".¹³⁷

Another problem with Malinowski's conception is that it does not consider the genetic mutability of humans. Earlier, I mentioned epilepsy as an example of a biologically derived "need" that was not met by Malinowski's model. To this, we must add the entire range of biologically determined phenotypical expressions of the human genome that are not part of the cultural "norm".¹³⁸ Examples of this include the differing ability to break down alcohol¹³⁹, and other genetically determined developments (e.g. epilepsy, Down's Syndrome, etc.). In general, we can refer to this class of "needs" as human biological variation.

One final class of needs concerns the intake requirements for optimum ontogenic development. Normally, this is assumed to refer to enough food (or other requirement) to avoid death. A significant amount of research, however, has shown that the human organism can survive, develop, and reproduce in non-optimal forms if certain basic requirements are missing and/or limited. In some instances, the physical environment

¹³⁷ This situation is not "new" or dependant upon the industrial revolution. A good pre-industrial example is the shift in saline levels in farmland in Sumeria thanks to intensive irrigation. Other examples would include deforestation, soil depletion, and species extinction.

¹³⁸ If one variant of an allele is dominant in a group, then its effects would be considered the "norm" for that group. The interesting, and tricky, situation arises when there are differing alleles for the same effect in the same group and this allele produces observable differences. Examples of this would include differences that may come to serve as a basis for non-biological definitions of "race" (e.g. melanin concentration) or "class" (e.g. facial structure) or "human" (e.g. Down's Syndrome).

¹³⁹ This is a genetically controlled, biochemical variation in low Km aldehyde dehydrogenase (ALDH). ALDH is the agent responsible for the metabolizing of acetaldehyde, which is the first breakdown product in the metabolism of alcohol (Goedde et al., 1985). The particular allele responsible for low K_m ALDH has been identified as ALDH2*2, and is the genetic basis of alcohol-induced flushing in Asians (Wall, 1994). In cultures where this allele is prominent (e.g. Japan), it is usually associated with low levels

(e.g. quantities of protein, vitamin A, zinc, etc.) limits these requirements, while in other situations the institutional environment limits these requirements.¹⁴⁰ Regardless of the source of the limitation, the requirement is physiological and, hence, part of the primary environment.

Given the discussion so far, we can define the major components of the primary environment as follows:

1. "Basic needs" - the requirements for the reproduction, development, maintenance and eventual disposal of human beings.
2. Ecological considerations - the symbiotic relationship established with the "natural environment".
3. Human biological variation - the effects of variability in the human genome
4. "Optimization" - the effects of non-optimal availability of required substances and/or processes.

While these components are all operational at a general level, if we are examining the specifics arising from the state of unemployment, then the list can be abbreviated to issues of "self" ("who am I?"; depression, stress, insomnia, etc.), money (which buys solutions to most primary needs), and possibly mate retention (cf. subsection 2.2.2.3).

of alcohol intake due to a variety of genetic and environmental factors (Harada et al.; Suwaki and Ohara, 1985; Wall et al., 1992).

¹⁴⁰ A good example of this is the effects of stress on the human system.

3.2.2 Secondary Environment

The term "secondary environment" refers to the environment produced by groups in order to meet the initial requirements of the primary environment. As such, this environment contains "ideologies", "institutions", and the artefactual or "built" environment.¹⁴¹ At its core, the secondary environment is composed of a series of chartered institutions which form an intra-social and, in some cases, an inter-cultural, environment (cf. Chapter 5).

It is important to note that most modern societies are "multi-cultural" in the broad sense that they contain different cultural groups.¹⁴² Since many chartered institutions are "cultural", this frequently leads to the development of chartered institutions which attempt to integrate different cultural responses within a single society - "inter-cultural and intra-social integrative imperatives" to modify Malinowski's terminology.¹⁴³ This leaves us with two major components of the secondary environment:

- Cultural chartered institutions
- Inter-cultural but intra-social institutions (including certain symbol systems)

¹⁴¹ The term "built environment" is used in the broad sense prevalent in archaeology. It refers both to built "structures" and to artefact systems.

¹⁴² The existence of "multi-cultural societies" is not solely a modern phenomenon. It is a situation which also existed in many historical societies (e.g. the Roman Empire, China, Byzantium, etc.).

¹⁴³ The terms "culture" and "social" are used in the following manner. Culture, from the Latin *cultura* - to cultivate refers to the upbringing of an individual; the sense of "right" and "wrong" in which responses to choose to specific situations. It has the connotation of "growth" and "controlled growth" (cultivation) and, hence, an implication that change is inevitable for the individual. Social, from the Latin *sociabilis* and *soci/o -are -avi -atum-* compatible, unite, associate, share; the sense of alliance or friendship between people, a sharing of a commonality. It has the connotation of "day-to-day" pragmatism - what is "possible" or "desirable" rather than what is "right" or "wrong". It is also used as the adjectival form of "society".

The ties to unemployment are clearer, at least inasmuch as the secondary environment includes all of the possible "landings" for an unemployed person: re-employment, career shift, self-employment, school, retirement, etc. A second core point is that the secondary environment defines the start and finish states of a rite of passage. As such, this is an absolutely central environment.

3.2.3 Tertiary Environment

The term "tertiary environment" refers to the inter-social environment. The form taken by this environment depends on the interactions between different societies, and the emergence of inter-social "systems". While these systems are often conceived of as economic, political and/or military (cf. Chase-Dunn, 1993), they may also be based on social disciplines (e.g. "professions", "religion", etc.) and artefactual systems (e.g. computer systems).

In a number of cases, the tertiary environment includes intra-cultural and inter-social chartered institutions. The most obvious of these are languages, religions and professions that span a number of different societies. In addition, the tertiary environment includes chartered institutions which serve to mediate inter-social relations (e.g. the "rules of war", the U.N., the Oracle at Delphi, etc.) and other chartered institutions which operate as transnational entities (e.g. trans-national corporations).

Given the discussion so far, we can state that there are three broad categories of entities in the tertiary environment:

- a) Inter-social systems, such as multi-social economies;
- b) Inter-social chartered institutions, such as religions and professions; and

- c) Intra-social chartered institutions whose primary focus is inter-social, such as development agencies, military organizations, intelligence organizations, etc.).

The ties to unemployment are via the effects of these systems and institutions on those of the secondary environment. For example, a dramatic difference in the cost of labour may well shift entire industries out of one society and into another. A different example would be if a religious organization gained enough political power to "outlaw" particular work or professions (e.g. genetic engineering). Shifts in the tertiary environment produce shifts in the secondary environment that has a significant impact on the availability of jobs.

3.2.4 Notes on the reformulation of needs to environments

There are a number of points that need to be made about the reformulation of needs to environments that I have not, so far, highlighted. One of the key points to consider is that environments act as ecosystems and the "inhabitants" of these environments are subject to evolutionary pressures. This leads to certain interesting situations when the inhabitants of an environment may well "act" in manners which are contrary to the survival of the individual members of the group.

This type of environmental competition is most readily apparent in situations when the environment has undergone a rapid change (see Calvin, 1991, 1997a for factors which act to catalyze evolutionary pressures). In particular, the shift to a "boom" or abundant environment may well create a host of competitors all aiming at niche dominance (cf. Calvin, 1991). Of special note for the current project is the relatively recent shifts that have happened in the past 200 years in the tertiary environment and,

particularly, in the realm of the technologically based compaction of time and space (see Chapter 6).

3.2.4.1 A Note on Professions

One benefit of reformatting Malinowski's model from "needs" to "environments" is that it allows us to examine professions by environment, thereby allowing us to account for the longevity or specificity of certain professions. For example, primary environmental professions would tend to appear across cultures and throughout time, while secondary and tertiary environmental professions would be temporally and/or culturally limited (cf. Abbott, 1988:92-93).

A second advantage of this reformulation is that it allows us to distinguish areas of "professional requirement" from the existence of specific professions (see 4.2.4). For example, we can distinguish a professional requirement for "health" which is met by a number of different, and frequently competing, specific professions. The term "professional requirement" refers to a culturally or socially constructed "need" (see 5.1.1) for a specific, authoritative instantiation of a particular paradigm and/or primary environmental need. I have used the term "paradigm", rather than body of knowledge, since it includes the concepts of problems, solutions, and methodologies (cf. Kuhn, 1970) and relates well to Abbott's (1988) conceptualization of professional knowledge (see 4.3). Given that paradigms are socially and culturally constructed, it is apparent that the needs that they fulfill may also both constructed and "authorized", at least in as much as the need derives from the secondary or tertiary environment (see 5.1). A classic example of this would be the "need" for religious sacraments.

Professional requirements may also derive from the primary environment, and this appears to be the case with a number of highly identifiable ones such as medical and environmental knowledge specialties. While professional requirements deriving from the secondary and tertiary environments are historically specific, those deriving from the primary environment may not be (i.e. they are species, ecosystem, or event specific).

3.2.4.2 A Note on Rites of Passage

A third advantage to this reformulation is that it allows us to categorize rites of passage by their environment. While this has been done in

Table 2 in a limited manner, we can show the influences of different environments on the same rite of passage. Thus, for example, rites of adulthood would derive from the primary environment and be heavily influenced by various secondary environment criteria (i.e. definitions of when it takes place, the role of "adults", etc.), while most initiation rites would derive from the secondary or tertiary environments.¹⁴⁴ While specific rites of passage may derive from particular environments, they are always mediated by a professional group of "ritual specialists" in such a manner that any particular rite of passage becomes a chartered institution.

While the primary effects of a rite of passage may happen without the intervention of ritual specialists, such a situation may have a number of outcomes. First, these effects may not be culturally or socially "valid". Consider, by way of example, the

¹⁴⁴ A good example of a rite of passage deriving from the tertiary environment is the place of PhD fieldwork in the discipline of anthropology. As a discipline, anthropology is avowedly intercultural and concerned with the communication of one culture to another culture, although in recent years the requirement for an intersocial basis in fieldwork has lost its universality. The practice of fieldwork is frequently referred to as a "rite of passage" that everyone must go through in order to "truly" become an anthropologist.

differences in social and cultural validity between a "legal" marriage, a "religious" marriage, and common-law marriage. Second, the effect may not appear in the same time frame without the intervention of a ritual specialists. Keeping with the example of marriage, it currently requires three years for a common-law marriage to achieve full legal recognition in Canada. This can be compared with the approximately thirty minutes for a legal marriage while, in a number of instances, "religious" marriage has no legal standing whatsoever unless the ritual specialist is also a legally licensed practitioner.

This reformulation is even more important in cases where the society is in the temporal event horizon, since the states involved are constantly shifting. When we consider the development of outplacement, there is a clear set of needs stemming from factors in each of the environments. Clearly, there is an abundance of unemployed people, both as a percentage and in absolute numbers. And, as I show more clearly in section 7.5, there is a lot of pressure developing for companies to "fulfil" their "moral" responsibilities. At the same time, the economic situation developed as a result of both technological change and the development of and shifts in global markets (see Chapter 6). There is no question that the outplacement industry has had to deal with pressures coming from all of these environments.

3.2.5 Summation

The reformulation of "needs" to environments allows us to develop specific taxonomies of chartered institutions based on the environment that generates the "need" they purport to fulfill. By differentiating between environments in the manner outlined above, we can also identify areas of "professional requirements" which will give rise in

all cultures to some form of chartered institution, as well as those that are situationally specific.¹⁴⁵

3.3 Interior Environments

My use of the concept of interior environments stems from Alfred Korzybski. In his introduction to the second edition of *Science and Sanity*, Korzybski (1958:xliv) argued that we must consider the neuro-semantic and neuro-linguistic environments of individuals as environments. It was essential to the project of general semantics to dissolve the artificial, Aristotelian distinctions of "either-or" (e.g. mind *and* body, subjective *and* objective, etc.), and it is equally essential for the purpose of this dissertation.

Since all of the environments considered in the previous sub-section are external to the individual, it is imperative that we introduce the complementary internal environments. Unlike Korzybski, I identify three interior environments: the neuro-somatic, the neuro-semantic, and the neuro-linguistic. The neuro-somatic and the neuro-semantic environments are clearly "interior" (i.e. concerned with individual, subjective states/processes). The neuro-linguistic environment, on the other hand, is both interior and transpersonal.

¹⁴⁵ Even if this is only in the form of a "taboo". The existence of a taboo indicates the socio-cultural recognition of the existence of a chartered institution which purports to meet a need, but which has achieved a negative value in that society. A classic example of this is the existence of "cults" (in the pejorative sense of the term) which are socially recognized and, at the same time, assigned a highly negative social value.

3.3.1 Neuro-Somatic Environment

The neuro-somatic environment of an individual is the analogic equivalent of the external primary environment. It is concerned with the internal physiological, neuro-physiological, and neuro-chemical "reality" of the individual. Certain "conditions" are operational in this environment such as depression, manic-depression, chronic fatigue syndrome, etc.

The neuro-somatic environment has many specific and varied effects on the phenomenology of individuals. Some of these effects are "inherent" (i.e. specific neurological and neuro-chemical conditions), while others are situationally induced (e.g. seasonal affective disorder, etc.). In general, this environment is only of interest for socio-cultural analyses when specific neuro-somatic situations are socially and/or culturally recognised and validated. In particular, there are two specific instances that are addressed in the outplacement industry: depression and optimism, since each of these emotional conditions has a noted effect on candidates abilities to look for a job and present a desirable image of self during the job search (see 8.4.1).

3.3.2 Neuro-Semantic Environment

For Korzybski, the neuro-semantic environment is also the *neuro-evaluative* environment. Korzybski (1958:xxxiv-v) gives an example from his seminars

In my seminars I pick a young woman student and pre-arrange with her a demonstration about which the class knows nothing. During the lecture she is called to the platform and I hand her a box of matches which she takes carelessly and drops on the desk. That is the only 'crime' she has committed. Then I begin to call her names, etc., with a display of anger, waving my fists in front of her face, and finally with a big gesture, I slap her face gently. Seeing this 'slap', as a rule ninety per cent of the students recoil and shiver; ten per cent show no overt reactions. The latter have seen what they have seen, but they *delayed their evaluations*. Then I

explain to the students that their recoil and shiver was an *organismal evaluation* very harmful in principle, because they *identified* the seen facts with their judgements, creeds, dogmas, etc. Thus their reactions were entirely unjustified, as what they have *seen* turned out to be merely a scientific demonstration of the mechanism of identification, which identification I expected

This particular example shows a reaction based on the evaluation of a particular event. This evaluation is based on certain cultural and/or social conditioning. There are, however, other neuro-semantic reactions based on hardwired neurological structures; the evolved psychological mechanisms described in section 2.2.2.

Since neuro-semantic reactions derive from two separate sources, it is only appropriate to distinguish between general types based upon the source. As such, I refer to the neuro-semantic environment produced by evolved psychological mechanisms (see section 2.2.2) as first order neuro-semantic structures, while those deriving from cultural and/or social conditioning are referred to as second order neuro-semantic structures. I have coined the term "psycho-cultural complex" to refer to a second order neuro-semantic structure coupled with a meme complex (2.4.4) that is a recognised, core component of a culture.¹⁴⁶

It is important to note that these reactions are referred to as "structures". This term is used to refer to the neurological bases of these reactions. The sum total of these neuro-semantic structures is referred to as the neuro-semantic environment. This distinction is important, since it is quite possible that any individual neuro-semantic structure will stand in opposition towards other neuro-semantic structures (i.e. a 'double-bind').

¹⁴⁶ In part, this was to try and get a term that would approximate the object of analysis of the culture and personality school in Anthropology, while remaining within the model presented in this dissertation.

The final analytic distinction required is that of the neuro-semantic ecosystem. This is the collection of semantic reactions that are linked into a particular component of an external environment that is linguistically, culturally and/or behaviorally held as "distinct" - usually a chartered institution (see Chapter 5 and section 8.4.3).

3.3.3 Neuro-linguistic Environment

The neuro-linguistic environment is both an interior and an interpersonal environment. It is concerned with the communication and conceptualization of meaning, both verbally and non-verbally. Korzybski (1958) and, to a lesser degree, Whorf (1941) held that the structures of a language constrain not only the range of and ways in which meanings may be expressed, but also the very legitimacy of certain forms of perception.

"Language", as Whorf (1941:167) noted, "is a system, not just an assemblage of norms." The systemic qualities apply not only to the language itself, but also to the structures of perceptions inherent in the language as actualized within individuals (i.e. the range of semantic reactions associated with words and phrases). While the norms of interpretation, e.g. the frequency distribution of different associated semantic reactions, may change, the structure of the language tends to remain unless there is a radical transformation.¹⁴⁷

At the other end of the neuro-linguistic spectrum, we find the deployment of non-verbal communications. As with semantic reactions, there appear to be two orders of non-verbal communications: those that are "hardwired", and those that are culturally defined.

¹⁴⁷ Such radical transformations have already happened in the connotative meaning of the word "job" (cf. section 6.3) in the past. A similar radical transformation is also currently taking place (cf. Bridges, 1994; Schwartz, 1997), but the current transformation is a return to an earlier definition an indication that the structure of language may contain the property of hysteresis.

Examples of "hardwired" non-verbal communications would include mate selection behaviour (Buss, 1994), pain and fear responses, etc. While the basic response are "hardwired", the actual expression of those responses is subject to a culturally defined process of expression. Examples of culturally defined non-verbal communications include reactions to time and space, clothing patterns, patterns of language use, etc. (cf. Hall, 1959).¹⁴⁸

The concept of a neuro-linguistic environment has been extended in the last few decades into neuro-linguistic programming (NLP) which is a therapeutic application of Korzybski's model modified by other systems (cf. Bandler and Grinder, 1979, 1982).¹⁴⁹ It is worth examining some of the models from neuro-linguist programming, since they are very similar to the operation of "rituals" and "magic".¹⁵⁰ The following description of NLP is drawn exclusively from Bandler and Grinder (1979).

The first step in basic NLP is to recognize the representational strategies used by individuals. This recognition is achieved in two ways: a) by a form of active listening, and b) by reading the body language of the individual, especially their eye movements (see Bandler and Grinder, 1979:25). The representational strategies themselves are sensory ways of storing, manipulating, and accessing information (generally visual,

¹⁴⁸ The distinction between hardwired and culturally defined is for analytic purposes only. There appear to be very few examples of non-verbal communication that are solely one or the other. Thus a statement that "X reaction is hardwired", should be interpreted as "X reaction is predominantly a hardwired response which is mediated by a cultural overlay". Conversely, the statement that "Y reaction is culturally based" should be read as "Y reaction draws on hardwired elements and combines them in a way that in a manner that is culturally prescribed - the observable reaction is primarily a matter of cultural definition."

¹⁴⁹ Albeit this extension has concentrated on the interior aspects of the neuro-linguistic environment.

¹⁵⁰ A similarity that they specifically refer to a many places.

auditory or kinesthetic¹⁵¹). The structure of representational systems is composed of a "lead system", a "representational system", and a "reference system" (Bandler and Grinder, 1979:28), each of which makes use of a particular sensory "channel".

The second step in basic NLP is to gain a rapport with the individual and/or with sub-*personae* of the individual. NLP holds that all people are "multiple personalities" who are aware of the context in which to use certain personae, and remember their use. This is done, at the gross level, by entering into their representational strategies. For example, if a person used primarily visual cues, both verbal and non-verbal, then matching those cues linguistically would help to achieve a rapport with the client. Conversely, using another representational system may well antagonize the client (cf. Bandler and Grinder, 1979:10-12).

The third step is to "reframe" the representational strategies used by an individual in order to change their behaviour. The term "behaviour" is used somewhat loosely since NLP holds that behaviour results from representational strategies, and that certain strategies are more effective than others. As such, "behaviour", as it is used here, includes components of perception and perceptual processing.

The process of reframing consists of six steps (Bandler and Grinder, 1979:160). First, identify the pattern to be changed. Second, establish communication with the *personae* responsible for that pattern. Third, distinguish between the pattern and the intention behind the pattern (the desire or "need"). Fourth, create alternative patterns to meet the intention. Fifth, allocate responsibility for generating and trying new patterns to

¹⁵¹ Some people also appear to use olfactory systems, although this does appear to be rare.

the *personae*. Sixth, check to make sure that these new patterns do not interfere with any other *personae*.¹⁵² The process, if it is successful, will shift one or more semantic reactions of the individual.

3.3.4 A Note on Rites of Passage

The model of representational strategies developed by NLP provides us with a number of access points in analyzing certain types of social interaction. It has been known for some time that "mythic language" uses a multi-sensory presentation genre to represent specific processual realities (cf. Levi-Strauss, 1963:206-231). Mythic language also uses what Wagner (1978) refers to as "lethal words"; particular statements that incite a double bind within an individual in order to shift their perceptions. Classic examples of this include Zen koans such as "what is the sound of one hand clapping?", and Irish riddle songs requesting "impossible" items (e.g. a cherry with no stone). By examining the representational strategies in specific texts and events, we can isolate specific components of the cognized environment of ritual specialists, at least in the rhetorical construction phase (see Chapter 7 and section 8.4.2).

In the model of rites of passage described by Van Gennep (1960) and elaborated by Turner (1969), the person involved moves from a preliminary state, "A", through a liminal phase, to achieve a second state, "B". Each of these states is characterized by a semantic ecology related to the cultural definitions of these two states, while the liminal phase is characterized by a set of reframing processes.

¹⁵² For a full description of the process, see Bandler and Grinder (1979:137-193). For additional techniques and strategies, see Bandler and Grinder, 1982.

It is not sufficient for a rite of passage to contain changes in the external environments. The individual undergoing the rite of passage must also "believe" that they have been changed as a result of the "rituals" in the liminal state. Indeed, the external validity of the rite of passage is, in part, dependent upon the internal changes in semantic reactions or the lack thereof. By highlighting the reframed semantic reactions, we can partially map the specifics of states A and B, at least inasmuch as the specifics are understood by the ritual specialists (see section 8.2).

3.3.5 Summation

While the reformulation of "needs" to external environments allowed us to develop specific taxonomies of chartered institutions, the deployment of internal environments enables us to address specific areas of meaning construction and reconstruction. Two key concepts, semantic reactions and representational strategies, allow us to target specific meaning constructions and attempts at reconstruction.

3.4 Conclusions

There are a number of specific semantic reactions that must be mapped out in this project in each environment. In particular, we will be mapping out changes in semantic reactions to work and "the world" at a macro-level (Chapter 6), towards executive unemployment during the early silicon age (Chapter 7), and the micro level processes of outplacement (Chapter 8).

In general, these modifications also allow us to sidestep a criticism of Malinowski's model, namely that it is ahistorical. Changes in environments over time can be compared with changes in institutions, while shifts in institutional dominance in

various environmental areas can track changes in social "power".¹⁵³ In particular, the move to an environmental model allows us to define specific selection pressures that have "shaped up" the outplacement industry.

¹⁵³ By way of example, most claims-making activity takes place in the symbolic environment, and the methodologies of the social constructionists measure changes in this environment which, subsequently, may (or may not) have an impact on the institutional environment.

4 Elementary social interfaces

This chapter is concerned with elementary social extensions of consciousness, or what we might call "social software operating systems". In particular, this chapter is concerned with the means of intersubjective communication, and how changes in various environments effect that communication.

The concept of coding inherent in the idea of "software" relies on a series of transformations of a very basic code into a series of more advanced codes. In computer software, the basic code is binary (a "bit") while machine code is hexadecimal (eight binary pairs or a "byte").¹⁵⁴ Unlike the binary coding of computers, biological coding operates on a quaternary basic code. The best known biological code is DNA (deoxyribonucleic acid), which is composed of four bases (adenine, cytosine, thymine, and guanine) which, in turn, make up genetic codes. Each code sequence, in turn, controls for the production of specific amino acids.

Both biological coding (DNA) and computer coding must be transformed into an ever increasingly complex form in order to produce systems that are interactive. As the coding complexity increases via transformation and recombination, stable systems or configurations emerge which are capable of interaction with other stable systems and configurations. These interactive systems may be seen as "languages", i.e. interactive systems composed of objects ("nouns"), relationships between objects ("verbs"), and a set of "rules" for constructing "new" configurations ("grammar").

¹⁵⁴ An 8-bit byte is the most common form at present, and is the basis for most PC's. This is converted into multiples of eight to produce specific character sets (e.g. the 256 character set of ASCII).

There is, however, a key difference between the emergent, stable systems that result from computer binary coding and biological quaternary coding. In computer systems, the resulting "language" is a translation interface that allows the end-user to tell the computer to perform certain specific functions in a specific manner. In biological coding, however, the number of transformations required from "end-user input" to action are much greater and are also much more context dependent.

In the first place, while there are biological codes for the development of particular "social abilities" (see Section 2.2.2), there are no biological codes which automatically develop these abilities. Rather than a code for development, there is a code for a time window in which the ability may be developed: a form of "ontogenic uncertainty", if you will, that is dependent upon specific socialization. Furthermore, even if the biological "machinery" is "damaged", an approximation of the social action governed by that machinery is possible (cf. Baron-Cohen, 1995:139-143).

In Chapter 1.2, I argue that "consciousness" is composed of three major components: physiological "hardware", social "hardware", and content "software". The model of environments developed in chapter 3 is the analogic equivalent at the social level of sensory input (basic physiological hardware). In this chapter, I develop a general model of "operating systems", or "M-forms", which are designed to mediate this "sensory input". While the specific neuro-semantic reactions to particular states are accessible via a micro-level analysis, and I do this in Chapter 8, it is still necessary to locate these states in specific social structures. In section 4.2, I draw on Laughlin's (1996) concept of Cyborg consciousness to illustrate how certain technological extensions operate and

effect M-forms. This discussion is followed by an examination of knowledge systems in section 4.3.

4.1 M-Forms

The basic components of responses to environmentally generated needs are the socio-cultural equivalents of individual patterns of action/perception. Drawing from Dawkins (1982), we may term these socio-cultural equivalents as “memetic replicators” (i.e. intersubjectively transmissible memetic organisms).¹⁵⁵ By this, I do not wish to argue that the phenotypic expressions of these answers are memetic replicators but, rather, memetic replicators serve as the basic building blocks out of which specific quasi-stable complexes - “M-forms” - emerge. These M-forms, in turn, serve as the ground for particular extensions which, eventually, form into the phenotypic expressions of particular answers - chartered institutions (cf. chapter 6).

M-forms act as a “gene pool” from which a variable number of more limited forms is abstracted. The difference between an M-form and a Weberian ideal type lies in two areas. First, I assume that M-forms are “entities” composed of specific, although varying, memetic sequences. The second difference derives from the first in that as “entities”, M-forms are subject both to selection pressures and to mutation. As such,

¹⁵⁵ I use the term “memetic replicator” since it contains no implication of human-like consciousness on the part of the cultural artefact and yet, at the same time, conveys the implication of limited social action. See Goodenough (1995) for an example of the “social action” which can be taken by a memetic replicator or, to use his term, a “mind virus”.

while the concept of an M-form overlaps that of a Weberian ideal type, there are distinct differences in their relative conceptualizations.¹⁵⁶

4.1.1 M-Form precursors

As with memes, M-forms are symbionts. As such, they are compound "creatures" which are composed of a number of basic components. While the elementary components of M-forms are memetic replicators or intersubjectively transmissible memetic organisms, the specific precursors to M-forms are meme complexes (cf. Section 2.4.4). Given the apparent universality of Fiske's (1991) relational models (see sub-section 2.2.2.2), I would propose that at least one set of M-Forms would center around them. It is this set of "social relational M-Forms" that we are most concerned with.

In general, we can distinguish five general types of M-form precursors: perceptual parsing, propriety parsing, communicative extensions, perceptual extensions, and technological extensions.

4.1.1.1 Perceptual parsing

Perceptual parsing complexes are primarily discrimination and emotive memes, where the complex as a whole is designed to "parse" or cut the cognized environment into particular "chunks". More specifically, perceptual parsing complexes are sensory interpretation coding where environmental input is converted in the sensorium into discrete elements which are capable of being identified and evaluated. As such, this

¹⁵⁶ There are also serious differences in the philosophical precursors. Weberian Ideal types draw on the conceptualization of a Platonic transcendent ideal type or form, while M-forms derive from a position of emergence. The "transcendent" component, or that which shapes what is seen, differs since the concept of M-forms assumes that any number of memetic organisms may produce similar M-forms (convergent evolution).

complex serves to divide subjective "reality" into bounded components that may be interacted with in a number of ways. In effect, perceptual parsing distinguishes "objects" (and relationships) within the environment examined.

4.1.1.2 Propriety parsing

Propriety parsing complexes draw on output from relational models (cf. Section 2.2.2.2) for their primary coding, and assign an "appropriate" model to various component elements of the cognized environment. These complexes are composed both of discrimination memes for each type of relational model (including the "null set") and emotive memes linking model-appropriate action with particular discrete elements of the cognized environment. At a more basic level, this complex serves to reinforce a particular perceptual parsing complex by providing internal sensory-emotive feedback, for example in the form of release of specific neurotransmitters which can trigger emotional states.¹⁵⁷ Propriety parsing complexes determine "values" by linking the objects and relationships produced by perceptual parsing with specific emotional reactions.

4.1.1.3 Communicative extensions

The concept of communicative extensions derives from McLuhan's (1964) work on media. As he notes (1964:23-24),

... the "content" of any medium is always another medium. The content of writing is speech, just as the written word is the content of print,

¹⁵⁷ A good example of this effect in operation is the placebo effect. A quick sidenote here: changes in neurotransmitter levels can cause changes in internally perceived emotions but, in an interesting twist, emotions induced in reaction to external perceptions can induce changes in neurotransmitter levels. This creates a situation where there neither external stimuli nor internal neurotransmitter levels are the "first cause" of emotions.

and print is the content of the telegraph. If it is asked, "What is the content of speech?," it is necessary to say, "It is an actual process of thought, which is itself non-verbal."

Communicative extensions are the biases towards particular communicative media. Certain memetic organisms are more easily transmitted via certain types of media and by variant types of genres within media. All memetic replicators rely on intersubjective communication in order to replicate. As such, it is obvious that the biases of time and space (cf. Innis, 1951) and of general form (cf. Ong, 1982; McLuhan, 1964) inherent in the particular communicative media will effect the replicative success.

Communicative extensions appear not only in particular forms (e.g. text, video, face-to-face, non-verbal language, etc.) but also in a propensity towards particular genres. Many forms of propriety parsing replicators are communicated via poetry or song, for example concepts of love or of one's relationship to a god, while others are communicated via linear textual genres, e.g. concepts of bureaucratic organizations or law. Communicative extensions, media and genres, each have their own inherent adaptive landscape that serves both as an extension and as a limiting factor on the complexes it is extending.

4.1.1.4 Technological extensions

Memetic complexes rely on particular technological extensions, whether these be artefactual or of technique. These technological extensions serve to enhance the replicative success of the particular memetic organisms being extended. In a number of instances, technological extensions are communications systems such as writing, audio or video recording, etc. In other instances, they are storage and delivery mechanisms (e.g. books, tapes, databases, epic poems, rituals, etc.). As with communicative extensions,

technological extensions have their own logic of adaptation whereby the users adapt to the extension. This logic of adaptation is gone into in greater detail in section 4.2

4.1.1.5 Perceptual extensions

Perceptual extensions of memetic complexes build upon the perceptual and propriety parsing complexes to build extended models of the environment or, in other words, to build knowledge systems. As with the other forms of extensions, perceptual extensions carry their own logic of adaptation and may be both conceptual and/or artefactual. Given the importance of knowledge systems for rites of passage, I have expanded upon them in much greater detail in Section 4.3.

4.1.2 M-form stability and competition

The stability of any given M-form is dependent upon the stability of its precursors (parsing components and extensions). While M-forms do have a limited adaptive ability, rapid change in any precursor can throw the entire M-form into confusion rendering it susceptible to being supplanted by other, competing, M-forms. It is important to note that M-form extinction is rare. The more common result is a shift in M-form frequency within a population.

For example, the M-forms at the root of the Reformation were not "new" by any stretch of the imagination. Protests against the authority ranking model of organized Christianity were endemic in the centuries preceding the reformation (e.g. the Cathars [10th-13th centuries], the Franciscans [13th century], etc.). However, changes in communications technology (specifically the introduction of the movable type printing press; cf. Niccoli, 1990) allowed for the mass publication of both Bibles and pamphlets

directly attacking the primary communicative extensions of the Roman Church: oral preaching and liturgical ritual (i.e. "theatre").¹⁵⁸ Obviously, the M-form behind Catholicism did not disappear. The competition, however, did cause a rapid shift in the population frequency of Catholics in Western Europe.

There are several key points illustrated by this example that deserve further attention. First, competing M-forms will be present in any specific socio-cultural area. This situation stems from the fact that M-forms, arising as they do from memetic organisms, are capable of being regenerated with every generation; a literal "re-membering". This process is, obviously, aided by the existence of any particular stored components of previous phenotypic expressions of an M-form (e.g. texts, stories, songs, etc.).¹⁵⁹

The second point raised by the example is that communicative extensions are separate from communications technologies. Communicative extensions rely on communications technologies, but they may be unable to adapt rapidly to changes in these technologies. A good, modern example of this is the development and deployment of computer mediated communication (CMC) technologies, which allow individuals and small groups to compete with large corporations in a global arena (see section 9.3).¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁸ The direct opposition to the primarily oral communicative extension of the Roman Church can be seen both in the Protestant injunctions to study the scriptures, something which was forbidden in the Catholic Church, and in the denial of the efficacy of liturgical ritual. The protestant assault on the Roman Church was also aimed at the market exchange relational model of salvation; in particular the doctrine of salvation by works, and in the purchase of indulgences.

¹⁵⁹ One example of this is the "re-membering" of Witchcraft that has happened since 1939 (see Tyrrell, 1992). This is also at the root of revitalization movements such as the modern Pentecostals who are a modern instantiation of the 2nd century Marcionites.

¹⁶⁰ A good illustration of this capability is the IBM 'netfinity server commercials. A 'netfinity server costs approximately US\$1800 and, with the addition of a minimal maintenance cost, allows

4.1.3 Summation

M-forms are composed of memetic replicator "building blocks" which, in turn, produce five main components of an M-form: perceptual and propriety parsing, communicative, perceptual, and technological extensions. The core parsing components utilize the extension components both to maintain intersubjectivity - memetic replicators must be intersubjectively transmissible - and to provide a feedback loop "grounding" them in "lived reality". Given that both the environments in which M-forms operate and the extensions of M-forms are subject to change, it is not surprising that M-forms are only quasi-stable at best.

This quasi-stability creates a potential for situations where a rapid shift in components may be necessary. Even in an environment of relatively stable M-forms, there will be a requirement for individuals to shift their personal M-forms so that they can operate in new social locations that require different perceptions. These requirements, the inherent instability and limited general utility of M-forms, creates a situation which requires some manner of M-form replacement, including rites of passage.

While communicative extensions are, obviously, the primary consideration for intersubjectivity, there have been comparatively few general communicative technologies in the history of the species:

1. "oral" communications (e.g. speech, face to face sign language, etc.)
2. signficatory "writing" (e.g. pictographs),
3. symbolic writing (e.g. ideographic, syllabic, and alphabetic writing),

individuals and small corporations to have an electronic presence in cyberspace that may actually be greater than their larger competition.

4. printing (especially movable type print),
5. digital transmission and recording (e.g. telegraph, radio, television), and
6. analog transmission, recording and interactivity (e.g. cyberspace, etc.)

Each of these broad categories of communications technology appears to have specific effects on what communicative extensions may be deployed most effectively.¹⁶¹ This discussion of the relationship between communications technologies and extensions leads us into a more general discussion about the relationship of technology to M-forms.

4.2 Technological extensions of M-forms and Consciousness¹⁶²

While a complete discussion of the role of technology in society is clearly beyond the scope of this dissertation,¹⁶³ there are certain key points that must be addressed. As I noted above in section 4.1.1.4, M-forms include a technological component: an extension that defines what particular pieces of technology are "acceptable" and "unacceptable", how they should be used, and what areas should be developed.

As with communicative extensions, technological extensions are not synonymous with all available technology but, rather, with a limited selection. Furthermore, even if technological development was instigated by an M-form, new technologies may produce changes in an environment that are detrimental to that M-form. The effects of an M-form

¹⁶¹ See Schmand-Besserat, 1990 for signifiatory writing (e.g. token systems); Ong, (1982) for oral verses literate cultures; McLuhan (1962) for oral, literate and "electronic"; and Negroponte (1995) and MacLeod (1995) for oral, literate, digital and analogue. On the interaction effects of various types of writing and movable type, see Pacey (1991), McLuhan (1962) and Niccoli (1992).

¹⁶² Parts of this section were presented at the 1996 annual meeting of the American Sociological Association (Tyrrell, 1996).

¹⁶³ For an overview see Pfaffenberger (1992).

on technological development are one particular form of "institutional isomorphism" (DiMaggio and Powell, 1991).

In this section, I wish to examine what happens when a particular technological "isomorphic vector" (i.e. the developmental path of an institutional isomorphism) reaches a catastrophe point. In particular, I draw on the work of Charles Laughlin (1996a) to model several of the effects of technological extensions as they are integrated into a man-machine conglomerate or "Cyborg".¹⁶⁴ Elsewhere (Tyrrell, 1996), I have found his model useful in describing the shifts that have taken place in the meanings and conceptualizations of "work" and "jobs".

4.2.1 Cyborg extensions

The term "cyborg" is a contraction of "cybernetic organism", and originally referred to a "melding" of man and machine (or artefact). Humans have been cyborgs for as long as we have used tools to replace or augment our physical endowments (ca. 2.4 million years+). I would argue, however, that the term "cyborg" should not be limited to the man – machine link. It should include memes: a man – meme – machine/artefact cybernetic system.

This type of extension is especially useful in considering bounded areas of human interaction such as sub-cultures, occupations, and professions. This utility is apparent in the distinct differences between similar man – machine situations where the difference is not reducible to artefactual differences. At the same time, the inclusion of memes in the cyborg "equation" may account for the disparate effects of introducing technological (i.e.

artefactual) systems into organisations. The concept of Cyborg can be extremely useful in accounting for changes in particular bounded areas of human interaction.

4.2.2 A Four Stage Model of Cyborg Extension and Evolution

The augmentation and/or replacement of human physiology and, hence, consciousness, with social artefacts is characteristic of the human species.¹⁶⁵ Even before the development of *homo sapiens sapiens*, our remote ancestors were members of the genus *homo faber*. In *The Evolution of Cyborg Consciousness*, Laughlin (1996a) develops a four-stage model of the human-machine ("cyborg") development. This model addresses the augmentation of humans with machine components but can also, I believe, be adapted to include all forms of social artefacts.

Laughlin (1996) argues that there are four stages in the development of cyborgs. The augmentation and/or replacement of some physiological component of the human body with an artefactual component characterize each stage. While his analysis concentrates on machine systems, there are other, non-mechanical, systems that also act to extend human physiology.

The first stage is the extension of the skeleton and outer shell of the human. Examples of mechanical extensions would include hand tools and weapons, armour, and simple prosthetics. Examples of non-mechanical artefactual extensions would include the token system of early Sumeria (see Schmandt-Besserat, 1992) and the development of

¹⁶⁴ In particular, this section serves as the basis for an analysis of the shifting conceptualization of "job" and "career" presented in Section 6.3).

¹⁶⁵ It serves as the "frontier" for expanding the system-as-structure component of individual consciousness (cf. section 2.3).

classification systems. The extension and/or augmentation of the qualities of "boundary" and "structure" characterize first stage extensions.

The second stage extends the human muscular system. Early mechanical examples would include the use of levers and pulleys, windmills and waterwheels, and the development of "leveraged" weapons (bows, trebuchants, catapults, etc.). In order to achieve its fullest expression, second stage mechanical extensions require the development of "stand-alone" technology in two areas: a) the harnessing of constant power sources, and b) mechanical systems that replicate specific muscular tasks. Second stage, non-mechanical extensions include the development of the complex token system in Sumeria (see Schmand-Besserat, 1992). The extension and/or augmentation of the qualities of "force" and "operability" are the essential characteristics of this stage.

Third stage technologies involve the replacement or augmentation of the peripheral and autonomic nervous systems. In electro-mechanical extensions, this is analogous to the development and deployment of digital and analog monitoring and control systems that operate in "real-time". Third stage systems separate the human from the immediate event or process by introducing a mediating device or system. Non-mechanical extensions include the development of pictographic "writing" and the development of symbolic technologies to access altered states of consciousness and/or control autonomic systems. The extension and/or augmentation of qualities of "sensation" and/or "experience" characterize this stage.

Fourth stage extensions augment and/or replace parts of the central nervous system (CNS). Current electro-mechanical extensions of this type include the development and deployment of stand alone, decision-making technologies capable of

interacting with their environment and exercising some control over it (e.g. expert systems, fuzzy controllers, robotic production lines, etc.). Most fourth stage extensions centre on simulating neo-cortical functions, however, other areas of the CNS are also being replicated and externalized on a small scale (e.g. natural language processing (spelling and grammar checkers, natural language translation programs, etc.). Non-mechanical, fourth stage extensions include the development of syllabic and alphabetic writing, and the development of systems for selective perceptual entrainment (e.g. rhetoric, mnemonic memory and computation systems, etc.). The primary quality that is augmented and/or extended by fourth stage technologies is "thought" (i.e. "Know-how"; see section 4.3).

4.2.3 Locus of control and the complex nature of extensions

Each stage changes the locus of control. With first stage extensions, the locus of control is at the intersection of the individual and the event or opportunity. Second stage extensions change the locus of control by introducing the extension as a third component. While similar to first stage extensions, there is always an awareness of the requirement for the extension, and the extension itself becomes a necessary condition for the event to occur. Third stage extensions shift the locus of control to an external, remote "other",¹⁶⁶ while fourth stage extensions ostensibly return the locus of control to the individual, but actually have embedded the event within a strict socio-cultural context.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁶ In the third stage technologies of pre-industrial societies, this controller tends to be supernatural (a god or goddess, the ancestors, the spirits, etc.), and the locus of control is situated in heaven, the other world, etc.

¹⁶⁷ Pre-industrial examples of fourth stage technologies are quite different from industrial examples. In third stage industrial technologies, the locus of control is "this worldly"; while in non-

The question of locus of control highlights the complex nature of cyborg extensions. While these extensions are conceived of as similar to the augmentation or replacement of components of the human body, we have a tendency to assume that there is an absolute division between these components. By way of example, simple mechanical or artefactual extensions include both their artefactual components and a symbolic component that governs their use (cf. Laughlin, 1989a), and these components may well be at different stages.

In many cases, it may be difficult to distinguish between first stage technologies and mature fourth stage technologies. This is especially true if the fourth stage technology is symbolic and its artefactual component contains design features which are fourth stage while appearing to be first stage.¹⁶⁸ While classical first stage technologies share similarities with mature fourth stage technologies, there are also some differences.

One primary difference is the social need for the extension (see section 5.1.1). First stage extensions tend to be purely opportunistic and/or contingent. On the other hand, mature fourth stage technologies tend to be embedded within the socio-cultural matrix and play a key functional part within it.¹⁶⁹ Once such an environmental need

industrial societies it tends to be "other-worldly". Fourth stage technologies, deriving as they do from orthoselection pressures inherent in third stage technologies, are similarly "other-worldly". The development of mystical and magical systems which bring the "other world" into this world are some non-industrial forms of fourth stage technologies (e.g. Tantric Buddhism, Cathar Christianity, Sufism, possession "cults", etc.).

¹⁶⁸ For example, the development of schools of rapier fencing in 12th century Italy appear to deal with first stage technologies, but actually deal with fourth stage technologies where the knowledge of use is encapsulated in training and in design. Another good example is that of the Achuelean "hand axe" (Clavin, 1991:178-186).

¹⁶⁹ Using the same example, there is no "need" for complex schools of fencing to develop unless there is a system of individual combat already in place within the socio-cultural matrix. The existence of such extensions, however, does not require that the matrix any longer exist – only that it existed in the

comes into existence, however, there is usually a fairly rapid development of the extension, at least in its symbolic component. This symbolic component ("knowledge-in-use", see section 4.3), may be enough to meet the environmental needs, leaving the artefactual component still as a first stage extension.¹⁷⁰ If this is insufficient, then there will be pressures to develop second stage artefactual components.

4.2.4 The place of the Zone of Uncertainty

The development of contingencies highlights the existence of a "Zone of Uncertainty" (cf. d'Aquili et al 1979:40, 171). For Laughlin (1989b: 2), a zone of uncertainty is "... the directly experienceable boundary between the transcendental nature of the being and the world, and the limits of an individual's understanding." I use the concept in a similar manner, but extend it to include the limits of a group and/or system's understanding. As such, a zone of uncertainty surrounds each chartered institution and knowledge system.

Zones of uncertainty are an emergent property of both the secondary and tertiary environments. They stem from two facts: the map does not equal the territory (see section 4.3), and, contra Durkheim, 2) not all individuals hold the same maps. Given these two facts, there is always a disjuncture between the knowledge of individuals and groups that will be institutionalized in some form.

evolutionary past of the society and serve some present function. For example, fencing is now a status marker as an Olympic sport, and also a marker of elite educational institutions.

¹⁷⁰ This highlights Herbert Simon's concept of "satisficing" in the development of technologies (see Calvin, 1991:34).

The existence of these zones of uncertainty around chartered institutions serves to define some of the secondary needs within a society. They also imply the existence of a risk factor, at least for specific individuals or groups and, in some cases, for entire societies. These risk factors often produce a professional requirement. In many cases, they generate and/or maintain the existence of specific chartered institutions (e.g. professions, secret societies, "age grade knowledge", etc.) which embody specialized, esoteric knowledge systems in order to ameliorate this risk.

This amelioration, the focus of the professional requirement, may be on the operational environment, or on the cognized environment, or on both (cf. Laughlin, 1989a). Regardless of the exact location of the particular focus, it will involve the augmentation and/or manipulation of individual and group consciousness through technological manipulation.¹⁷¹

Figure 4-I: The zone of uncertainty

¹⁷¹ "Technology" is used in the broad sense of artefact, symbol, and relational manipulation. In other words, it includes the commonly accepted meaning of technology and also that of technique (cf. Laughlin, 1989a).

In addition to being the focus of professional requirements, the zone of uncertainty marks the areas in which, and through which, rites of passage take place. These passages highlight the generality of the concept of the zone of uncertainty: the uncertainty may be on the part of an individual, a sub-cultural group, or of the culture/society at large.

Consider, by way of example, how a marriage would fit into this model. To many individuals, marriages are *terra incognita* and a source of uncertainty. To most cultures, however, and to many professionals living and operating within those cultures, marriages are a well understood phenomena. Even when the general pathway is fairly well known by individuals, there is usually a desire on their part to have some guidance, even if it is not of a "professional" variety (cf. Grimes, 1995).

In other situations, such as the case of looking for a job, the pathways through the zone of uncertainty shifted considerably over time making the zone more uncertain that it was before. This increased uncertainty created an opportunity which was exploited not only by the development of the outplacement industry, but by a whole host of individuals and groups (see Chapter 7 for details).

4.2.5 Summary

The purpose of this section was to expand upon some of the effects of technological extensions, and to introduce the concept of a zone of uncertainty. Technological extensions and, in particular, those that act as cyborg extensions (see subsections 4.2.1 and 4.2.2) have clear effects on the creation and maintenance of isomorphic vectors in the social world. As such, these extensions and their concomitant effects produce selection pressures for certain specific forms of social relations and

institutions, e.g. current selection pressures for reciprocity systems (see Chapter 9). In the next section, I integrate a discussion of knowledge systems with the other material in this chapter.

4.3 Knowledge Systems

Any discussion of knowledge systems must start from a position that what is contained within the system, "knowledge", is a symbolization of some "reality" rather than the reality itself.¹⁷² A knowledge system is a map rather than a territory and, hence, is imperfect. This imperfection derives from the simple observation that for a map to equal a territory there must be a one-to-one correspondence between all parts of the territory and the map (cf. Bateson and Bateson, 1987).¹⁷³

A further imperfection arises from the very nature of the systems themselves. Symbolic systems are communicative systems. As such, they rely on both connotative as well as denotative values for the components of the system (e.g. the symbol units and the rules for constructing collections of symbol units). Connotative values, however, are subject to individual variability that, in turn, gives rise to a fuzzyness of values.

Drawing on the concept of the Zone of Uncertainty (see section 4.2.4; D'Aquili et al, 1979; Laughlin, 1989b), we can characterize knowledge systems in one of three ways:

- i. "common knowledge";

¹⁷² As such, a knowledge system is an epistemology together with a set of perceptions that support that epistemology. "Facts" are the discrete constructions that stem from the interaction of perceptual parsing and "objective reality."

¹⁷³ A map (knowledge system) may be imperfect but it may also be adequate to achieve a desired result. A good example of this is the use of Newtonian mechanics in space launches rather than the more accurate Einsteinian relativistic mechanics. Knowledge systems are another example of satisficing behaviour, at least for most people.

- ii. "specialized knowledge";
- iii. "esoteric knowledge"

"Common knowledge" is socially constructed as generally available to all members of the society. While certain restrictions may be placed on access to this knowledge (e.g. gender divisions or age grades), in general it is available to all members of the society who meet certain minimal requirements.¹⁷⁴ "Common knowledge" also includes a subset of "mandatory knowledge" which is required for minimal operation within the society. Modern examples include "basic skills" such as numeracy and literacy.

"Specialized knowledge" is generally restricted to a specific sub-cultural group or groups. This second form of knowledge includes "professional knowledge" in that either access to or the practice of this knowledge is restricted to members of specific social groups. The complexity of the subject or the use of particular specialized languages (e.g. certain branches of mathematics and physics) may also restrict access.

"Esoteric knowledge" concerns areas of interest where specific knowledge either is not socially valid (e.g. magical systems in modern Canada) or is hidden from the general populace, either intentionally or not. Unlike specialized knowledge, this type of

¹⁷⁴ These minimal requirements include the ability to comprehend the particular knowledge, a situation that may be beyond the ability of a number of people. This, in turn, may give rise to questions of the "humanity" of the people who are unable to comprehend "common knowledge". One current example is the definition of "mentally competent" in relation to court trials.

knowledge is the province of social roles that are marginal¹⁷⁵ to the vast majority of society such as mystics, consultants, shaman, pure theoreticians, magicians, etc.

The typology of common, specialized and esoteric knowledge is useful only in as much as it describes the restrictions placed upon knowledge systems by general social and/or cultural practice. For our purposes, it is necessary to deploy two additional typologies of knowledge systems: the cultural organization of knowledge systems, and individual aptitude with knowledge systems.

The cultural organization of knowledge systems refers to the typology developed by Abbott (1988) in reference to professional knowledge. Abbott argues that the basis of claims to the status of "profession" rest on a series of knowledge claims. As he (1988:40) puts it, these are

...claims to classify a problem, to reason about it, and to take action on it: in more formal terms, to diagnose, to infer, and to treat. Theoretically, these are the three acts of professional practice..... Diagnosis and treatment are mediating acts: diagnosis takes information into the professional knowledge system and treatment brings instructions back out from it. Inference.... takes the information of diagnosis and indicates a range of treatments with their predicted outcomes.

While Abbott concentrated on the shifting process of claims making, I wanted to concentrate on two other points.

First, Abbott's model is that of a very basic transformation system: input, manipulation, output range. This simple form serves to protect the validity of the manipulation component ("inference" - the epistemological base of the system) and, hence, of the associated profession. This protection arises from the different sources of

¹⁷⁵ The term "marginal" is used in the sense of set apart from the mainstream, and has no evaluative connotations although there is a definite connotation of sacrality.

systemic validity: the rules contained within the system, the degree of correspondence between prediction and outcome, and the validity granted to the system by its users and recipients (see Chapter 5).¹⁷⁶

The second point I wanted to highlight is the similarity between the form of a knowledge system and that of component processes of human consciousness (cf. Chapter 1.2). This similarity is important when we consider the role of knowledge systems in the creation and maintenance of social roles. Knowledge systems, regardless of their social validity, serve as the pool from which the system-as-structure component of what might be termed "role consciousness" derives.¹⁷⁷

These two points highlight the observation that the transformation system model developed by Abbot underlies much of what we think of as "knowledge", both for professions and for individuals. It is the same structure as the models of "thought" proposed by Calvin (1996), and mimics the structure of many neuronal connections. As such, it is not unsurprising that individual knowledge systems would include a component in them which produces a *de facto* set of "claims" which serve to order the sensible world of the individual.¹⁷⁸ In effect, they serve to produce the "natural attitude" of the various lifeworlds which individuals inhabit. In more formal terms, individual *de*

¹⁷⁶ Please note that this third source of validity is not necessarily the same as that given by the society. A good case in point is the validity of certain magical systems in the modern world which have little social validity but quite a large amount of user validity (cf. Luhmann, 1989; Tyrrell, 1992).

¹⁷⁷ "Role consciousness" is not consciousness *per se* but, rather, the sets of values and expectations that are associated with roles. See section 5.5.2.

¹⁷⁸ Indeed, these sets of sub-conscious and semi-conscious "claims" are required by the model of consciousness proposed in Chapter 1.2 as a sub-component of the system-as-structure. It should also be noted that there is a distinct relationship between claims and meme complexes (see Chapter 7).

facto "claims" serve as the ground from which specific norms, beliefs and, to a lesser extent, values are generated.

This brings us to the third typology of knowledge systems, individual aptitude, since the "proof" of individual "claims" is in the lived experience of them in operation. While the literature of skills is extensive in sociology,¹⁷⁹ I want to concentrate on a model derived in part from Michael Polanyi (1964). This model proposes the existence of a continuum of knowledge-in-use ranging from skill through "know-how" to competency.

The term "skill" has been used to cover a wide range of different meanings. The root meaning of the term is "to cut", "to discern", or "to separate" (Skeat, 1958). It derives from the same Proto-Indo European root, *sci*, as in "science" and "consciousness". This root meaning has lead to a conflation of three core concepts: the ability to

- a) perform an action sequence,
- b) to discern the correctness of an action sequence, and
- c) to create an appropriate action sequence with a specific "tradition".¹⁸⁰

While all three concepts are related, it is important to be able to distinguish between them. I use the term "skill" to refer to the first concept, "know-how" to refer to the second concept, and "competency" to refer to the third concept. Collectively, these three are referred to as the "skills continuum". While these concepts are organized along a continuum, they are also nested in the sense that competency includes both know-how and skill. Competencies, know-how and skills operate within specific "traditions", or

¹⁷⁹ For an overview, see Vallas (1990). See also issue 17(4) of *Work and Occupation*, which deals with the concept of skill.

¹⁸⁰ The concept of a "tradition" is a combination of Kuhn's concept of paradigm and school, and derives from M. Polanyi (1964).

formalizable knowledge systems, which are constructed using the structure identified by Abbott (1988).

4.3.1 Talents and Traditions

As with most situations involving humans, there is a "joker in the pack": talents. Individual ability does not rely solely on the acquisition of skills, know-how and competencies, but also on the existence of individual talents. Talents, in and of themselves, appear to be inborn abilities, some of which are genetically mediated.¹⁸¹ Talents, or rather the actualization of talents, appear to operate along a continuum. For the majority of people, talents are actualized by the development of specific skills that act as the vehicles for the expression of that talent.¹⁸²

As can be seen, the definition of talents is slippery. As I use the term, "talent" refers to an individual ability to perceive and act on that perception without necessarily being trained in either the perception or the actions. Talents are inborn abilities that are outside of the population norm in their area of operation. Classical examples would include mathematical talents such as a "lightning calculator", musical talents such as perfect pitch.

The existence of individual talents has led many cultures to develop knowledge systems surrounding their discovery and development. Examples of this would include

¹⁸¹ I use the term "mediated", rather than "determined" since there is, to my mind, no conclusive proof one way or the other. There are clearly certain cases where a specific talent operates in constant conjunction with a genetic sequence, but all this proves is that the sequence allows for the existence of the talent.

¹⁸² Mozart is my favourite example of a person who did not need learned skills to actualise his talent for music. Of course, many people never develop their talents.

the vision quests of the Plains Indians, the mystical systems of Christianity and Judaism, and the meditation systems of many other cultures. Talents are also at the base of the Christian concept of a "calling" or a "vocation", which is the basis of the modern concept of a vocation to a profession (cf. Weber, 1958). The conceptual and analytic differentiation between talents and the skills continuum is quite important not only to account for individual variation, but also because it is a key conceptual split in the outplacement industry (see section 8.4).

4.3.2 Talents and Charisma

Let us return for a moment to the concept of "tradition" or formalizable knowledge system. Within the skills continuum, operations at the level of competency allow individuals to modify the tradition via the creation of new components or, more accurately, by the recombination of components that produce a variant process meeting the same ends. This "creation" is at the level of Kuhnian "normal science". In other words, the new creation exists in potential within the tradition and is actualized by the creative act. The act of creation extends the range and limits of the tradition through a refinement of some component of the tradition.

On the other hand, talents may operate at a level that both precedes and transcends traditions. The operation of particular talents, especially when they are coupled with solid relevant competencies or other specific forms of social authority,¹⁸³

¹⁸³ Competencies are, after all, a form of social authority in as much as all knowledge systems are socially constructed. Given this, the vehicle through which talents may be operationalized as charisma may include any form of social authority.

may well confer upon the individual a degree of charisma which allow them to transcend and redefine the tradition. As Weber (1947:358-9) noted, charisma is

A certain quality of an individual personality by virtue of which he is set apart from ordinary men and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities. These are such as are not accessible to the ordinary person, but are regarded of divine origin or as exemplary, and on the basis of them the individual concerned is treated as a leader.

The transformation of talent into charisma is especially apparent in the case of operations within the zone of uncertainty of a given knowledge system. This arises not only because of the quality of awe¹⁸⁴ that these zones may inspire, but also because of the release from terror (i.e. the "assurance") that the operation of a talent in this zone may inspire in others. Charismatic authority releases individuals from previously held, internalized, social rules and replaces them "new" rules of operations.¹⁸⁵

Weber (1947:359-373) held that charismatic authority must either be routinized (i.e. converted into a tradition or normal science) or that it will disappear if the leader fails. This is certainly true if we are only considering the charisma of one individual. However, if we consider charisma as a force that both operates in and is generated by zones of uncertainty, then Weber is incorrect. The charisma will still operate as long as the zone of uncertainty exists and produces a sense of awe, even though the charisma may be attached to different individuals.

¹⁸⁴ The root meaning of "awe" - ME *apre*, - is "fear" or "dread". It is also relate to the Gr. *αχος* - anguish or affliction.

¹⁸⁵ The specific rules may, in fact, be reconceptions of older rules. For example, the entire concept of "fundamentalism" is a return to the fundament or root of a tradition.

Weber (1947:363) argues that "... charismatic authority has a character specifically foreign to everyday routine structures." In many instances, this "character" is an inversion of "everyday routine structures" or what Turner (1969) referred to as "anti-structure". In these cases, the charisma is released to individuals in a process of social drama that allows for sense making in a culturally supported crisis situation (cf. Turner, 1987:38-39). More importantly for our purposes, the charisma is inherent (i.e. existing in potential) in the structure of the social role of "ritual specialist" mandated by the social drama.

4.3.3 Conclusions

Given the discussion so far, knowledge systems may be classified as "normal", "contingent", and, for want of a better word, "transcendent". Normal systems are operationalized through the skills continuum. Contingent systems operate at the border of the zone of uncertainty. Transcendent systems are operationalized via talent, and operate within the zone of uncertainty of knowledge systems. Contingent and transcendent systems generate a form of charisma that attaches to the individual operating in these systems. Knowledge systems, however, must be operationalized - symbolically mediated in day-to-day, lived reality. This mediation takes place via institutions and chartered institutions.

4.4 Summation: M-form replacement and rites of passage

The purpose of this chapter was to examine elementary social "operating systems", or M-forms. I argued in section 4.1.1 that M-forms are composed of two "parsing" components (perceptual and propriety) and three different extensions

(communicative, technological, and perceptual). In section 4.2, I draw on Laughlin's (1996) concept of Cyborg consciousness to illustrate some of the effects of technological extensions and their interaction back on M-forms. This was followed in section 4.3 by an examination of knowledge systems.

This chapter served two specific needs within the dissertation. First, there was a need to create a bridge between the biological models of Chapter 2, the environmental models of Chapters 3 and the models of institutions presented in the next chapter. As I noted in my preliminary discussion of rites of passage (section 1.1), the same tri-partite structure (separation, liminality, re-aggregation) is apparent in rituals designed to cover a wide range of different situations. In some situations, most noticeably in specifically recognized contingencies and in seasonal/cyclical situations, the ritual involves the replacement of one specific perceptual pattern with another.

More specifically, I would argue that several particular sub-classes of rites of passage are designed to replace one M-form, or core component of an M-form (usually a perceptual parsing component), with another. This ritual replacement of M-forms appears to be somewhat different from the shifts in perceptions brought about by life cycle rituals (e.g. birth, puberty, marriage, and death rituals; cf. Grimes, 1995) which shift the location of an individual within pre-defined taxa in the perceptual parsing complex of a single M-form. By way of example, the act of siring or giving birth to a child changes the location of the parent within an M-form, but does not change the M-form. The ritual replacement of M-forms appears to have more in common with initiation rituals where an M-form discontinuous shift is involved: the start and end point locations of the individual are in social spaces governed by different M-forms.

In the next chapter, I examine the particular locations in which and through which social action takes place: institutions. Institutions are the "symbols" on social "maps" (i.e. the social territory/structure); maps that are constantly subject to change and redefinition via a process of social construction and environmental change.

5 Constructing Structures

Institutions are the functions of knowledge systems; an abstraction of a particular interpretation of an M-form. There is no requirement that any given institution actually fulfil a current, objectively "real", need. Rather, institutions are the conceptual materialisations of subjectivity "real" needs; an "answer" that was produced within or diffused to a given culture or society at some point in their history.

I am using the definition of an institution as a function of a knowledge system for very specific reasons. Within the social sciences there are several definitions of the term "institution" ranging from an element of pattern in social relations (e.g. Parsons, 1951:39) to an "organized system of human activities" (Malinowski, 1961:49).¹⁸⁶

For Parsons (1951:39) an institution is "... a complex of institutionalized role integrates which is of strategic structural significance in the social system in question." Parson went to great lengths to distinguish between his definition of institution and Malinowski's which he characterized (1957:59, fn 1) as "... referring to a concrete social system or... a group." This is typical of Parson's misreadings of Malinowski. While Malinowski (1961b[1945]:50) argued that institutions were "... a group of people united for the pursuit of a simple or complex activity...", he made no requirement that the members of the institution be united in a single space or time. Furthermore, Malinowski's definition of an institution included not only the "concrete social system" or bounded social group, but also patterns of action and interaction, material artefacts, norms and perceptions, and purposive

"values".¹⁸⁷ In one instance, Malinowski (1961b:49) asserted that the term "institution" was equivalent to an "organized system of human activities."

Malinowski (1960) argued that all cultural organizations (institutions) appear as specific ways to meet particular needs and/or desires. These, in turn, produce a series of secondary or derived needs that stem from the operation and maintenance of various institutions.¹⁸⁸ On top of these, there are also a series of what he termed "integrative imperatives"; symbol systems designed to maintain group cohesion.¹⁸⁹ For Malinowski, the institution was the primary interface between individuals and their operational environments. Institutions embody the composite answers (material, perceptual, and organizational) of a culture to particular needs, problems and desires. In many ways,

¹⁸⁶ On the intellectual history of this second definition of institution, and its current use in the social sciences, see Powell and DiMaggio (1991:1-38).

¹⁸⁷ The term "value" as used by Malinowski includes both ideological components, evaluative components (e.g. such and so is worth doing), and purposive components (e.g. we do this because...). It is imperative to note that Malinowski (1960:22) viewed "values" as transformations of organic desires, a point clearly illustrated in his discussion of the spirits of the dead in the Trobriands (Malinowski, 1954[1916]:149-274).

¹⁸⁸ For Malinowski (1960, ch. XI) derived needs produced systems of economics, law, education and political organization. These secondary systems arose in response to needs created by the deployment of institutions. See Chapter 3 for my reformulation of Malinowski's model.

¹⁸⁹ For a detailed description of his views, the reader is referred to Malinowski (1960, ch. XII; see also Firth, 1957). Unfortunately, Malinowski's work in the area of integrative symbolism is based solely on stimulus response psychology. And, while he does attempt to link individual biology to symbolism (Malinowski, 1960:132), his model must now be considered hopelessly out of date in light of current knowledge of neurophysiology. Models that are more in tune with current neuropsychological knowledge include the Biogenetic Structuralism (Laughlin and D'Aquili, 1974) and those stemming from Evolutionary Psychology (Cosmides and Tooby, 1992). For less neurologically sophisticated models of symbolism, the reader is referred to Gagliardi (1990) and Alvesson and Berg (1992).

Malinowski's work prefigures sociotechnical systems theory, but his model is much greater in range (especially, Malinowski, 1965).¹⁹⁰

Figure 5-I: Institutionalization

Malinowski's analysis of institutions clearly deals with a sliding scale of group size. This is clearly shown in his analysis of land tenure in the Trobriands (Malinowski, 1965, esp. chapters 11 and 12). Land tenure, a concept that did not exist in the Trobriand society of 1914, is analyzed by an extensive examination of the institutions that surround land use, access rights to land, the technology of gardening, the magic of gardening, kinship rights, the distribution of crops, etc.

¹⁹⁰ In sociotechnical systems theory, one must consider three broad levels: primary work systems, whole organization systems, and macrosocial systems (Trist, 1981:24). The primary work systems are networks of essential roles held together via a common purpose. Whole organization systems are either self-standing work places or are corporate bodies. For sociotechnical systems theory, macrosocial systems are other whole organization systems and conglomerates of whole organization systems operating within a society (e.g. communities, industries, media, etc.). See Trist (1981) and Passmore et al. (1982) for fuller description of sociotechnical systems theory.

While he never developed the observations further, Malinowski's work points towards three key situations. First, that institutions may only operate in specific perceptually defined territories. Second, the relationship between institution and community is poorly developed; a situation that is not surprising since the Trobriands are definitely a small-scale society. Third, it is apparent that some intermediary analytic level between a concept system (e.g. ideology, knowledge system, etc.) and individual organizations is required. Furthermore, it is also apparent that there are a number of different "institutions" that operate at the same level as organizations, but which are not organizations.

In biology, the concept of a function refers to the particular use(s) of a given organism at a particular point in time. An organism may serve a number of uses depending on specific context, a situation that is analogically equivalent to the number of different uses to which knowledge systems may be deployed. The analogic equivalence is based on the similarities between the product/action of an organism and the particular instantiations of knowledge systems, rather than between the organism and the instantiation.¹⁹¹

Institutions, as I use the term, are the range of potential instantiations or actualizations of knowledge systems: the "function" of a knowledge system. To avoid confusion, I use the term "chartered institution" to refer to the actualized instantiations of particular institutions. Since the answers potentiated in institutions may be "stored" in a

¹⁹¹ The confusion of organization with organism is an analogic flaw that is apparent in a number of readings of the functionalist school. This analogic confusion may well derive from one of the core codes of Western Culture (cf. Fry, 1990), specifically from Paul's 1st letter to the Corinthian's, Chapter 12, verses 12-31.

variety of artifacts, an institution may appear in a number of different "forms" as it moves from storage to materialisation and back again.¹⁹²

The processes of institutionalisation and de-institutionalisation (in the sense of movement from an M-form to a chartered institution and vice versa) are both processes of social construction (cf. Best, 1987) and historical reconstruction (cf Connerton, 1989). In effect, the process of institutionalisation is the grafting or splicing of a stored sequence of answers onto another series of environmentally mandated answers - the production of a phenotypic chartered institution. It is the cultural equivalent of genetic engineering and/or mutation and, at the phenotypic (chartered institutional) level, exhibits both Darwinian and Lamarckian inheritance characteristics. This process is expressed visually in figure x-ref.¹⁹³

Chartered institutions stand as the phenotypic expressions of the institutional genotype; the actualization of one or more potentials inherent in one or more institutions. As such, chartered institutions are both the product of the process of actualization and of ongoing interaction with their operational environments.

Chartered institutions are not, however, equivalent to "organizations" in the common sense of that word. Rather, they are a variety of forms of organized behaviour that may or may not be included within an organization. In general, I distinguish between

¹⁹² The process of an institution moving from a stored artifact to a complete materialization is discussed by Weber (1947). In the case of "revelation" as the source of a "new" institution (i.e. the prophetic, charismatic founder), the initial insight must first be moved into an artifact (i.e. it must be explained in culturally comprehensible terms, including armed force), and from there through the "normal" process of institutionalization.

¹⁹³ The use of this type of figure derives from Gregory Bateson's discussions on consciousness (cf. Bateson and Bateson, 1987:36-49, 100-109).

five main sub-types of chartered institutions: organizations, disciplines, roles, tasks, and "life courses" (cf. section 5.5).

Regardless of their specific form, there are three common patterns between all chartered institutions:

1. the processes for actualizing a chartered institution (section 5.1), and
2. the functional "requirements" of chartered institutions (section 5.2).
3. the location of chartered institutions within communities (section 5.4);

These three patterns are general to all chartered institutions. Obviously the form of the chartered institution, and the particular historical context will act to modify the specifics of both actualization and functional requirements.

5.1 The Process of Actualization

The process of actualization is a process of social construction. Of course, this does not mean that all actualizations are *de novo* social constructions of all the functional components of a chartered institution. In general, we can distinguish a continuum of component construction stretching from the social construction of a "need", through the construction of particular structures to meet this need, to specific chartered institutions based on these structure.

While the points on the continuum may be separated for analytic purposes, it is important to keep in mind that it is a continuum. Furthermore, depending on exactly where the social construction is taking place on the continuum, there may be an implication of pre-existing structures. For example, the social construction of a specific

chartered institution implicitly assumes pre-existing structures and needs, while the reverse is not true.

5.1.1 The Social Construction of a "Need"

Figure 5-II: The claims-making process

Source: Best (1987:102)

The process of the social construction of a need is well known, although it is usually referred to as "the construction of social problems". Best (1987:102) has argued that there is a common pattern of rhetoric in making claims about social problems. This pattern consists of three main components: the grounds of a claim, the warrants that justify a conclusion, and the claim or conclusion itself (see Figure 5-II).

The grounds or "data" of an argument fall into three main types: definitions, examples, and estimates. While grounds exist in particular external environments, they are rhetorically constructed in interior environments. Definitions, the range and type of data to be included, serve to control certain areas of neuro-linguistic "space", by parsing out "what" is to be perceived as a component of the problem. As such, definitions serve to produce the boundary conditions of a particular "meaning space" via the deployment of specific discrimination memes.

The use of examples and, in particular exemplary stories, serve to modify the neuro-semantic environment. Associating a particular "problem" situation with a pre-

existing semantic reaction allows the "new" definitions to achieve a visceral legitimacy. Best (1987) and Johnson (1989) have discussed the use of atrocity tales constructing the missing child problem, and there are a number of atrocity tales present regarding downsizings and firings (see Chapter 7).

Atrocity tales are not the only form of exemplary story used in claims-making. Other types include cautionary tales, success tales, and journey tales.¹⁹⁴ The most academically famous tale of this form is the Hero's Journey (Campbell, 1968), but there are many other examples.¹⁹⁵ The common component in all journey tales, and many other exemplary stories, is an encounter with an "awe" inspiring situation that arises from a structural condition (cf. sections 7.3 and 7.4).

The final types of grounds are estimates of the incidence, growth, and range of the problem.¹⁹⁶ These estimates aim at producing a rationally based reaction in the audience. This reaction, however, has been preconditioned by the creation of semantic reactions from the use of exemplary tales. The numbers included in the "estimates" are for all examples of the "problem", as defined by the claims-maker, while the exemplary stories are usually only the most extreme cases. The use of estimates serves to extend the semantic reaction to all cases of the "problem" and, by so doing, expand the awareness of the "need".

¹⁹⁴ Journey tales appear in many different cultures, with slightly different connotations. In general, I use the term "journey tale" as equivalent to the class of Celtic tales known as *imrama*. This class of tales include both foreordained journeys, formalized journeys, and journeys of exploration.

¹⁹⁵ Varieties of journey tales include the exploration tales of Celtic legend (e.g. the voyage of Brendan the Navigator), the descent myths of the ancient Near East (e.g. the Inanna-Dumuzi cycle, the Persephone myth, etc.), the myths of the Grateful Dead (Smith, 1996), and the "American Dream" myth.

¹⁹⁶ The rhetorical form and types of these claims vary from culture to culture.

Warrants, for Best (1987), are the often unconsciously held validity claims within a culture or society. They are a combination of neuro-linguistic connotations (e.g. "rights and freedoms", "associated evils", "deficient policies", etc.) and neuro-semantic value reactions (e.g. the value of ...; Best, 1987:).¹⁹⁷ Warrants draw on pre-existing memetic structures and semantic reactions which define what is "right and proper" and what is "wrong and improper". Often, these warrants have no basis in "fact" but, rather, draw their strength from perceptions of what "ought" and "ought not" to be.

A good example of this comes from the debate around capital punishment. Is the role of the criminal justice system to effect reformation of criminals, to exact vengeance, to secure restoration for victims, or to "protect" society? All four areas (reformation, vengeance, restitution, and "protection") are different warrants that are used to establish and maintain both the criminal justice system and the concept of "justice".

For Best (1987), claims call for specific actions on the part of the audience. These "actions" may be a new awareness of the "problem", for the creation of specific structures and/or organizations, or a "call to specific action". This call for a new "awareness" raises an interesting point. While often considered as a precursor to claims, grounds actually serve as claims in and of themselves. Rather than claims towards action or changes in external environments, they are claims to changes in the neuro-semantic and neuro-linguistic environments. As such, they create a "need" through shifts in the perceptions of

¹⁹⁷ Neuro-semantic value reactions are those reactions that induce a visceral feeling of "good" and "evil". They are not "rational" values in any sense of the word. Rather, they rely on sub-conscious reactions which are associated in consciousness with the concepts of "good" and "evil" (or "right" and "wrong").

individuals, where the warrants for the "need/problem" are internal. The "conclusion" is self-evident if the grounds are accepted.

5.1.2 The Social Construction of Charter Structures

Unlike claims for a new "awareness", claims that argue for the creation of specific structures aim to produce what Malinowski termed a "charter". For Malinowski (1960:52), charters are "... the system of values for the pursuit of which human beings organize..." and "... the idea of the institution as entertained by its members and the community." (1960:48). Charters operationalize a series of "awareness" claims - semantic reactions to and increased perceptions of specific social problems or needs. At the same time, charters also encapsulate the concept of communal authority or legitimacy, at least inasmuch as they are the embodiment of certain specific moral axioms from which the formal "moral" structure of the chartered institution will derive.

At a general level, charters have the form of "X should do Y", "X is responsible for Y", "X is capable of doing Y", and/or "X is allowed to do Y". In general, charter structures serve as the ground of legitimacy for chartered institutions. Each of Malinowski's conceptualizations of a charter invokes different memetic complexes. The first definition, "a system of values", evokes a linked series of memes that center around what is "right and proper" - emotional memes. The second conceptualization, "the idea of the institution", corresponds with a memetic complex that centering around strategy memes - who should do what.

By way of example, the Oath of Asclepius is a charter of the first type for medical doctors while legislation surrounding the right to practice medicine is a charter of the second type. When we speak of a "charter" as a whole, it includes all of the sub-

components of that charter. In fact, many charters are composed of multiple sub-charters that deal with specific instances in the general area of practice.¹⁹⁸

5.2 The Requirements for a Chartered Institution

The construction of specific chartered institutions is analogically equivalent to the process of genetic engineering where a given charter is grafted onto a modifiable structure. There are, however, certain minimal functional requirements for a chartered

institution to exist and replicate itself.¹⁹⁹

Malinowski (1960) argued that there were six minimal requirements: charters, personnel, norms, material apparatus, activities and function(s) (see Figure 5-III). Charters, as noted above, provide the social/cultural and moral legitimacy for a chartered institution. The personnel and norms of a chartered institution

Source: B. Malinowski
A Scientific Theory of Culture

¹⁹⁸ As a side note, when professions are competing amongst themselves this competition usually involves either the creation of new charters, actually specific sub-charters are the most common, and/or the definition of components of charters (cf. Abbott, 1988 chapters 3-5).

¹⁹⁹ NB: some of these functional requirements are not necessary if there is no desire to replicate the chartered institution.

define what is now referred to as the organizational culture of the chartered institution.²⁰⁰ However, since chartered institutions are not limited to organizations, I will refer to these two components as the chartered institutional culture (CI culture for short).

In view of our reformulation of "needs" as environments (chapter 3) and in keeping with Malinowski's (1960:53) definitions, the material apparatus and the activities may be collectively referred to as the environmental interface of the chartered institution. It should be noted that this includes the area currently referred to as the "informal culture" of organizations - the lived and living "reality" of their operation.²⁰¹ Finally, we have the function of the chartered institution which is, to use Malinowski's (1960:53) words, "... the integral result of organized activities."

While this reformulation may appear somewhat out of place, it serves to highlight the distinctions between the formal and informal cognized environments of the chartered institution. The formal cognized environment includes the charter and the CI culture, while the informal cognized environment includes the environmental interface and the function.

5.2.1 Minimal Requirements for a formal cognized environment

The minimal requirements for the formal cognized environment of a chartered institution are the existence of a set of expectational "rules" for the operation of the

²⁰⁰ In actuality, this corresponds more closely with the idealized organizational culture, at least as far as the norms component is concerned.

²⁰¹ For an interesting, and quite humorous, discussion of the distinctions between the "formal" and "informal" cultures of an organization, see Reynolds (1994). The concept of formal and informal, or "espoused" and "observed" cultures (Argyris and Schon, 1978), is a useful since it allows us to describe a third "culture" which derives from the perceived differences between ideals and the actuality. This third culture has been called the "aspirational culture" by Doug Fraser (1998).

chartered institution. These "rules" may be broadly grouped into the "ideals" (the charter), rules for personnel, and rule for operations.²⁰²

The rules for personnel include, but are not limited to, issues surrounding a) the acquisition and deployment of formal power and authority within the imperium of the chartered institution, and b) the recruitment of new personnel. The rules for operations include issues surrounding the deployment of the environmental interface.

I have used the term "rules" to describe these statements. In fact, they are ideals that may or may not be held to in actual practice. In a number of cases, these "rules" are merely showcases that attempt to create and portray an "image" to a given observer. (see Reynolds, 1994 for a good example). As such, these formal "rules" act as a "presentation of self" (Goffman, 1959) for the chartered institution.²⁰³

5.2.2 Minimal Requirements for an informal cognized environment

The minimal requirements for the informal cognized environment of a chartered institution are quite different from those of the formal cognized environment. While the formal cognized environment centers on rules and ideals, the informal cognized environment centers around actions and actual relationships

I included three broad areas from Malinowski's (1960) model within the informal cognized environment: the material apparatus, the activities, and the function of the

²⁰² NB: this is very similar to Malinowski's components, but the emphasis has been shifted to "formal rules" rather than supposed "actualities". Furthermore, the charter is composed of more than just the ideals of the organization.

²⁰³ This "presentation of self" is quite apparent in the process of corporate image construction, especially in the deployment of trans-social forms of legitimacy markers such as ISO9000 certification and other business "fads". See Chapter 7 and section 8.2.3.

chartered institution. The distinction between material apparatus and activities is, however, somewhat forced in the current information economy. Is an idea or a perception part of the material apparatus or the activities of a chartered institution? This is why I introduced the term "environmental interface".²⁰⁴

5.2.3 Summation

In discussing the components of a chartered institution, I used the terms "formal" and "informal" cognized environments in a somewhat ambiguous manner. Normally, the term cognized environment refers to the mental map(s) a person has of "reality". When the term is used to refer to the cognized environments of a chartered institution, however, it has a subtly different meaning.

Chartered institutions arise in a social setting in response to a perceived need, but the process outlined in section above deals only with the process of construction at the level of society. Regardless of the origins of their components, chartered institutions must operate in the everyday world, hence the split between formal and informal cognized environments.²⁰⁵ Even the most elaborate formalizations of an environment are always smaller than the actual environment (i.e. the "map" is always less detailed than the "territory").

²⁰⁴ This does not mean that no distinction should be made between material artefacts and activities. The distinction is still, in many cases, both useful and valid. However, it is also a limiting distinction in that it serves to create an artificial split in situations where artifacts and activities are symbiotically entwined (e.g. mature fourth stage technologies - see section 4.2.2).

²⁰⁵ This operation in the everyday world takes place even if the chartered institution is "in the world but not of it", a fact well noted by Weber (1958).

Chartered institutions are constructed to meet perceived need via the application of specific changes in awareness, structure and operation. These formal properties are modified in the day-to-day operations of the chartered institution in response to challenges in the operational environment. It is to the level of day-to-day operations that we must move our analysis.

5.3 Process-events

Many theorists in the field of organizational culture are moving towards a conceptualization of "culture" as "sensemaking" (cf. Peterson, 1998, forthcoming). This form of analysis has tended to concentrate on the concept of an "event". Peterson (1998) has argued that there are numerous forms of event analysis, depending upon the bracketing of the event. Drawing on analogies from physics, he argues that these different forms derive from perceptions of the event as a discrete particle, a wave, a field, a perspective, or a potential (cf. Peterson, 1998:18-23).

Peterson's typology may serve as a basis from which to expand our analysis. In physics, a particle is the observable element around which models are constructed. Particles, however, are not "elementary", at least in the sense of being irreducible building blocks, and the same is true of "events". This creates a situation where the ability of scientists to test a model is limited by the precision with which they can apprehend the particles they study.²⁰⁶ The limitations of precision produce a situation where "events", and the processes which give rise to them, are inherently fuzzy.

²⁰⁶ A situation which gives rise to the problem of over and under emphasizing the differences and/or similarities between events.

The relationship between a process and an event is that of background-foreground where the processes take place “behind the scenes”, at least for some of the participants. Furthermore, a single ongoing process may produce any number of events, all of which are driven by the process and, hence, related, but which may be quite different in their observable forms.²⁰⁷ Even where the forms are similar, the actual event may be quite different, due to differences in the actors involved.

5.3.1 Process-event spaces

If we decide to face empirical “reality” boldly, we must accept the Einstein-Minkowski four-dimensional language, for “space” and “time” *cannot be separated empirically*, and so we must have a language of *similar structure* and consider the facts of the world as series of *interrelated ordered events*, to which... we must ascribe structure.

Korzybski, 1958:57 (emphasis in the original)

If, following Korzybski’s argument, we treat processes and events as inseparable relations - process-events for want of a better term - we are then able to extend our analysis in a very fruitful direction. Rather than a singular function, process-events are composed of a set of relations. These relations, in turn, are sets that are grouped into open topological spaces or “manifolds”. These manifolds are grouped into higher order manifolds that contain the core elements of all component manifolds, and have all other elements in potential.²⁰⁸ Let us consider the example of rites of passage.

²⁰⁷ Consider, for example, the process of downsizing a company. The process will drive lay-offs and firings, the intended events, but it may also create morale problems and tarnish the public image of the company. To use a somewhat different wording derived from Merton, events are the manifest and latent functions of processes.

²⁰⁸ I.e. as partial members of the topological manifold. The partiality of membership, the fuzziness, is what determines that these manifolds are “open” topologies. On general topology, see Kelley, 1955.

The core element of rites of passage is the tripartite structure of separation, liminality, and re-aggregation. This is the core element of the manifold that contains all rites of passage. Secondary elements (i.e. core elements of sub-manifolds) include the temporal characterization of the observable event as cyclical, one time linear (fixed), one time linear (not fixed), and multi-time linear. The event may or may not also be mandatory, from either natural or socio-cultural sources, a situation which gives rise to Turner's (1982) distinction between "liminal" (mandatory) and "liminoid" (not mandatory). Finally, the event may involve a shifting of location within a particular M-form, or it may involve the inculcation of a different M-form (cf. 4.4).

Within each secondary manifold, numerous other elements serve to define unique topological spaces that may or may not be linguistically separated or "named". The "naming", including a social valuation, of a topological process-event space creates two potentials: a potential for social generality, and the potential to exteriorize the contents of that space to others and, hence, influence them. These potentials, if actualized, are the two main criteria for social facts (cf. Durkheim, 1964:1-13, esp. 3, 10, 13).

The action of naming a process-event includes not only the social valuations that result from the social construction of that process-event, but also from the relations established with other linguistically related process-events even if there is no specific topological relationship. A good example of this is the process-event space of Female Circumcision, and the alternate naming of that space as Female Genital Mutilation. There are serious semantic reaction differences between "circumcision" and "genital mutilation" (cf. Ferguson and Ellis, 1995).

The action of naming may also produce a situation whereby a social problem is redefined such that the jurisdiction of that problem shifts between various professional bodies (e.g. Abbott, 1988, ch. 5). In this instance, the linguistic connotations of the name are changed. It is important to note that regardless of its source, the linguistic connotations of the action of naming a process-event space serve to place it within a broader realm of social relations.²⁰⁹

This placement of a process-event space serves to answer the question of “who”: who can access the space, who controls access to the space, etc. As such, the linguistic connotations and jurisdictional claims on a process-event space have important ramifications for the development of social roles (section 5.5.2) and social organizations (section 5.5.3). A process-event space is socially and culturally mediated through these particular members (i.e. roles and organizations) of external environments. But process-event spaces are also mediated in internal environments (cf. section 3.3), and it is to these internal environments that we now turn.

5.3.2 Process-Event, Communitas and Flow

As I noted earlier, process-event spaces contain core elements and are bounded. Regardless of the specifics of any given process-event space, there are certain general properties which will apply. Process-event spaces are “rules governed”, at least in the sense that they contain a series of dynamic relations between specific elements. These “rules” are not those created and formalized by individuals, the cognized map of the process-event space but, rather, they are the operational territory of that space. As such,

²⁰⁹ It is also important to note that the social placement of a process-event space may have no

these “rules” include the sum of all potential inherent in that space, a situation that is much larger than the cognized map.

While there are inevitable differences between cognized maps and operational territories, for any given individual these differences will change over time. As such, it is useful to be able to differentiate between the “same” person at different points in time. Korzybski (1958:1-11) used a notation of Smith_i^t , where i is the identifier of the particular individual and t is the time index for identification.

While useful, this needs to be extended to include an index of mapping or “knowledge” of the process event. And, since this knowledge is itself variable, this must also be included. If we use the Smith_i^t notation as a basis, we can modify it to $\text{Smith}_i^t \text{ CM}$ $\{fe_1, fe_2, fe_3, \dots fe_n\} \subset E_c(\text{pem}) \rightarrow E_o(\text{pem})$. In this modification CM stands for the cognized map of Smith at time t which is composed of elements $\{fe_1, fe_2, fe_3, \dots fe_n\}$ which are fuzzy, and whose membership value is indicated by f .²¹⁰ These fuzzy elements are a subset $\subset$ of the cognized environment of the process-event manifold $E_c(\text{pem})$ which, in turn, is a partial mapping $\rightarrow$ of the operational environment of the process-event manifold $E_o(\text{pem})$.

Changes over time may be examined by comparing the $t_1, t_2, t_3, \dots t_m$ values of Smith’s CM, both of the individual elements and of their membership values.²¹¹ These

bearing on the actual relations to other topologically related process-event spaces.

²¹⁰ A fuzzy element is a member of a fuzzy set where the membership of the element in the set may be less than full. The membership value is usually indicated by a numeric value between 1 and 10. In this case, the membership value may indicate awareness without skill, or skill without competency.

²¹¹ In some cases, changes in the $E_c(\text{pem})$ may also be useful, although it should be noted that the $E_c(\text{pem})$ is usually the property of “experts”.

changes establish the vector of Smith within the $E_c(pem)$, although they do not establish the intentionality behind that vector.²¹²

This method for establishing a vector within a process-event space holds true if and only if the $E_o(pem)$ is either *de facto* or *de percepto*²¹³ a closed topological space. *De facto* closed process-event spaces are quite rare, while *de percepto* closed spaces are quite common. Consider, by way of example, the game of football as a process-event space. While “everyone” recognizes that the rules may change, they will not change in any single game. As such, football is a *de percepto* closed process-event space that is treated as if it were a closed space at any particular point in time.

When we come to partially open and fully open process-event spaces, we have a very different situation. Keeping with our example of football, we can see that it is, in fact, a partially open process-event space, at least in some of its elements. While the rules do not change in the middle of a game, the application of those rules may change, players may be injured and withdrawn, and tactics will shift from play to play.

In the case of football, the degree of openness is partially established by the rules of the game, partially by chance (e.g. player injuries, missed penalty calls, etc.), and partially by the intentionality of the actors. It is also established by events that are

²¹² Or, in other words, the questions of relational power and the desires of the individual. It should be noted that I have included this material here in the interests of completeness since, for certain legal and ethical reasons (see section 8.1.1) I was unable to gather data specific to outplacement.

²¹³ “*de percepto*” refers to a situation where changes are so slow as to be easily absorbed into the $E_c(pem)$. As such, there may be a recognition of change, but it has little immediate influence.

completely beyond the “normal” scope of the game, for example a terrorist attack at a Superbowl game, or a case of mass food poisoning in one team.²¹⁴

As with fully closed process-event spaces, fully open process-event spaces are rare. In fact, a fully open process-event space would appear to be completely beyond the boundaries of the knowledge of an individual; literally a “mystery” in the oldest sense of the word, an “open sacred secret (cf. Kerenyi, 1955). It is this quality of “mysteria” that lies at the root of the process-event that Turner (1982) calls “communitas”. It is an intuition/experience of “oneness” with all others who have experienced the “same” event brought about either spontaneously or through specific techniques.²¹⁵

The process of comprehending and remembering the experience/intuition leads to a naming of that experience, and a search to replicate and/or re-member that experience in an explicable and replicable format.²¹⁶ The action of remembering, explicating, and replicating and experience may give rise to a formal rules-governed process-event.²¹⁷ If this happens, then that formalized process-event will become subject to the process of social construction and placement within the social and linguistic structures (cf. section 3.3).

²¹⁴ The creation of *de percepto* closure on these outside events is achieved by taking “normal” precautions.

²¹⁵ It is only when it is brought about by specific techniques that it becomes a process-event space subject to “knowing” and, hence, manipulation. In other words, it is only a *social* process-event space once it is mapped.

²¹⁶ I use the term “re-member” to tag the very archaic meaning of the word remember; literally to put a body back together - in this case a body of situations that lead to an experience.

²¹⁷ Or the attempt to recreate the experience may be a failure, and remain a “mystery”.

Process-events happen with and to social actors, regardless of whether or not that actor is an individual or an organization (cf. Peterson, 1998). Our concern at the present is with the effects upon individuals, and we will deal with organizations later (cf. Section 5.5.3). Any given process-event may be mapped out using two dimensions: the “challenge” of the process-event and the skill level attained in that process-event. The dimension of “challenge” is, in actuality, a combination of the complexity, the degree of openness, and the correspondence of the cognized map to the operational territory of the process-event: $E_c(pem) \rightarrow E_o(pem)$ (see Csikszentmihalyi, 1990:72-77).

An individual who is an actor in a process-event is subject to a variety of emotional responses based on his/her skill level and the level of challenge. Csikszentmihalyi (1990) has argued that within a given process-event or “game”, individuals are able to achieve an “optimal experience” which he calls “flow”. For Csikszentmihalyi (1990:49), flow is the quintessence of enjoyment; a state that he argues contains the following characteristics.

Source: Csikszentmihalyi (1990:74) modified

Figure 5-IV: Flow

First, the experience usually occurs when we confront tasks we have a chance of completing. Second, we must be able to concentrate on what we are doing. Third

and fourth, the concentration is usually possible because the

task undertaken has clear goals and provides immediate feedback, Fifth, one acts with a

deep but effortless involvement that removes from awareness the worries and frustrations of everyday life. Sixth, enjoyable experiences allow people to exercise a sense of control over their actions. Seventh, concern for the self disappears, yet paradoxically the sense of self emerges stronger after the flow experience is over. Finally, the sense of duration of time is altered; hours pass by in minutes, and minutes can stretch out to seem like hours. The combination of all of these elements causes a sense of deep enjoyment that is so rewarding people feel that expending a great deal of energy is worthwhile simply to be able to feel it.

The experience of flow is not, however, an automatic result of engaging in an activity but, rather, it takes place only in a limited section of event space defined by the boundaries of challenge and skill (Csikzentmihalyi 1990:74). Activity that takes place outside of this channel may lead to either anxiety or boredom (see Figure 5). Activity that takes place within the flow channel (e.g. Smith₁ and Smith₄), however, produces a situation whereby Smith desires to repeat the experience (cf. Csikzentmihalyi, 1990; 74-77).

Csikzentmihalyi's model, however, is quite useful for our purposes since it gives us specific indicators to look for in examining any particular process-event. And, since flow states are likely to engender a desire for repetition, it also goes some way to explaining a resistance on the part of individuals to change. More importantly, the experience of a flow state within a given process-event has the potential to establish a commonality of experience across generations and other barriers, and this commonality allows for a form of spontaneous *communitas* which transcends space and time (cf Turner, 1982:47-48). The commonality of experience formed by a shared bond of flow

experiences serves, in part, to form the basis of a community (cf. Turner, 1982:55-58), and it to an examination of community that we know turn.

5.4 Process-events and community

For Malinowski, the core of the concept of community is relationships between individuals: their mutual expectations, obligations, rights and responsibilities. In general, he viewed communities as the source of institutional "authority", a not unreasonable view when examining small-scale societies. He also recognized other forms of community including what we would now refer to as "communities of practice", although he based them around experience and identity (e.g. kinship and para-kinship structures; cf. Sahlins, 1972) in a manner similar to the concept of occupational sub-cultures discussed by Trice (1993).

For Malinowski, communities authorize institutions, prescribe their deployment, define their propriety, and act as a testing ground for their validity. Communities are not, in and of themselves, autonomous. Rather, they are parts of a larger web of social relations that define any particular society and the relationship of one society to another (i.e. the "world-system" in which that society operates). Communities are described as the living sites of culture(s), incorporating one or more institutions within their boundaries and acting as a focus for social action and experience (i.e. the lived experience of the operation of one or more institutions). As such, they serve to create a sense of "us" grounded in a commonality of experience and understanding, and, by extension, a sense of "them".

One way of viewing the range of needs, desires and problems "solved" by a community is to consider them as a topological "domain" (cf. Tyrrell, 1998; section

5.3.2). Each community has its own domain that may range from answering a specific need to answering many needs. Currently, most individuals are members of multiple communities and also have a shift in their needs over their lifetime. As such, the relative impact of any single community on an individual varies according to the breadth and relative importance of the need(s) covered by that community at a particular point in time. A more concrete expression of this may be seen in the current mobility of employees in high tech firms. Their current organization/community may not be able to meet their current or projected needs and, as a result, they are susceptible to being "headhunted" by other firms that are capable of meeting these needs.

Numerous authors (cf. Wellman, 1998:10-11 for overview) have assumed that for a community to exist there must also be an associated settlement site. This assumption is the same as arguing that for any work to take place, there must be a factory or office building: an assumption that is increasingly rejected as the current increases in telework clearly show (for more on virtual communities, see Chapter 9).

Wellman (1998:10) notes that many definitions of "community" contain three common criteria: interpersonal networks that provide sociability, social support and social capital to their members; residence in a common locality; and solidarity sentiments and activities. If we accept these criteria, especially if we are examining communities that develop within particular organisations, then we must rework the concept of "site" in such a manner that we can account for, amongst other things, distributed work teams. These three criteria may be transformed into the following:

- Social networks that give access to institutions which provide active and potential affective and material support and resources;

- A common site in which and through which these affective and material resources may be provided;
- A set of solidarity sentiments and activities (i.e. structures and rituals to promote attachment).

5.4.1 Community and Territory

The assumption of the necessity for a physical site as a precondition to the existence of a community is, at first glance, a matter of common sense. It is, however, axiomatic in anthropology that there are numerous groups that have no permanent physical location (e.g. hunting and gathering societies, many pastoralist societies, etc.). Rather than a single location, such as a village or neighbourhood, they share in a territory.

Territories contain the locations, or "sites", in which and through which institutions, organizations, and communities operate. The term "location" does not refer to a specific "place" in physical reality but, rather, a location in perceptual reality which may, or may not, be restricted to a particular "place" and will shift along with changes in the perceptual reality. Institutional "territory" may be equated with specific organizations or social roles, although any particular territorial claims will be in a state of constant redefinition (Abbott, 1988).

Within any specific territory, the sharing of resources takes place both in physical sites (e.g. factories, meeting rooms, IRC chat rooms, etc.) and in non-physical "sites" (i.e. artefacts, asynchronous communicative media, etc.). Since many types of institutions may be "stored" in potential in artefacts, there is no requirement that the originator of the support be present or even alive at the time of transmission.

The linking of various sites into coherent, subjective "wholes" produces territories in which communities evolve. These communities may be of any type from that of a work team, to a virtual corporation, to a medical support group. Indeed, the integration of these communities into current organizational cultures has been of major concern, especially in the area of telework (cf. Davies, 1996).

5.4.2 Functions and Games in Communities

I use the term "function" in its biological, rather than sociological, sense to denote the current, rather than original, effect/use of a particular pattern of interaction. As such, the function of a community is to share specific affective and material resources. Since this sharing is not, of necessity, dependent upon any particular point in space or time, is there some commonality upon which it is based?

In *From Ritual to Theatre*, Turner (1982) argued that there is a distinct relationship between the structures of a community and what he has called *communitas* (Turner 1969, 1982). For Turner (1982:50), *communitas* stands in a "figure-ground" relationship with social structure. *Communitas* spontaneously erupts and, if the experience is held to be useful and/or desirable, it is encapsulated within a structure (i.e. as an institution) and passed on to others.

Turner (1982:58) sees a relationship between this institutionalized *communitas* and Csikszentmihalyi's concept of flow (5.3.2). Flow, as the subjective experience of a particular type of event, channels the participants into a set mode of perception that blocks out extraneous perceptions and, by doing so, achieves specific ends. When coupled with particular "structures" (e.g. game specific rules and specific relations

between the game and other structures), flow experiences, and the ends they produce, becomes one particular form of institutions - "games".²¹⁸

Any given flow experience contains both material and affective outcomes, and is a component in a relational web composed of other flow experiences. Obviously, a flow experience is an "affective resource" in that it engenders a sense of control and accomplishment, but it also provides *material* resources, at least in as much as the game produces particular ends. Thus, by way of example, when salesmen speak about being "in the groove" they are referring to the subjective flow experience (Maltby, 1999).

The flow experience serves to produce a sense of *communitas* between people who share the same, or similar, games: a sense of "commonality" which engenders an "us-ness" which provides a common ground for communication between otherwise disparate people. It must be noted that there is no requirement that the affective and material outcomes of a game must be "positive": games will serve the same communicative and *communitas* building function even when they are "negative".

The relevance of this model for organizational cultures is clear. Flow experiences act as the shared bases for occupational, departmental, and work team sub-cultures. They provide the subjective, experiential basis for individual attachment to particular (sub) organizations that allow for the continuing production of organizational cultures.

²¹⁸ The term "game" is used here specifically due to the "self-contained" nature of flow experiences, games, and events. It is an analogic convenience that has the advantage of being a collective concept that implies both material resources, rules of action and experiences generated through their usage. It also highlights the relationship between "play", "games", liminality and *communitas* (cf. Turner, 1982).

5.4.3 Flow and Community boundaries

What is distributed within a given community is not the actuality of a singular flow experience, although this may be available, as much as it is the *potentiality* for one or more particular flow experiences. In other words, communities supply their members with the rules to one or more games, and the potential opportunity to engage in these. As such, access to particular games, and the sense of "we-ness" produced by these games, serves as one boundary defining a community. While less obvious, the relevance of this model to outplacement stems from a) the creation of shared experiences of unemployment (e.g. networking, interviewing, struggling with a resume), and, increasingly, from b) the commonality of being outplaced.

A second boundary is the utility of resources. Communities, by their very placement within larger environments, will inevitably adapt to whatever their "local" conditions are, and this adaptation will produce a variance between a) the production of specific games, and b) the relative importance of different games. Given this situation, it is not surprising that some communities contain specific games which are completely absent in other communities, while others have adapted to produce games that are only occasionally required by the general society in which they operate. This second type may be referred to as "contingent communities", since they centre around specific culturally recognised contingencies (see section 9.5).

We can clearly see from the preceding argument, that communities may be transient, contingent and differentiated in their needs/answers domains. These domains include specific "games" and larger "metagames" (i.e. linked sequences of games in which the outcome is both longer in time and greater in its product than any component

game). The exchange of information is critical in maintaining both the boundaries and the necessity of the community. As such, we can conceive of the intersection of communities and the territories in which they operate as the “playing field” within which these games and metagames operate.

In the preceding sections, I have attempted to draw out and expand upon certain key components:

- Institutions are expanded from a community’s means of satisfying fundamental human needs to include games and metagames;
- Territories are expanded from physical locales which circumscribe groups that interact frequently, to systems creating opportunities for communication and participation in basic need fulfillment or constructed games;
- Communities are expanded from intersubjective networks of relationships that deploy and authorize a comprehensive set of institutions covering the full range of human needs to networks that are more specialized and focused in the institutions that they support.

For our purposes, the importance of this section lies in the deployment of a) specialized networks, b) non-spatial territories, and c) the increasing commonality of unemployment. These are the factors on which outplacement is based, and which define the contingent communities of the unemployed (see section 9.5).

5.5 From Process-events to Chartered Institutions

One of the central points made by Peterson (1998:18-23) is that, at certain levels of analysis, processes may be treated as if they were unitary “things” - observable particles that indicate larger fields. For process-events, part of this reification comes

during the process of naming and the consequent semantic indexing (cf. 3.3). More important, for our purposes, is the transformation of reified process-events into “problems” and “tasks” which, as Abbott (1988; chap. 2) has noted, serve as the territory for professions to compete over.

Reified process-events are not solely the field of competition for professions, they also appear around other areas of a social structure and cultural matrix. In some cases, reified process-events define specific locations in the social structure by the defining the core attributes of these positions. In other cases, they define the practices that produce specific attitudes that define the core attributes of a position or worldview.

Process-events construct the “doingness” of individuals that allows for the production of experiences which, in turn, are the grounds and boundaries for immediate experiences.²¹⁹ As such, process-events serve as the grounds within which specific, named composite entities are constructed and maintained (cf. 5.3.1).

These named, composite entities are, for want of a better term, “charterable institutions”. Until these charterable institutions have undergone a process of social construction, i.e. valuation and placement within the socio-cultural matrix, they will remain as chartered institutions *in potential*. Given the non-homogenous situation of the vast majority of modern societies, it is also important to note that a particular charterable institution may be culturally chartered, but not socially and vice versa.²²⁰

²¹⁹ This is most noticeable when the individual is within the flow channel of the process-event, however the states of boredom and anxiety are also important experiences that have observable social effects.

²²⁰ A good example of this is female circumcision in Canada which, until 1996, had no specific social charter but did have specific cultural charters (cf. Ferguson and Ellis, 1995). A good example of the

Charterable institutions are the *de novo* chartered institutions in potential for any given specific social and/or cultural group.²²¹ In many cases, individual reified process-events will accrete to specific, pre-existing chartered institutions although they may well serve as the territory for jurisdictional conflict between various specific chartered institutions or groups of chartered institutions. The term “accrete” is used intentionally since the lexical positioning of the reified process-event will tend to establish the initial position of the process-event within the socio-cultural matrix and, hence, in respect to specific chartered institutions. In effect, chartered institutions become “accretion points” for “new” process-events.

In general, we can identify five main types of accretion point for reified process-events: disciplines, roles, organizations, tasks, and a *cursus vivorum* (loosely translated as “life-course”). Each of these types may be viewed as analytically separate, even though, in everyday reality, they are intertwined.

5.5.1 Disciplines

The term “discipline” is related to the term disciple, and has connotations of teaching (from the Latin *docere*) and learning (from the Latin *discere*). It also has connotations of learned perception, in the sense of a style, method, or way of perception/action and it is in this particular sense that I use the term. Frequently, these disciplines are professed (from the Latin *profiteri*; *pro* - before all and *fateri*, - to

obverse situation is the imposition of monogamous marriages on the Mormon populace of the United States in the 19th century.

²²¹ By *de novo* I mean that they have no specific valuations or placement within the social structure assigned to them. They are, for all intents and purposes, “new”.

acknowledge) in such a manner that the style of perception/action becomes reified as the core characteristic of those who profess it.

This, of course, is the root of what are colloquially called "professions", even though the current meaning is somewhat expanded in its implications (e.g. the implication of payment received for services rendered).²²² While the concept of disciplines lies at the root of many professions, the two are not equivalent. Many disciplines may be both practiced and professed without achieving the social status of professions.²²³

Certain reified process-events act as the core definitional criteria of disciplines, while others serve as auxiliary criteria. A good, and germane, example of this comes from the Durkheim's (1964:xxxvii) preface to the first edition of *The Rules of Sociological Method*.

We are so little accustomed to treat social phenomena scientifically that certain of the propositions contained in this book may well surprise the reader. However, if there is to be a social science, we shall expect it not merely to paraphrase the traditional prejudices of the common man but to give us a new and different view of them; for the aim of all sciences to make discoveries, and every new discovery more or less disturbs accepted ideas. Unless, then, Sociology attributes to common sense an authority which it has not enjoyed for a long time in other sciences - and it is impossible to see how such authority could be justified - the scholar must resolutely resist being intimidated by the results to which his researches lead, demanding only that they be conducted scientifically. As it is characteristic of the sophist to invite paradoxes, likewise it is a sign of intellectual cowardliness to avoid them when they are imposed on us by the facts.

²²² Although there are still some "professions" that lack a direct economic repayment for services, for example certain orders of priesthood.

²²³ Several good examples come to mind such as particular disciplines in fencing and martial arts, along with various meditational disciplines.

In this work as a whole, Durkheim attempts to establish the specific, defining criteria for the discipline of Sociology, and the core process-events are named in this particular section.

First and foremost, Sociology as a discipline, is to examine “social phenomena” or, what he later defines as social facts. This establishes the core criteria of the discipline, the “what is to be perceived”. Secondly, this examination must be “scientific”, a criterion which is shared with all other sciences in opposition to the “traditional prejudices of the common man”. Third, Sociology and Sociologists must avoid two positions: sophistry and “intellectual cowardliness”. For Durkheim, these four criteria, two positive (“thou shalt...”) and two negative (“thou shalt not...”), serve as the core process-events of the discipline of Sociology. All four of these criteria are perceptual, and it is the internalization of these perceptions, the “learning” of these process-events, that serves to define the reality of what we mean when we speak of someone being “socialized within a discipline”.²²⁴

5.5.2 Roles

The concept of a “role” has been borrowed by social theorists directly from the theatre (Sarbin and Allen, 1968:489), and has connotative links to other theatrical concepts such as “plot”, “drama”, “audience”, “actor”, etc. The concept of a “role” implies the existence of other social actors, who “play” other, related roles and together “produce” an event from a loose “script”. The dramaturgical stream of role theory has followed the implications and connotations deriving from the theatre in their work.

A different strand of role theory draws more heavily on what might be termed "positional roles"; those expectations of action which derive from an individual's place within a specific social order (e.g. Gross et al., 1958). This strand implicitly accepts Radcliffe-Brown's (1952:188-204) definition of "personhood" as deriving from their placement within a social structure or, in other words, based on their social roles. Social roles, in this view, are the dynamic aspect of a social status; the expected behaviours and attitudes that are required for the performance of the role (see Gross et al, 1958:11-13).

After an examination of various different strands of role theory, Gross et al. (1958:17) note that "[t]hree basic ideas which appear in most of the conceptualizations considered, if not in the definitions of role themselves, are that individuals: (1) in *social locations* (2) *behave* (3) with reference to *expectations*." (emphasis in the original).

The primary difference between these two strands of role theory, at least as far as we are concerned, is the concept of "location". For much of dramaturgical theory, "location" is an event or scenario, while for others "location" is a particular nexus in the social structure. This is more a matter of choice in research subject than in it is one of irreconcilable difference.

If, as I have argued earlier, process-events accrete around particular nexi, then it can be seen that the dramaturgical theorists study particular process-events (scripts, "games"), while the others study the accretion points. Gross et al.'s (1958: chapter 2) concern with the "Postulate of Role Consensus" (i.e. the problem of expectations differing from actions within a given role) disappears if we assume that individuals

²²⁴ This is, of course, quite different from being considered as a "Sociologist" in the sense of being a licenced and accredited practitioner of the *profession* of Sociology.

within a particular social location have choices from a number of the different process-events that define that role.²²⁵

The concept of role also operates in reverse. Rather than the “doing” of a role producing the “being” of that role, the “being” may lead to the “doing”. This reversal happens when individuals have exterior labels placed upon them with consequent expectations and social effects (cf. Becker, 1963). In a number of cases, these labels may also produce internal expectations, self-fulfilling prophecies whereby the role expectation becomes, for that individual, “true”. Both the “doing” to “being” and the “being” to “doing” are processes of learning to play a role and, as such, are subject to both formal and informal negotiation of the learning process.²²⁶

One important point concerning roles that has, so far, only been alluded to is the chartering of a role. In role theory, the charter for a role derives either from the script of the particular event, or from the location of the role within a larger structural framework. In other words, the charter is a functional requirement of the scene or an authorized requirement of the social structural nexus. The problem with these assumptions, however, is that they cannot account for changes in a role or for the addition or deletion of roles.²²⁷

A further problem is that these assumptions cannot account for the transference of one individual between roles, or for either the application to or stripping away from an

²²⁵ A point noted by a number of authors in the discussion of styles of playing a particular role. The core criteria are the same across styles, but the ways in which those criteria are operationalized varies.

²²⁶ Formal negotiation would include both role socialization and expert or professional interventions. One interesting form of informal role negotiation comes in the form of peer support (cf. Dekeseredy and Schwartz, 1993).

²²⁷ A problem that is solved via the use of social construction theory and an examination of the genesis, mutation, and destruction of specific role structures.

individual of a role. Inasmuch as it has been used in sociology (e.g. Trice and Beyer, 1984), rites of passage theory has been the black box which has been used in an attempt to explain the relationship between an individual and a role.²²⁸

This relationship, however, is obvious once the similarities between role theory and rites of passage theory are examined. At their core, both theories deal with expectations of action based on the expectancy of particular motives (see Burke, 1962). The core difference between the theories is that role theory concentrates on "normal" situations defined within a social structure, while rites of passage theory concentrates on liminal and liminoid situations which are "anti-structural" (i.e. inversions or transformations of "normal" social structures; cf Turner, 1969).

Once this relationship is realized, it is obvious that every role is intimately linked not only with other "normal roles" but also with particular "anti-roles". These anti-roles share the same core properties (expected action and motives) transformed along one or more axes of inversion.²²⁹ In addition, these anti-roles also include a large component of temporal reflexivity - an imperative to examine the "Big Picture" and one's place in it.²³⁰ Obviously, this "examination" includes an examination of one's expectations and

²²⁸ The major exception to this is Glaser and Strauss (1971), but their formulation of rites of passage theory has other major problems.

²²⁹ A good example of this in criminology is Merton's (Pfohl, 1985, 210-214) typology of ends-means or individual adaptation to anomie. In this model, transformations take place along either a goals axis or a means axis.

²³⁰ This can be seen in all types of rites of passage from initiations to marriage ceremonies to death rituals as well as seasonal cycles.

motives and an internalization of “appropriate” (to the new role/state) expectations and motives.²³¹

As such, this temporal reflexivity provides the basis for the individual, experiential chartering of the new role or state via an internalization of expectations and motives. Or, to put it another way, experiential chartering works by an individual learning the main relevant “stories” and/or scripts (“games”) appropriate to the role/state and establishing a “resonance” with one or more of the characters in the story. This type of chartering is a clear example of exemplar based learning, and differs from chartering based on either “revelation” or “authority” (e.g. charismatic, traditional or rational-legal authority; cf. Weber, 1947).

Social roles consist of sets of expected actions and motivations that are codified into a generalized semantic form - the “role”.²³² They are intimately linked both with other social roles and with various anti-roles and have a place in both the social structure and anti-structure.

5.5.3 Organizations

In their most basic, charterable form, organizations are networks of relationships. While they are still in potential, these networks are of two forms: a) personal networks, and b) networks of idealized social roles (including anti-roles). Once actualized, these two networks meld in a form that is bounded by specific criteria that vary from organization to organization. These criteria, or “organizational boundary conditions”,

²³¹ The “learning of tribal gnosis” component of a rite of passage (cf. Turner, 1969), although this internalization may well not happen.

serve to define the organization as “separate from” other organizations, a condition that is usually symbolized and achieved via the act of naming and reifying the organization.

The chartering process imposes certain specific organizational forms. As Malinowski (1960:48) noted, “[t]he charter is the idea of the institution as entertained by its members and defined by the community.” If the proposed organization does not meet the criteria of that particular type of organization as defined by their community, then it cannot be that type of organization until and unless that definition changes.²³³

In addition to the imposition of organizational forms, chartering also imposes certain communicative restrictions. These communicative restrictions impose spatial and temporal biases of communications (cf. Innis, 1951) on the organization that may well be different from those of the most “efficient” communications technology available. This is especially apparent in the legislative requirements for specific types of communications and/or organizational structures, but it is also apparent in other areas (e.g. sub-cultural norms).²³⁴

Once actualized, i.e. named and reified as a social actor, organizations become subject to the effects of the environments in which they operate and serve as environments for the members of that organization.

²³² Codified in the sense of being symbolized with a general noun; the “name” of the role.

²³³ A good example of this comes from attempts to have modern Witchcraft recognised as a religion in Canada (see Tyrrell, 1992)

²³⁴ An interesting example of this comes from the book industry. Can we really call Amazon.com a “book store”? Problems with the general perceptions of what a book store should be have forced Amazon.com to deploy specific forms of communicative technology to simulate the intersubjective experience of physically shopping in a book store (e.g. the use of AI programs to follow a customer’s “taste”).

5.5.4 Tasks

In their most basic form, tasks are the named, observable reifications of process-events (cf. Section 5.3). Tasks are the basic "unit" of conflict between various professional organizations, and serve as the building block for professional imperia (cf. Abbott, 1988). Tasks, in and of themselves, have little inherent "reality" - they rely on specific conditions in the environment for their reality and, if this changes or disappears, then the tasks themselves may well disappear (cf. Abbott, 1988:92-93 for an example).

In many ways, "tasks" are the analogic equivalent of perceptual parsing components, but at the level of institutions. They define "what" is controlled, manipulated, and performed, while the ongoing processes of social construction and professional conflict define the "who" (the analogic equivalent of propriety parsing).

5.5.5 *Cursus vivorum*

The concept of a *Cursus Vivorum* or "life path" derives from the Roman concept of the *Cursus Honorum* - the "path of honour" of young men of the senatorial and equites classes. As I conceive it, the *cursus vivorum* is a collection of paths that define the "right and proper" - ways to succeed, and all of the other options. In part, the concept as I use it derives from Merton's typology of individual adaptations to anomie (cf. Merton, 1938). I do not, however, assume that there are any absolute definitions but, rather, that all culturally constructed paths to achieve goals will generate the reactions/variations described by Merton.

Any *cursus vivorum* will be a "path" or way of achieving a particular goal as laid out by a given culture at a given point in time. As such, the various paths will, of necessity, be of varying degrees of effectiveness at other points in time. What is

important, at least for the purposes of this dissertation, is that a particular *cursus vivorum* will contain an inherent promise of fulfillment and this promise may be broken (for one example, see Section 5.6).

5.5.6 Summary

At the start of this section, I noted that chartered institutions stand as the phenotypic expressions of the institutional genotype; the actualization of one or more potentials inherent in one or more institutions. Chartered institutions, and most especially organizations, are also the “touchstones” of both knowledge systems and M-forms. By this, I mean that chartered institutions “ground” knowledge systems and M-forms in lived reality: they complete the circuit from individual biology back to individual lived experience and, in doing so, they produce a series of feedback circuits. These circuits are, of course, subject to oscillation and this is the subject of the next section.

5.6 Trust and the Institutional Life-Cycle

Institutions, regardless of their form or of the number of chartered institutions that embody them, operate on a basis of trust, in several senses of the word. First, there must be a certain minimal degree of trust by members that the knowledge systems in that institution “work” (i.e. fulfil their current organisational mandate).²³⁵ Second, there must

²³⁵ As I noted above, the mandate may well change with historical circumstances. By way of example, the ritualized dancing around maypoles in many English villages originated as a fertility rite. At the present time, even though the dances are very similar, their mandate is as a tourist attraction, a way of integrating the community, and as a “remembrance” of historical tradition. Such shifts in the mandate of an institution are quite common. In effect, an institutional “materialization” may well pick up new problems and answers over the course of its development cf. Abbott (1988).

be a minimum level of trust between individual "members" of an institution that each person will fulfil the role required of them.²³⁶

The creation and maintenance of these two forms of trust is itself embodied in what might be termed "institutional culture".²³⁷ While this might be called an "institutional ideology", such a conceptualisation is misleading in that it assumes the *a priori* primacy of rational/mental "thought" over emotional "thought".²³⁸ The use of the term "culture" in place of "ideology" highlights the linkages of both rational and emotional thought required for an institution to survive.²³⁹

Institutional cultures, and the institutions they protect, are susceptible to environmental selection pressures. This is especially critical in situations of rapid environmental change, where the cognized environment of an institution is readily perceived as being

²³⁶ There is, of course, no requirement that members of a chartered institution actually like each other, although this second trust requirement is frequently embodied in an "us" verse "them" mentality. The issue of trust, in this instance centres around a requirement that the individual will submit to the group in issues relating to the chartered institution or that they will leave (or be forced out of) that chartered institution.

²³⁷ There are also specific "cultures" for each chartered institution that fulfil the same function, hence concepts such as "organizational culture", etc.

²³⁸ This assumption appears most strongly in discourses concerning the domination of one group by another. The assumption is that the dominating group is motivated solely by rational self-interest and is incapable of emotional "sympathy" with the group it "dominates". It further assumes that the dominant group is incapable of altruistic impulses towards the dominated group and, when it discovers action that might be considered as altruistic, it searches for a "rational" reason for the action and decries the altruistic act as "self-serving" and "manipulative". As with most materialist philosophical positions since Descartes, the position assumes that resources are scarce and that all people wish the same resources and, hence, any and all actions are geared towards attaining those resources.

²³⁹ Please note that there is absolutely no requirement that the emotions involved be "positive". Fear can, under certain circumstances, be a highly motivating emotion and has certainly been the basis of many institutions. In fact, one might well argue that fear of not having an answer to a specific problem is the root motivation behind institutions to begin with.

“false” or “inadequate”.²⁴⁰ While certain environmental changes may be perceptually constructed as being beyond the influence of the institution, if the change takes place in an area which the institution claims control over, then the sense of “falseness” and/or “inadequacy” will be enhanced.²⁴¹

In the case of specific chartered institutions that have a complex organization where there is a differential emphasis on attention to the operational environment, such a perception of “falseness” may be unevenly spread between members of the organisation.²⁴² This may well produce a situation where one section of the organisation acts in ways that are contrary to the institutional (and organisational) culture, thereby breaching the trust between members of the organisation.

Since this trust serves as an emotional and rational guarantor of the answers embodied in the institution itself and, by extension, for all organisations embodying that institution, these answers are likely to come under intense scrutiny: they are no longer part of the “taken-for-granted” cognized environment. In effect, breaches in the cognized environment exacerbate mutagenesis.

²⁴⁰ Cognized environments are the sum totality of the knowledge of a given unit of analysis. Thus one may speak of the cognized environment of an individual, a group, an organization, etc. One of the overtly observable forms of a group's cognized environment will be an ideology, while others would include patterns of behaviour, language use, etc.

²⁴¹ On the concept of institutional claims, see Abbott (1988). By way of example, numerous magico-religious institutions claim physical health and fertility as part of their institutional sphere. Plagues, miscarriages, poor harvest, etc. may well lead to rapid change in the cognized models of these institutions. Examples of this can be seen in the elaborate conceptualizations of African and European Witchcraft, and in the development of movements such as the Fratricelli and the Franciscans in Medieval Europe.

²⁴² Beck (1992:93-99) has produced a somewhat slapstick description of members of organizations where there is a differential emphasis of attention to the operational environment, and how they respond to changes in the environment.

5.6.1 Breaches and the mutation of institutions

Breaches force people to search for answers to address a situation that is no longer acceptable.²⁴³ While the specific instances of such a breach in the cognized environment appear to vary dramatically, there are a limited number of forms. These forms can be defined along two axes. First, they either reinforce a core institution or they attempt to replace it.²⁴⁴ Second, the core institution involved may be currently dominant in the same sector of society as the breach, it may have previously have been dominant in that sector, or it may never have been dominant in that sector.²⁴⁵

I noted earlier that the areas where an institution claims "control" are especially susceptible to breaches caused, in part, by the actions of the institution. This susceptibility arises due to orthoselection pressures in the operational environment.²⁴⁶ In effect, organisations embodying specific institutions with a high survival chance become imitated, thereby reducing the survival chances of the organisation.²⁴⁷ This increased competition forces organisations to accelerate their development along specific lines. In

²⁴³ These answers may be in response to any type of need; primary, secondary or tertiary, and may be at the level of an individual, an organization, or an institution. The requirement to search for answers beyond those that are no longer acceptable is what makes this period so highly mutagenic.

²⁴⁴ In some instances, the reinforcement or replacement attempts may be made at the level of M-forms rather than at the level of institutions. An example of this would be a call to replace a democratic (in whatever form) state government with a dictatorship.

²⁴⁵ A "sector" is, itself, an institution in that it is a perceptual categorization of a sphere of activity. As such, sectors are not immutable, ideal categories but, rather, are socially constructed and reconstructed in the same way as other institutions.

²⁴⁶ "Orthoselection" is sustained selection on members of a lineage over time which causes continued evolution in a specific direction. It is the result of environmentally sustained positive and negative feedback loops. See section 3.2 and Bateson (1987).

²⁴⁷ And this imitation will take place regardless of the number of optimal institutional embodiments.

effect, organizational orthoselection pressures tend to produce increased specialization which, as a by-product, increases the speciation of phenotypes (chartered institutions). One example of this is the specialization/speciation of the "personal problems" professions (cf. Abbott, 1988: ch. 10). Eventually, this development reaches a point where the organisation is susceptible to developments in other areas of the operational environment.

In discussing this problem using a different analogy, Kuhn (1970) argued that paradigms provide their users with specific problematics and methods of solution. These specific problematics and methods are the institutional traits that allowed the paradigm to become the dominant knowledge system and, hence, cognized environment. They are also the traits that are susceptible to orthoselection.²⁴⁸ At some point in time, the weight of evidence that cannot be explained by the paradigm causes a breach in the cognized environment, and the consequent search for a new paradigm.

The vector of orthoselection pressures on specific institutional traits produces discernible "trends" within both the operational and cognized environments. These trends, if strong enough, may change the topography of both environments and, by so doing, change the situation which initially selected for specific institutional traits.²⁴⁹

²⁴⁸ I use the term "institutional trait" as a term to distinguish specific observable propensities and foci of an institution. As such, an "institutional trait" may be conceived of as the phenotypic expression of one or more memetic replicators which modify the epigenic expression of an M-form. By way of example, an M-form centred around "go forth, be fruitful and multiply" which may serve as the basis for procreative activities, will in all probability be modified by memetic replicators which govern with whom and with how many people this can apply.

²⁴⁹ In effect, institutional traits may produce changes in the operational and/or environment(s) which will eventually change the "survival zone" of the institution. To carry on with example used in the previous footnote, changes in medical technology may well produce shifts in population which will

Certain traits appear to be specifically adapted to produce a functional equilibrium where environmental changes fluctuate between various stable equilibrium points.²⁵⁰ Other traits appear to have a specific goal that, if ever achieved, will end the trait.²⁵¹

5.6.2 Breach periods and the reconstruction of institutions

The period surrounding a breach is marked by an efflorescence of activity of all types:²⁵² an abundant environment, since the dominant player in the niche has "self-destructed". If the breach is severe enough, and generally spread throughout a society, it may well mark a major shift in the form and distribution of core institutions and M-

negatively impact on the survivability of the culture as a whole by depleting available resources. On the specific controls instituted by a number of societies on fecundity, see Harris (1977).

²⁵⁰ However, these equilibrium points are only valid as long as the entire system remains in some form of equilibrium. They are definitely susceptible to system external, catastrophic events. A good example of this type of trait would be the development of "gentleman's agreements" which have produced a number of cartels. These serve to stabilise supply and demand for a particular item, until some event extraneous to the cartel upsets it, such as state intervention, a foreign competitor, or the development of a new technology.

²⁵¹ An example of this type of trait would be the current practice of "downsizing" which, in many instances, has so demoralized organizations that they are no longer able to function in a competitive manner. Dawkins (1989:83) distinguishes between these two types of traits or replicators, as "germ-line replicators", and "dead-end replicators".

²⁵² And this activity is not all "positive". A number of social scientists (e.g. Marx, Weber, etc.) have attempted to capture and express the spirit of a period of breach (usually the breach surrounding the process of industrialization). However, I would suggest that the best expression of the spirit of a period of breach has been given by Yeats.

Turning and turning in the widening gyre
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;
Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
The best lack all conviction, while the worst
Are full of passionate intensity.
The Second Coming, stanza 1

forms. This, in turn, will affect the relative distribution of varying forms of consciousness as a function of system as structure within the society (cf. section 2.3).

In addition to the efflorescence, breach periods are also characterised by the rapid materialisation, dematerialization, adaptation and exaptation of various institutions and traits. In many situations, the trends leading to the breach have produced new environments that are conducive to the dematerialization of previously stored institutions and traits.²⁵³

Breach periods, in and of themselves, are highly unstable. They are transitional periods where the M-forms that characterize sectors of a culture and, in some instances, the core M-forms of the society come under attack. Breach periods highlight the connection between M-forms and what Polanyi (1957) termed "modes of integration".²⁵⁴

5.7 Summation and Conclusions

Throughout the previous four chapters, I have attempted to create a model that will help us to analyze both rites of passage and, in particular, the outplacement industry. In general, the model is an emergent functionalist model based, to a large degree, on Malinowski's Theory of Culture. The extensions and modifications provided in Chapters

²⁵³ For example, the period of the early 1980's marked the development of an economic environment characterized by "corporate raiding", where small, highly capitalized groups would take-over and break up large corporations. This pattern is strikingly similar to that which appeared at the end of the Mycenaean age, and is characterized by a reciprocity based intra-group mode of integration and an expropriative intergroup mode of integration. Another example would be the spread of fundamentalist movements in the modern world, many of which are attempting to recreate the intra-group redistributive mode of integration.

²⁵⁴ For more on this in specific relation to outplacement, see Tyrrell (1994, 1995, 1996).

4 and 5 have extended Malinowski's theory sufficiently for us to now start the analysis of the outplacement industry at the macro-social and mid-range levels.

In general, the plan of the next part of this dissertation derives from the form of analyses taken. In Chapter 6, I trace out the developments, changes and modifications to the tertiary environment and, in particular, to concepts of work and career, that have happened since the start of the Industrial revolution. I have chosen such a long timeline since it is important to show how the structures that characterize the Late Industrial Age appeared and developed and, also, how the structures that are currently emerging derive from previous forms. In Chapter 7, I "drop down" to a specific mid-range level, the secondary environment, and analyze the rhetorical and, to a lesser degree, the socio-legal construction of outplacement. This is followed in Chapter 8 by an examination of both the actual (within the ethical limits of the research; see 8.1.1) and idealized processes of outplacement.

6 Setting the scene for Outplacement

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the historical context out of which the outplacement industry develops. In order to do this, it is necessary to follow developments in technology (particularly transportation and communications) over the past several centuries. This necessity arises out of the complex feedback loops between technological innovation/adoption and social/work organization (i.e. the socio-technical systems that evolved) and the meme complexes these feedback loops produced.

In section 6.1, I lay out a general scheme for the spread of technological innovations, their concomitant diffusion, and the resulting creation of social selection pressures and their surrounding isomorphic vectors. These technological developments and isomorphic vectors are traced from the early 18th century to the mid-20th century in sections 6.4, 6.5, and 6.6 of this chapter.

In section 6.7 I concentrate on a) the development and deployment of computing and communications technologies, and b) the changes in work organization brought around due to these technologies and increased international competition. It is in this period, from 1968 to 1982, that the outplacement industry develops as one of many potential responses to increased unemployment and career uncertainty.

6.1 The emergence of cycles: innovation, diffusion, and selection pressure

In *Phases of Economic Growth, 1850-1973*, Solomou (1987) argued that the growth pattern of the world economy does not follow a Kondratieff, or long-wave,

pattern.²⁵⁵ Rather, he (1987:56-62) argues that the pattern is best described as a series of "shocked Gerschenkronian catching-up waves" or G-waves: innovation and growth in one national economy stimulates growth in other linked national economies, as they play "catch-up" with the dominant national economy.

The importance of this observation for the current project is twofold. First, there is evidence that G-waves operate between sectors in a national economy, at least in the areas of retooling and restructuring - a form of sectoral diffusion of socio-technical systems at the organization level. Second, there is little doubt that outplacement appeared in response to mass changes in the global economy reflected in local employment situations, and developed both from sectoral diffusion and from vertical diffusion (i.e. higher to lower occupational status).

The process of sectoral diffusion is not, however, a simplistic matter of borrowing ideas and tools between sectors of the economy. In general, two distinct types of sectoral diffusion are apparent. First, there is the borrowing phenomenon where a tool, technique, concept or form of organization is borrowed from one sector and applied to another sector. The reasons behind this borrowing are varied, but tend to be proactive, i.e. the borrowing takes place in order to meet a need or gain an advantage in the current, comprehensible environment. Second, there is a situation analogous to a paradigm shift where the adoption of the new tool, technique, concept or form of organization is driven either by desperation or by the potentials inherent in the new tool. Another way of describing the differences would be that the borrowing type of diffusion operates by

²⁵⁵ Solomanou does note that other, shorter, wave cycles (e.g. the ~20 year Kuznets cycle and the ~7 year "business" cycle do appear to operate.

manipulating symbolic reality, while the second type arises in response to stress or shocks to symbolic reality.

Borrowing diffusion is the most common form, and operates not only within national economies but also between them. Modern examples of this type would include the colonization of Cyberspace by the mass media (i.e. newspapers and television), while older examples would include the adoption of the Welsh longbow by the English or the "borrowing" of Italian silk machines by Thomas Lombe in England in 1718 (Pacey, 1990:103).

Reality shock diffusion is rarer than borrowing diffusion but, at the same time, it is usually more visible. Modern examples of this type would include attempts to deploy Japanese management techniques in North American firms, the mass adoption of personal computers by social service agencies (Garson, 1988, Ch. 3), and indiscriminate mergers and restructuring operations. Older examples of this type include the development of mass armies during the Napoleonic wars, the forced industrialization of Russia under Stalin, the industrialization of Japan, and the Cathar movement in Provence in the 11th and 12th centuries.

Borrowing diffusion is, almost by definition, evolutionary in that it operates both within a particular M-form and within a social system in an attempt to gain adaptive advantage. The "innovations" that form the "origin" for a borrowing diffusion are already embedded in the symbolic systems of the culture. For example, steam engines of the Savery and Newcomen types had been operating in Cornish mines from the end of the 17th century, and textile machinery had been operating in England from the early 18th century, well before the supposed start of the Industrial revolution.

Borrowing diffusion, however, often sets the stage for reality shock diffusion by producing and reinforcing certain evolutionary lines of development or isomorphic vectors which, eventually, reach a catastrophe point²⁵⁶ or "phase change"; periods of social, technical, and cultural turbulence. It is these phase change periods, often lasting for fifty or more years, which mark the shift between quasi-stable forms of social organization. Indeed, the difference between reality shock diffusion and borrowing diffusion is often a matter of culture lag: the time for the culture to adapt to the innovation.

6.2 Preliminary notes

In the following sections, I use a stage model based on the conventions of archaeological "stages" established by C.J. Thomsen in 1819. Actual dates are impossible to establish, since practices from one "age" continue into the next. This creates a situation where any particular "age" or "stage" is characterized by particular clusters of functionally equivalent technologies and organizational forms, but the individual sectors of any given society may well be in different stages (cf. Beck, 1992). The model presented in Table 4 is, therefore, not to be taken as an "all-encompassing" definition of any society.

In general, the model is based around three major ages: mercantile capitalism, industrial production, and information production. Mercantile capitalism refers to the

²⁵⁶ This catastrophe point is not, of necessity, a point where change will inevitable happen. Rather, it is a point where the current evolutionary vectors are matched and balanced in a critical balance such that any outside disturbance will induce rapid perturbation of the system and induce a phase change. This change may be to a simpler form of the complex system or to a more elaborate form, there is no inevitability as to which way the phase change will go.

production and distribution of wealth where the majority of the goods traded are either bulk commodities or luxury goods. Industrial production refers to the production and distribution of wealth where the majority of the goods traded are manufactured commodities. Information production refers to the production and distribution of wealth where the majority of the "goods" traded are symbolic patterns of information and are not necessarily "material".²⁵⁷ I also refer to this period as the "Silicon Age", given the predominance of silicon chips as the basis for information processing, telecommunications, and computers.

Each of these ages is divided into an early, middle, and late phase. Each phase is further sub-divided into sub-stages (processes) which are characteristic of the deployment of the "new" form of wealth generation. Unlike the archaeological record where sub-stages follow a pre-set pattern deriving from the stratigraphy of a given site, the stages in this model are neither mandatory nor always the same for every society or sector of a society. Given these constraints, stages are marked as X_n where "X" refers to the stage number and "n" refers to particular broad adaptive strategies. In cases where the particular adaptive options are unimportant for the general discussion, the stage is marked solely with the "X".

Since the Merchantile Capitalist age is of limited importance to this dissertation, I have not expanded it out into stages. The Industrial Age is usually considered to start somewhere between 1750 and 1790 in England, and at various later dates in the rest of

²⁵⁷ In other words, while the commodity may be "tangible", i.e. a human is capable of interacting with it, it need not be "material". A good example of this type of commodity is computer software available over the Internet. Other examples would include digital entertainment systems (such as television or streaming video), access time to the internet, electronic data sets, etc.

Europe and North America. I have placed the initial phase of the Industrial age back to 1763, since many of the innovations that become apparent in the next stage (1790-1814) are first produced in this period, especially in the area of military production and, most importantly, the Watts Steam Engine (1775).

Table 4: Ages

Age	Stage and Time	Age	Stage and Time
Mercantile Capitalist	~1550 - 1789	Late Industrial Age	1914 - 1929
Early Industrial Age	1763 - 1789		1930 - 1937
	1790 - 1814		1938 - 1949
	1815 - 1832		1950 - 1967
	1832 - 1848		1968 - 1982
Middle Industrial Age	1849 - 1860	Early Silicon Age	1968 - 1982
	1861 - 1872		1983 - 1993
	1873 - 1893		1993 - ????
	1894 - 1914		

6.3 The concepts of "job", "work", and "employment"²⁵⁸

The word "work" derives from the germanic root $\sqrt{WERG}$ meaning "to fashion" or "to work" something and has connotations of material transformation. This is quite different from the root meaning of the word "job", which derives from the Irish Gaelic *gob* mean "a beak", "a morsel", a "bite sized portion", or a mouthful (i.e. *gobber*). The connotation related to the highly limited time span used to perform a specific series of acts. In other words, a "job" is a piece of work.

In *Jobshift*, Bridges (1994:31) notes that before the industrial revolution, the word "job" referred to "any task that was a single piece of work." By the 1830's in England, the term shifted to its modern connotations of, to use Bridges (1994:30) words, "... the way most people today get their money, their status, and many of their friends - in

²⁵⁸ All etymological derivations in this section are from Skeat, 1958.

addition to their sense of belonging, their feeling of being productive, and their hopes for a better future.” While Bridges assertion that the transformation was complete by 1830 is somewhat off the mark, it does highlight the transformation and conflation of both "job" and "work" with the concept of "employment".

"Employment" derives from the Latin *implicare* meaning "to occupy", "to use", or "to place within". The conflation of work and job with employment is quite apropos both in light of the implication of hierarchical organization in the word itself and also in reference to the development of factories and corporations.

6.4 The Early Industrial Age (EIA)

The Early Industrial Age, at least in Britain, is sometimes referred to as the "textile phase" of industrialization since the textile industries drive much of the changes (cf. Hobsbawm, 1969). Three key changes in the social and technological environments mark the shift between Mercantile Capitalism and Industrial production: changes in work organization, the development of efficient mechanical power generation systems, and changes in the cognized environment of Europe. The key developments are summarized in Table 5.

6.4.1 Changes in the organization of work

The first change was in general organization: much human labour ("work") was broken down into a series of small "jobs" which were organized in a sequential order - Adam Smith's (*Wealth of Nations*, I,i) discussion of pin making is a good example. In and of itself, specialization and codification of production sequences were not new. Similar examples existed in a number of different societies, and the process had been

operating in Western European nations for at least 200 years in military drill (cf. Rothenberg, 1986).²⁵⁹

Table 5: Stages and Key Developments in the Early Industrial Age

Stage	Dates	Key Innovations and Developments
Late Mercantile Capitalist/ Early Industrial Age 1	1762-1789	Adoption of sequential, standardized production methods to non-military areas Deployment of efficient, continuous, stand-alone power sources (e.g. steam engines)
EIA 2	1790-1814	"Rationalization" of continental economic system in both production and distribution Mass expansion of British fleet and military, along with consequent mechanization of primary and secondary sectors of the economy Introduction and spread of river based steamboats in both the US and Europe Initial use of railroads (Trevithick, 1802)
EIA 3	1815-1832	Initial deployment of steam-powered transportation systems the ocean going steamboat/gunboat in 1824 Mass deployment of railroads using wrought-iron rails and carrying passengers, 1825) Extraction of quinine from cinchona bark (1820), and commercial production of quinine (1827) Invention of European, mass-producible breechloading guns (Dreyse in the late 1820's)
EIA4	1833-1848	General usage of quinine in Africa General deployment of steam powered gunboats (e.g. the Opium Wars of 1841-2) Initial deployment of electric telegraph (1837) Discovery of natural insulating material - <i>gutta-percha</i> - in 1843 Early attempts at socio-cultural engineering (e.g. Comte, Quetelet, and Babbage) Iron ships with screw propellers (1837) Daguerreotype (1839)

One key point cannot be overemphasized: the industrial revolution took place as part of a continuum of technological change that had been going on in Western Europe from the late 11th century (Lilley, 1973). As Lilley (1973:190) noted, "... the

²⁵⁹ This process, in turn, produces interchangeable components that allow for the transportation and sale of a single component rather than an entire unit. Military examples of this include the production of cannon balls, the development of "interchangeable" soldiers, and the production of general military supplies. Other examples include the production of chainmail and segmented armour (*lorica segmentata*) in the Roman Empire and chariot components in Mycenaean Greece and the Minoan Empire (Chadwick, 1976, esp ch. 9).

technological changes of the industrial revolution are to be thought of as a phase - a crucially important phase, but still only a phase - of this long-term movement."

6.4.2 Efficient mechanical power sources and work organization

The second key change was the introduction of an economically efficient mechanical system of generating power - the Watts steam engine. While the strategy of manufacturing interchangeable components which are assembled into a finished product has been around since at least the third millenium BCE, as has some form of a factory system (Stein and Blackman 1993; Yoffee 1995), the coupling of such a system with a continuous power source on a wide spread scale was new. More importantly, the coupling of the two systems requires the use of a factory system for certain stages of production: the ones where the specific phase involves the application of steam power and/or large fixed structures.²⁶⁰

Both of these changes stem from a combination of the institution of "scientific rationality" as developed initially during the enlightenment with the institution of mercantile capitalism. These two developments combined to produce a situation where machines not only could, but *should* be used to replace humans at manufacturing tasks independent of the natural environment.²⁶¹ The maladaptation of the older social contracts

²⁶⁰ This might well explain the centralization of cannon ball manufacture well before that of bullet production. Cast iron cannon balls require a drop height of ~200 feet, while hand cast bullets were still being produced by some individual soldiers in preference to issue cartridges at the end of the Napoleonic wars and even into the American Civil war. Certainly the increasing use of wrought-iron required a factory system, as did the production of increasingly large bore guns both for shipboard and shore battery use. For more on the economic/organizational efficiency argument, see Langlois (1996).

²⁶¹ This is, of course, a vast simplification of the factors involved. For a more detailed examination of the technological factors involved, see Pacey (1991), for the organizational factors, see Braverman (1974), and for the social factors, see Polanyi (1944).

to the new social environment produced during this period are well known and described in many places (e.g. Braverman, 1974; Polanyi, 1944).

Despite the requirement for a factory system, there was no consequent requirement for a rationalization of employment practices. Indeed, in many industries the "putting-out system", and its variants, were operational well into the final stages of the Middle Industrial Age (cf. Braverman, 1974:60-63). This type of "work" was in keeping with the original meaning of the words "job".

6.4.3 Changes in the European cognized environment

The third key change brought about during the Early Industrial Age was the introduction of a series of shifts in the cognized environment. While the Early Industrial Age saw many shifts in the cognized environment, there are three areas that are of prime important for us: transportation, communications, and geographical access.

The primary shift in transportation was the shift towards steam powered land and sea transport, allowing for a standardization of timetables and the creation of an expectation of schedules (cf. Hobsbawm, 1969:110-111). This standardization is most readily apparent in the development of rail and inland water systems, while ocean sea transport systems continued to be dependant, to some degree, upon weather conditions.

The period marked two major shifts in communications: a time-compression and the start of a spatial compression (cf. Innis, 1951). In part, these compressions relied on the ability of new transportation systems to deliver messages on a set schedule, thereby increasing the expectation of information delivery (e.g. the use of railroads to deliver the mail and newspapers to rural areas and other urban centers).

The second major factor in producing these compressions stemmed from the introduction and spread of telegraphic systems that allowed for the very rapid spread of important information. This factor increased in importance in EIA4 with the introduction of various electric telegraph systems, although general deployment of these systems didn't happen until the 1840's (Levinson, 1997: chap. 5).

The third area of change in the cognized environment was that of geographic access for Europeans. This change was brought about by two major factors. First, the extraction and production of artificial quinine in the 1820's allowed the European powers to enter areas of Africa and the Far East in force and to stay there (Headrick, 1981: chap. 3). The second factor was the deployment of steam powered gunships that allowed the European powers access to the interior of many parts of Africa and Asia in overwhelming force. The Opium Wars in China (1841-2) are an example of this (Headrick, 1981: chap. 2).

All of these shifts produced changes in the cognized environment in Europe and, especially, in England. These changes reinforced certain other changes that were happening as a result of changes in the production process. First, the gradual shift towards set work schedules (a disciplining of the workforce), introduced in the 17th century by the Methodists and in various European armies, was reinforced and solidified, although it was based more on production than on continuous labour.²⁶²

This shift towards set work schedules also marked a more general trend towards a standardization of social roles and a concomitant interest in social engineering, not only

²⁶² In other words, the work schedule could easily be applied to a putting out system as well as a continuous labour system.

in the area of "work" (e.g. Smith, 1981; Babbage, 1833), but also in the general ordering of society (e.g. Quetelet, 1842). This trend, which included the founding of much of the discipline of Sociology, served as a way both to attempt to understand and to control the social changes wrought by the early industrial revolution. The concept of "control", as espoused by Babbage (1833) and Quetelet (1842), is crucial in that it provides the basis for the meme complex that later becomes Scientific Management (e.g. Taylor, 1911).

The second major shift in the cognized environment related to a globalization of outlook, rather than production. While a number of European powers had had a "global" outlook during the Mercantile Capitalist period (e.g. Britain, the Netherlands, France), the opening of new areas in Africa and the Far East for colonization and colonial control increased this view. In particular, the regularization of communication and transportation allowed for a centralization of production in the core countries (e.g. the ship construction industry in Britain; cf. Headrick, 1981: chaps. 9, 12). At the same time, the new colonial areas, especially in Africa, allowed access to incredible sources of natural resources.

While this globalizing view would not dominate production in the Early Industrial Age, at least outside of textiles, it did serve to extend the range of perception of the industrial nations. At the same time, it also served as a spur for the campaigns of colonial conquest marked by breechloading rifles and steam powered gunships that are a hallmark of the Middle Industrial Age.

6.4.4 Summarizing the shifts in the Early Industrial Age

The Early Industrial Age strengthened a number of trends ("isomorphic vectors") that had existed in the Mercantile Capitalist Age. In particular, it encouraged five main trends:

- a shift from a rural population to an urban population;
- a shift of production to a factory system;
- the development of work schedules based on production;
- the standardization of commodity and information distribution; and
- an increasingly globalized worldview.

Each of these trends reinforced the ongoing transformation of the process of labour that had started in the 17th century: a shift from "jobs" to "employment". By the end of the Early Industrial Age, this transformation had been completed, at least in its general form: most people were employed in occupations with defined work production requirements even if that occupation was only "general labourer".

The last phase of the Early Industrial Age also marked the shift from textile industrialism to the production of capital goods and the primacy of iron, steel, coal and railways that mark the Middle Industrial Age.

6.5 The Middle Industrial Age

As the market becomes more extensive, large-scale industry appears. The effect of it is to transform the relationship between employers and the workers. The greater fatigue occasioned to the nervous system, linked to the contagious influence of large urban areas, causes the needs of the workers to increase. Machine work replaces that of the man, manufacturing that of the small workshop. The worker is regimented, removed for the whole day from his family. He lives ever more apart from the person who employs him, etc. These new conditions of industrial life naturally require a new organization. Yet because these transformations have been accomplished with extreme rapidity the conflicting interests have not had time to strike an equilibrium.

Durkheim, 1984[1893]:305-306

The middle Industrial Age was, as Durkheim noted in Book 3 of *The Division of Labor in Society*, a transition phase which had "... not had time to strike an equilibrium."

Indeed, much of the Middle Industrial Age is characterized not only by rapid social and technological change, but by the search for an appropriate form for an "equilibrium" - and this equilibrium was as much a matter of politics as technology.

The key developments in the Middle Industrial Age are shown in Table 6.

Table 6: Stages and Key Developments in the Middle Industrial Age

Stage	Dates	Key Developments
Middle Industrial Age 1	1849-1860	Spread of capital goods industrialization Spread of electric telegraph systems Iron steamer becomes the "standard ship" Submarine cable systems (local, short range) Bessemer process steel Minié (1848/9) and Enfield rifles (1853) Application of the American System to gun making and other goods (mass production of interchangeable parts) Photography (esp. the negative process)
MIA 2	1861-1872	Solidification of central governments (e.g. US civil war, unification of Germany and Italy, establishment of national census bureaus) Introduction of "ironclads" Permanent ocean submarine cable systems (intercontinental, long range) Battle of Sadowa (1866) - started constant army rearmament program in European armies Development of brass cartridges Introduction of repeating rifles Introduction of rapid-fire weapons (e.g. the Montigny Mitrailleuse machinegun)
MIA 3	1873-1893	Refinement of rapid-fire weapons (e.g. Maxim gun, 1884) Direct link submarine cables Steel ships Mass production cameras - Kodak box camera (1889) Telephone (1876) Phonograph (1877) Electric lighting (carbon filament lamp - 1879)
MIA 4	1893-1914	Wireless telegraphy (1895 - local, 1901 transatlantic) Scientific Management

6.5.1 Changes in technology and the organization of work

Most of the vectors established in the Early Industrial Age continued to strengthen during the Middle Industrial Age: the shifts from rural to urban and to a factory system; the development of work schedules based on production; standardization of distribution; and an increasingly globalized worldview, and technological development, both civilian and military, reflected these vectors.

6.5.2 Standardization and Mass Production

The early phases of the Middle Industrial Age (MIA 1 and MIA 2) are characterized by the development and deployment of mass production techniques, especially in the areas of transportation and military production.

The concepts of "standardization" and "mass production" tend to go hand in hand: standardized parts allow for mass production and vice versa. This was especially true in the area of military production. The Battle of Sadowa (1866) made it obvious to all European powers that breech-loading rifles were absolutely necessary for military survival, and started an arms race that continues to this day.²⁶³

But the mass deployment of military power required a similar mass deployment of production and distribution: military logistics. This, in turn, led to the rapid development of military depot and rail transport networks in much of continental Europe.²⁶⁴

6.5.3 Transportation and Communications

The MIA 3 period saw the deployment of extensive, empire-spanning, undersea cable systems which, when coupled with the increasing use of coal powered fleets (both merchant and military), brought all of the world into quick transport and communication distance. Despite empire-based tariff systems, the MIA marks the creation of an economically feasible world trade market, albeit one that was still not integrated.

²⁶³ The Battle of Sadowa took place in the Austro-Prussian war. Sadowa was marked by a 20:1 kill ratio where the Prussians, using breechloading rifles, annihilated the Austrians using muzzle loading rifles and smooth bores. The realization that a Great Power could have their field army destroyed in a day sent a shock throughout Europe.

²⁶⁴ Britain, which has traditionally relied on its navy for defense, concentrated on a naval depot system, especially coaling stations, and the creation of a rail transport networks was limited to the Dominions and certain core colonial areas (e.g. India).

The extensive logistics networks also created an environment in which it was possible to conduct a global military campaign which could be centrally managed and reported. Dispatches from colonial conflicts such as the Boer War would be available to all parts of the imperial communications networks with days. This capability for central management, along with a desire for greater control precision, becomes a hallmark of the late MIA period in both the military and corporate sphere.

6.5.4 Changes in the cognized environment

The Middle Industrial Age is the first true period of globalized communications, allowing those who live in the core regions to vicariously experience life in both combat zones and in peripheral areas. It should come as no surprise that the MIA saw the development of both journalism and Anthropology in Europe since for the first time immediate events could be captured both in words and in pictures.²⁶⁵

The cognized environment of people living in the core imperial areas (i.e. Europe, the USA, and core colonial centers) is marked by an increasing awareness of events both locally and globally. The MIA 3 and 4 periods are also marked by an increasing unrest with the social effects of industrialization, and various social movements designed to alleviate these effects. One of the effects of these social movements was the spread of alternate forms of work organization ranging from profit sharing (Monroe, 1896; Howearth, 1896) to contract work to full employment.

²⁶⁵ Consider, by way of example, the use of early photographic equipment to record the Crimean War including the consequent popularization of the profession of nursing. For Anthropology, consider the fundraising efforts of the London Missionary Society and their spread of popular interest in "primitive peoples" (cf. Kuper, 1988).

6.5.5 Summarizing the shifts in the Middle Industrial Age

The Middle Industrial Age is characterized by an increasing depth and breadth of both communication and transportation networks. This is matched by a similar interest in the development of social planning and organizational centralization. The MIA is also characterized by a search for a form of work organization that would redress some of the key problems of industrialization. Of particular note, is the systematic use of all of these factors to open up new markets - niches for industrial production and consumption, and the proliferation of new forms of consumer goods.

6.6 The Late Industrial Age

The Late Industrial Age concentrated on the mass production of consumer goods and services. The Late Industrial Age centered on the increased abstraction and codification of work task related knowledge, coupled with a shift from a social contract based on exchange to one based on redistribution. The stages in the Late Industrial Age are summarized in Table 7

Table 7: Stages and Key Developments in the Late Industrial Age

Stage	Dates	Stage	Dates
Late Industrial Age 1	1914-1929	LIA 4b	1960-1967
LIA 2	1930-1937	LIA 5a/ESA 1a	1968-1975
LIA 3	1938-1949	LIA 5b/ESA 1b	1976-1982
LIA 4a	1950-1959		

I have not included the key developments for this time period since there are too many to list.²⁶⁶ As far as core technological developments are concerned, we can point to

²⁶⁶ The interested reader is referred to Pacey (1991), chapters 9-11, and Levinson (1997) for an excellent synopsis and analysis of the development of technology during this period.

the development of semi-conductors, air travel, broadcast media, and the mass deployment of automobiles.

6.6.1 Changes in the organization of work - Redistributive Organizations

By the end of the Middle Industrial Age, one particular form of work organization was gaining popularity: Taylor's Scientific Management. While subject to many problems, it captured the support of many corporate leaders (cf. Braverman, 1974). The system itself was not new; indeed, a similar system had been in use in the military since the 17th century. Its adoption by corporations, however, allowed for an increasing centralization of industrial control, a pattern that was encouraged by the shift to a wartime economy in the late 1930's and early 1940's (see Braverman, 1974; Warner, 1963:301-354).

By the 1950's, this redistributive social contract had produced what Ruitbeek (1963) termed the "Organization Society", inhabited by the "Organization Man" (Whyte 1956; Granick, 1960). The organization had become the primary environment in which individuals competed, and which provided the major arena for individual self-definition (Whyte 1956; Osterman 1984; Tyrrell 1996a, 1996b). This period is characterized by a social contract wherein loyalty to and conformity with the expectations of the organization are exchanged in return for security (Kalleberge, Knoke and Marsden 1995 (Bennet, 1990; Grossman, 1988; Morin, 1991; Tyrrell, 1994; see section 7.2).

6.6.2 Work and Unemployment: 1960-1980

The LIA 4 period, and LIA 4b in particular, mark the highpoint of the Late Industrial age. The promise of the Industrial Age is clearly reflected in the duration of

unemployment figures from the LIA 4b period (cf. Figure 6-I). The trend shown clearly is not only towards decreasing unemployment, but also towards a decreasing duration of unemployment.

Figure 6-I: Duration of Unemployment, LIA 4b

This situation started to change radically in Canada at the end of the 1960's when shrinking markets, foreign competition and overproduction, coupled with the aftereffects of a merger mania in the mid 60's, all combined to eliminate large numbers of positions from every occupational grouping, including executive positions.

The initial part of this phase, LIA 5a/ESA 1a (1968-1975), marked an increasing period of uncertainty for everyone, regardless of their occupation. In addition to international events such as the end of the Vietnam War, the Oil Crisis, and double-digit inflation, the unemployment picture in Canada worsened in both total number and duration (see Figure 7-II). For the first time in decades, many managers and executives found themselves out of work.

Figure 6-II: Duration of unemployment, LIA 5a

It is during the LIA 5a/ESA 1a phase that we start to see outplacement developing in Canada. This phase is absolutely crucial for that development, since it is when the "promise" of the LIA 4 social contract becomes clearly broken. At the same time, the introduction, on a mass scale, of mini-computers along with the spread of telecommunications technologies and rapid transport allow companies to increase the span of control of individual executives (cf. 6.7, 7.4.1).

This trend increased dramatically in LIA 5b, and culminated in the worst unemployment in Canada since the great depression. As I will show in Chapter 7, while much of the rhetorical and legal groundwork leading to the development of outplacement as a stable industry takes place during the LIA 5a/ESA 1a period, it is during LIA 5b/ESA 1b that the major rhetorical construction takes place. Even if the unemployment figures coming out of the LIA 5a/ESA 1a period could have been explained away as a temporary aberration, those of the LIA 5b/ESA 1b period, and especially those from 1980 onwards, clearly indicated that the entire world of work was restructuring.

Figure 6-III: Duration of Unemployment, LIA 5b

6.6.3 Summarizing the shifts in the Late Industrial Age

The late Industrial Age has been characterized by a number of trends in three general areas. First, there has been a generalized replacement of human with machine labour. Second, the cognized and operational environments of most large organizations have been extended to encompass the entire globe and low Earth orbit. Third, there has been a centralization and intensification of C³ functions (Command, Control, and Communications) and, in many cases, a shifting of these functions from humans to digital technologies, especially in LIA 4 and 5 (e.g. expert systems).

6.7 The Early Silicon Age

The culmination of these trends, the Early Silicon Age, is characterized by several key structures. First, the productive capacity of the Late Industrial Age sectors of the economy far exceeds the possible demand, while this situation is reversed in the service

and information/knowledge intensive sectors of the economy (cf. Rifkin, 1994). This can be seen in the rapid development and growth of the so-called “high technology” sectors: computers, robotics, bio-technology (both genetic engineering and medical technology), and precision (micro-) instrumentation (Beck 1992). It can also be seen in the chronic labour shortages currently reported in these sectors.

Second, the destruction of trust in the bureaucratic organizational forms and the social contracts of the Late Industrial Age have produced a situation of generalized uncertainty. Rather than placing faith in organizations, individuals are forced to be reliant on personal networks and communities (see sections 5.4, 7.7, and Chapter 9). The newly developing social contract places trust in the individual and personal networks over the organization and can be characterized as operating on reciprocity (cf. Sahlins, 1972; Mauss, 1990; for a detailed discussion, see Tyrrell, 1995; see section 7.7 and Chapter 9).

Third, the development and deployment of rapid, interactive communications technologies, especially communications technologies such as the Internet, Intranets, EDI, and the World Wide Web has produced new environments which give many people unprecedented access to specialized communities of interest and general knowledge (see section 9.3.1).²⁶⁷

While it is difficult to create an exact timetable for the Early Silicon Age, In general the ESA 1 period is the same as the LIA 5 period (1968-1980) and is marked by

²⁶⁷ While these electronic communication networks are by no means the only new forms of community, they are amongst the most readily observable and accessible. The deployment of electronic communication networks is similar to the deployment of the printing press at the end of the 15th century that heralded the burgeoning of mercantile capitalism (Nicolli 1990; Ong 1982; McLuhan 1962). They are media in which and through which people can access and spread information and ideas at a speed that is an order of magnitude faster than that of the previous era.

the introduction of fibre-optic communications, the initial development of computer WAN's (Wide Area Networks) such as ARPANET, the rapid spread of mini-computers (e.g. the IBM AS 400), and the development of early personal computers.

The ESA 2 period is somewhat easier to locate in time, starting in approximately 1981 with the general availability of personal computers, and coinciding with a wave of restructurings across industries (cf. Beck, 1992), and ending with the deployment of the World Wide Web in late 1992. The ESA 3 period starts with the deployment of the WWW and may or may not be over.²⁶⁸

The Early Silicon Age is characterized by a number of social "readjustments" (cf. Rikin, 1994). Rather than attempt to outline them here, I believe that it would be better to move on to the analysis of the outplacement industry, since many of the characteristics will be brought out in Chapters 7 and 8. In particular, the central shift towards reciprocity systems noted above and presented in detail in Chapter 9, is more readily comprehensible after reading Chapters 7 and 8.

6.8 Summary and Conclusions

The purpose of this chapter has been to outline the historical context leading up to the development of the outplacement industry. In particular, section 6.1 produced a general mechanism of diffusion that matches the models of variation and mutation in subsection 1.2.2.2 and, according to Solomonou (1987), explains the observed shifts in innovation and economic growth better than other models.

²⁶⁸ It is likely that the end of the ESA 3 period will coincide with the general shift towards ecommerce at the retail level.

Sections 6.4, 6.5, and 6.6 trace the general history of technological development through the Industrial Age in order to show the development of particular isomorphic vectors that culminate in the development of the Early Silicon Age (section 6.7). I have concentrated the analysis presented in these sections on technological developments, since these serve as the selection criteria for organizations: faster communications, transport and data processing.

The shift to the Early Silicon Age, however, is marked by the "culmination" of the selective process; a catastrophe point that, in many cases, leads to local extinctions, especially of the social contract developed during the LIA 4 period (see Chapter 7). The extinction of this social contract created an empty niche relating to the unemployed and allowed for the niche to be parcellated between governments, unions, self-help groups, head hunters, and the outplacement industry. The interactions between these groups, and the continuing isomorphic vectors in communications and, in particular, in the development of computers and data interchange, produces a situation leading to a convergent evolutionary pressure in forms of exchange (see Chapter 9).

7 LIA 5/ESA 1: The Rhetorical Construction of Outplacement

In this chapter, I will discuss how Outplacement and, in particular, the role of the outplacement or relocation counselor, was constructed. The focus for the majority of the chapter is on the early period when the industry was first coming into existence, and deals with the time period of 1968 to 1982(LIA 5/ESA 1). It is during this period that we start to see the collapse of the post-war compromise and the destruction of several of the defining memes of the Late Industrial Age 4 social contract including the loyalty for security meme. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the situation of executives. For most of the Late Industrial Age 4, executives were rarely let go unless they either had a job to go to immediately or for incompetence.

The entire LIA 5/ESA 1 period marks major shifts both in how the employment relationship of executives and their companies and how unemployment itself are conceived. This change is, in part, chronicled in the pages of a number of key business newspapers and magazines, most notably in *Executive*, the *Financial Post*, *The Financial Times of Canada*, and the *Globe and Mail*.

7.1 Constructing Meaning and Jurisdictional Claims

I have considered the construction and change of communicated meaning in different forms and at different analytic levels in four other places so far in this dissertation. In section 2.4, this was discussed in the frame of memes. In sub-section 3.3.3, I drew on Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) to talk about the neuro-linguistic environment "inhabited", in part, by the semantic reactions and "semantic webs" (quasi-stable collections of semantic reactions) discussed in section 4.3. When considered at the

overt, observable social level, the interaction of all of these different levels produces the process of social construction discussed in sub-section 5.1.1.

When considered *en masse*, each of these levels of analysis serves as a precursor level to the next: memes and memetic complexes lead to the production of representational strategies (NLP) that, in turn, contain, reproduce and strengthen semantic reactions and produce semantic webs. The manipulation and transformation of these semantic webs then follows a process of social construction, at least at the macro-level, my manipulating the memes, representational strategies, and semantic reactions.

As I noted in section 5.1, social constructionist analysis aims to identify the grounds, warrants and claims that form the rhetorical positioning of actors involved in the process of socially constructing a claim. The goal of such analyses is to produce an interpretation of the process and rhetoric of construction. In actual fact, numerous social constructionist analyses go much further by drawing in additional information from many other sources, usually contextualization material, in order to produce a plausible analysis aimed at accounting for all of the facts in evidence.

The aim of producing a plausible analysis rather than a true analysis draws on the work of Carlo Ginzburg (cf. Muir and Ruggiero, 1991). Simply put, the basic criterion for deciding plausibility is to both show formal structural similarities of a subject and to demonstrate by external evidence that the interpretation is plausible. The final guard against circularity is "Ginzburg's Razor" which is expressed as follows: "other things

being equal, the interpretation that requiring [the] fewest hypotheses should generally be taken as the most probable." (Muir and Ruggiero, 1991:xix).²⁶⁹

Figure 7-I: The claims-making process

Source: Best (1987:102)

Let us return, for a minute, to the basic constructionist methodology outlined by Best (1987; see Figure 8-I). All conclusions or "claims" are based on initial grounds as filtered through specific warrants. The process of manipulating popular understanding, the relation of a particular subject, the "problem", with other areas of the local semantic web, involves the transformation of certain grounds and the application of specific warrants such that the conclusion or claim is "obvious" and "logical". It is worthwhile going into each of these three components involved in the methodology, and linking it more tightly into the model outlined above.

One key change in constructionist methodology needs to be highlighted. In section 3.3.3 I discussed the concept of representational strategies, according to neuro-linguistic programming. In short, "representational strategies" refers to the storage and processing of sensory stimuli. Bandler and Grinder (1979) have argued that in order to communicate well with another person, you must match their internal representational strategy. A

²⁶⁹ For more on the philosophical position behind this, see the introduction to Muir and Reggiero, 1991.

simple extension of this observation, when coupled with the well know fact that groups tend to produce specialized "language", leads us to the supposition that there may well be representational biases in different forms of communications - representational "genres" as it were. This supposition is well supported in the popular literature relating to outplacement and discussed in each of the following sections.

The model shown in 8-I starts with the establishment of the grounds upon which the argument rests. For Best (1987), these grounds are divided into two main types: definitions and extent estimates, each of which is further subdivided.

Definitions are composed of three main types: domain and orientation statements which "define" the "placement" of the problem and examples which illustrate the problem. Domain statements serve to define the boundary of the subject. In effect, they state the discrimination memes that will serve as the boundaries of a topological event-space that defines the subject. Orientation statements are also discrimination memes but, rather than defining the boundaries of a topological event-space, they serve to define the relationship between that space and other, more recognizable, event-spaces.

For example, in considering the case of child abuse the definition of "abuse" was extended to include areas, such as spanking, that had previously not been considered abuse while, at the same time, transforming the orientation of the problem from a moral/spiritual/personal discipline problem to one of medicine/psychology (Johnson, 1989). The transformation of orientation served to shift the charter for operations in the area from moral/spiritual/religious specialists to medical/psychiatric specialists.

It is in the area of orientational definition that we can clearly see the links between the social constructionist position and the methodology of studying professions advocated by

Abbott (1988). For Abbott, conflicts over orientation grounds are the basis of jurisdictional claims by professional organizations (cf. Abbott, 1988: chapter 3). And, when we look at the development of the outplacement industry, we can clearly see evidence of several jurisdictional/orientation claim fights (e.g. between Forty-Plus and the nascent outplacement industry; see 7.3.3 and 7.3.4).

For Best (1987:106), examples "... do not merely attract attention; they also shape the perception of the problem." And, while several constructionist papers (e.g. Johnson, 1989; Gusfield, 1981) consider the role of atrocity tales in detail, they do not consider other types of tales which also form examples. In particular, the constructionists do not examine *imrama*²⁷⁰ and the use of other genres. Indeed, when we look at the different types of rhetorical genres used in the construction of outplacement, we find that there are four major types: wonder tales (7.3), atrocity tales (7.4), and mystery plays (7.6)

As with definitions, extent estimates are also of several types: incidence estimates, growth estimates, and range claims (e.g. discrimination of victims). One key point is that all of these extent estimates assume that the source under study is a "problem". This is a natural outgrowth of the process of social construction, where the extent estimates are manipulated to "produce" the "problem" in the first place.²⁷¹ In most cases, any specific

²⁷⁰ The term *imrama* is Irish Gaelic for a cluster of story genres that may be loosely translated as "journey tales". As such, it includes chronicles, epics, wonder tales, and certain types of atrocity tales. In many of the Celtic originals, there is an imposition of the "otherworld" into the journey, and this is especially true in the genre of wonder tales, although it is present in all of them.

²⁷¹ In other words, the manipulation of extent estimates is designed to claim the largest range possible for the problem and, by extension, for the "solution". This is a clear example of attempting to extend the jurisdictional claims of a professional group or alliance of such groups, by definition.

estimates must be considered as under suspicion. This is especially true in the case of estimates of executive unemployment, which rely on official figures from the Labour Force Survey (LFS) and semi-official figures from the Technical Services Council (TCS).

The problem with these figures lies in the construction and presentation of the data. For example, executives are grouped together with clerical workers before March, 1974 into a single category in the LFS. A second problem that appears after the 1974 revision is that the number of cases involved in the new "management" category is quite small, at least for the 1974-1976 period. These, and other, problems serve to reduce the predictive validity of the LFS, at least as far as executives are concerned.

But if the predictive validity of the LFS is open to question for executive unemployment, it is still useful in terms of tracking the general trends in the duration of overall unemployment. In many ways, the lack of specific predictive ability of official figures actually aids in the rhetorical construction of outplacement by creating uncertainty. When this uncertainty is coupled with the general trends in unemployment duration, the effects of individual atrocity tales is increased. This tactic has a tendency to appear both in the form of "fuzzy" numbers – "scores of hundreds" rather than 2.1% - and in various forms of "prophetic" writings.²⁷²

²⁷² The term "prophetic" is used with both biblical and "sorcerous" connotations. Andreski (1972:92) has noted that the

"... scientific method has triumphed throughout the world because it bestowed upon those practiced it power over those who did not. Sorcery lost, not because of any waning of its intrinsic appeal to the human mind, but because it failed to match the power created by science. But, though abandoned as a tool for controlling nature, incantations remain more effective for manipulating crowds than logical arguments, so that in the conduct of human affairs sorcery continues to be stronger than science."

The "sorcerous" element apparent in many discussions surrounding business, including unemployment, is quite common. Consider, by way of example, the numbers of business "gurus" who have appeared over the past several decades.

This same tactic, the coupling of uncertainty with general trends, was noted by Best (1987) in the construction of the missing children problem. The tactic has a tendency to work well (i.e. to increase tension and “awareness” of the “problem”), especially in the case of outplacement, as long as two conditions hold. First, the general trend of unemployment duration must continue to increase both numerically and as a percentage. This means that increasing numbers of people will be aware of someone they know who has spent a “long time” looking for work, as well as providing “official support” for the problem. The second condition that must hold is that there is no particular institution responsible for handling the problem that is generally accepted as being efficacious in relieving the “suffering of the victims”. If the second condition does not hold, then we are dealing with a jurisdictional claims fight rather than with the construction of a “new” problem.

In fact, the general acceptance of a jurisdictional claim is the entire aim behind the construction of the problem in the first place. Clearly, the acceptance of a range claim for a “problem” will serve to define that problem as “normal” and the “change” to have been radical or revolutionary. Indeed, in order for a jurisdictional claim to be held, such range claims must be accepted and normalized. As such, the bridging mechanisms would institutionalize themselves into the “new” E_c thereby enhancing the initial claims, both jurisdictional and constructional.

The *de facto*, and sometimes *de jure*, acceptance of jurisdictional claims should, all else being equal, end the phase of rhetorical construction and inaugurate a phase of rhetorical maintenance and defense of the new jurisdictional claims. This phase shift is marked, according to Best (1987) by a shift from a rhetoric of rectitude (an early,

moralistic claims making form) to a rhetoric of rationality (later, pragmatic claims making activities), and this is true of most post-1982 writing on outplacement.

In the following sub-sections, I consider four different genres - wonder tales (7.3), atrocity tales in the business press (7.4) and the courts (7.5), and mystery plays (7.6) in addition to examining the representational strategies used in these genres (7.9). All of the material in these stories, however, is produced in reaction to components of the LIA 4 social contract, its core memes, and it is worth examining these in somewhat greater detail.

7.1.1 A note on the selection of sources for this chapter

The data for this chapter was collected by searching the Canadian Business Periodicals Index initially from in 1974 to 1983.²⁷³ The search was conducted using the keywords "dismissal", "employment", "executive", "firing", "outplacement", and "unemployment" (including combinations). Search terms also included the names of key players (e.g. Murray Axmith and Eric Barton) and companies (e.g. *Stevenson & Kellogg*). It rapidly became apparent that the vast majority of items (82.5 %; see Table 8) appeared in four main publications: *Executive*, the *Financial Post*, *The Financial Times of Canada*, and the *Globe and Mail*.

This time period was initially decided upon since the crucial period for the construction of the outplacement industry is before early 1983, by which point the

²⁷³ The CBPI started in 1974 and was superceded in 1987 by the American Business Index, which is available in a computer searchable form.

industry was well established.²⁷⁴ While the industry was "officially" started in 1975,²⁷⁵ certain elements that were later contained in the industry, and much of the "atrocious tales" (see sub-sections 7.4 and 7.5) were established before the industry came into existence. This is typical of the process of the construction of a social "need" (see section 5.1). As a result of this tendency of "prefiguring", I scanned back issue copies and microfiche of *Executive*, the *Financial Post*, *The Financial Times of Canada*, and the *Globe and Mail* from 1969 to 1974. One point that became obvious as a result of this scan was that only *Executive* was especially concerned with the problems of unemployed executives.²⁷⁶

Many of the articles that showed up in the searches were not relevant: short notes on the unemployment rate, stories concerning unemployment insurance, strikes, and changes in the measurement of unemployment. After excluding these, I was left with 160 articles for the period from 1969 to 1983 (see Table 8). Of these 160 articles, 45 were from *Executive* (28.125%), 21 from the *Globe & Mail* (14.375%), 38 from *The Financial Times of Canada* (23.75%), 26 from *The Financial Post* (16.25%), and 28 from other sources (17.5%).

²⁷⁴ The exact date is impossible to pin down, since general acceptance relied on both changes in the legal code, commonlaw, and the general culture of Canadian business executive. All informant agreed that outplacement was accepted "sometime around the end of 1982".

²⁷⁵ In actuality, two different firms started at around the same time in the fall of 1975: Murray Axmith and Stevenson & Kellogg.

²⁷⁶ A not unsurprising observation, since *Executive* is concerned primarily with issues facing executives in Canada. Even the two articles from the *Globe & Mail* that appeared in 1971 were concerned with job opportunity loss and the restoration of executive salaries in the United States.

After examining each of these 160 articles, a second cut was made based on three criteria: relevance to outplacement,²⁷⁷ wrongful dismissal, and the "plight" of unemployed executives. This second cut left 70 articles which were directly relevant to the research. A third, and final, cut was based on the time of publication, with earlier articles being favoured over later articles, and later articles being included if and only if they contained material that had not already been included elsewhere.

Table 8: Articles and Sources

Year	Articles	Exec.	G & M	Fin. T.	Fin. P.	Other
1969	0					
1970	1	1				
1971	7	5	2			
1972	2	2				
1973	3	3				
1974	2	2				
1975	7	1	1		4	1
1976	16	1	2	7	4	2
1977	13	4	4	2	1	2
1978	31	1	1	17	7	5
1979	11		4	5	2	
1980	15	2	2	7 ¹	2	2
1981	10	2	1		3	4
1982	37	16 ²	6		3	12
1983 ³	5	5 ²				
Total	160	45	23	38	26	28
Notes: Includes 5 articles from the April 14 th Human Resources special supplement. Includes Brian Grossman's monthly column of employment law. Numerous articles on unemployment in general not included.						

There is some difficulty with relying on printed articles in order to examine the rhetorical construction of outplacement. Much of the communication between executives, especially those who are members of the economic elite, takes place in private (see Clement, 1975:243, 247-249). Indeed, one interesting indication of how

²⁷⁷ Defined by either mentioning outplacement or a related endeavour (e.g. Forty-Plus; see subsection 7.3.3).

much of the rhetorical construction of outplacement took place "behind the scenes" is the fact that Eric Barton, who developed outplacement for Stevenson & Kellog in 1975, is not mentioned in any article until July, 1977 (Irvine, 1977).²⁷⁸

This is not to say that using printed articles in an effort to get at the rhetorical construction of outplacement is useless - far from it. The articles serve as focal points for private conversations (i.e. items which can be pointed to and last across time). Some of them (e.g. Axmith, 1975; NFB, 1981) are masterpieces of rhetoric, combining logic and emotional appeals in ways that can transform the audience. Even if the articles were not the sole arena in which outplacement was constructed, they are certainly a good exemplar and illustration of some of the debates that took place "behind the scenes".

7.2 Core memes of the LIA 4 social contract

While I have already discussed the development of the LIA 4 social contract elsewhere (cf. section 6.6), it is worthwhile revisiting it to extract its core memes and general memetic structuring. In general, we can identify certain primary meme complexes and other secondary complexes that are directly related to firing. Since this is not a dissection on the development of the LIA 4 social contract, the descriptions presented here are, of necessity, limited.

7.2.1 Primary Meme complexes of the LIA 4 social contract

There are two primary meme complexes, along with their corollaries, with which we are concerned, namely

²⁷⁸ Several informants noted that Barton hated the limelight and would work away steadily contacting forty or more people a day by telephone.

1. The permanence of the organization,²⁷⁹ and
2. The concept of "salvation" or self-meaning through work.²⁸⁰

The concept of corporate permanence is designed to reflect the power and prestige of the corporation/organization. In general terms, it is unimportant if the organization is a government, a private corporation, or a union. Consider, by way of example, the use of such phrases as "Big Business", "Big Government", etc.

Permanent organizations may serve as a source of stability for individuals within the social landscape, and this is certainly the image many organizations tried to project in the LIA 4 period (cf. Whyte, 1956). This permanence, especially when coupled with a strongly bureaucratic organizational form, allows for the existence of easily perceptible, formalized career paths (a characteristic noted by Weber, 1947:363-372). As such, they act to provide a stable platform in which and through which numerous *cursus vivorem* may be instantiated (cf. 5.5.5). When this permanence of organization and, by extension, of career paths exists, then the organization will come to have specific jurisdiction claims of career development (cf. the concept of the Organization Man; Whyte, 1956).

Organizational jurisdictional claims over career development are strengthened in the absence of competing jurisdictional claims from, for example, unions and professional associations. And this was clearly the case when we consider the position of executives and upper level management who were subject to few, if any, outside

²⁷⁹ Or, rather, the illusion of permanence such that the organization serves as a being that is "greater" than the individual, allowing them to be subsumed within it.

²⁸⁰ Or, in other words, Weber's (1958) concept of the Protestant Ethic or, as it was phrased at the private school I went to "present pain for future gain".

jurisdictions surrounding their careers. In fact, the only major extra-organizational jurisdictional claims most executives were subject to was the "old boys network".²⁸¹

The main expression of organizational jurisdictional claims over career development for executives shows up in what I have called the "loyalty for security" meme (Tyrrell, 1994).²⁸² Simply put, the meme says that as long as you follow orders and remain loyal, then the company will take care of you. This meme also appears in Christian theology in the guise of "faith in God" where the proof of the faith is in the objective results (cf. Weber, 1958:114).

The second primary meme complex derives from the Protestant ethic (Weber, 1958). Simply put, it is a complex that says that self-meaning derives from work. It should be noted that while the origin is based in theology, most of the LIA 4 expressions of it are secular. There are several major corollaries of this meme that are important for our purposes.

First, there is the concept of a "calling" or "vocation". While this is normally discussed in vaguely supernatural terms, it can be reduced to a general statement that some extra-human agency has already decided what an individual's *cursus vivorum* (see sub-section 5.5.5) will be. Since these are controlled by organizations in the LIA 4 period, it naturally follows that the organization will define your career. Indeed, there is a connotation of immorality in disagreeing with the organization on this point.

²⁸¹ See, for example, Clement (1975), especially on career paths via kinship networks (pp. 183-187) and on the effects of private schools (pp. 240-247).

²⁸² This meme is not the exclusive property of the LIA 4 social contract, but seems to appear in all instances of redistributive organizations and cases where the authority ranking social relationship (cf. 2.2.2.2) is predominantly instantiated.

Figure 7-II: LIA 4 meme complex

A second corollary concerns faith: since the organization provides the place for defining self-meaning, and since the organization defines the paths to achieve this, one must have faith in the organization and follow its dictates. While this "faith in the organization" meme is subject to other jurisdictional claims, it also serves as one of the moral bases for the loyalty for security meme. One point that needs to be made clearly is that the "work equals self-meaning" meme is logically prior to and independent of the permanence of organization meme.

The primary memetic complexes discussed in this section are shown in Figure 7-II. Next we need to consider the secondary meme complexes relating directly to firings and the unemployed.

7.2.2 Secondary Memes relating to firings and the unemployed

The main secondary meme we are concerned with is a binary opposition emotive meme which can be stated as "employment is good; unemployment is bad". This binary meme derives in part from the Protestant ethic discussed above, but appears in a secularized format. Since the assumption of employment is based on employment by an

organization, we can state that this binary meme also derives from the jurisdictional claims of organizations to define careers.²⁸³

The first corollary of this meme is that terminations, as a source of unemployment, must be “evil”. Terminations, as such, must be viewed as a breach of the social contract embodied in the loyalty for security meme. If a termination occurs, it must be as a result of an employee breach of contract, since for the company to admit to fault would undermine their claims to stability. The result of this “logic” is the “at fault” meme, which basically states that if you are unemployed, it is your fault (see *Executive* 1971b, 1972; Westcott, 1975).

The final secondary meme is a strategy meme that states that a person being fired should make no complaint about the situation. The rationale for this meme is that if one does complain, then the old boys network will shun him and make it very difficult to find work. A terminated executive who “takes it like a gentleman” and who accepts the company’s decision may have a reduced stigma, since he may be taken as a martyr – proving his “faith” by accepting social “death”.²⁸⁴

²⁸³ There are also certain obvious cases where one is not employed, but one is also not unemployed. In LIA 4 definitions, these tend to be fairly simplistic – retirement, student status and, for many women, “housewives”. Note that all of these exceptions are linked to the prescriptive categories of age or gender.

²⁸⁴ Personally, I never found this to be a convincing meme and I have run across few people who do. It does, however, have the advantage of making the person firing you appear to be the “bad guy”, and may allow you to get more out of your termination than would otherwise be possible (cf. *Executive*, 1973b). The meme itself is not present in many articles, although I have heard it expressed in conversations a few times. For a rather twisted corollary of this meme based on tax laws, see sub-section 7.5.2 and Moauro (1978)

7.2.3 Summation

In the past section, I have tried to extricate the main memes from the LIA 4 social contract and show how they are interlinked.²⁸⁵ In the following sections, I will be discussing how these memes are treated in the period from 1968 to 1982, and how the conflict surrounding them is used to create the jurisdictional claims of the outplacement industry. Each of the following sections deals with a particular genre of story appearing in the popular business press: wonder tales (7.3), atrocity tales in the press (7.4) and in courts (7.5), and the final genre of mystery plays (7.6).

7.3 Wonder tales

Wonder tales are the core stories of how to achieve certain specific ends outside of, or in spite of current structural strictures. They are the stories that come to define the possibility for leaving the cognized environment in order to affect some change. They tell the story of the journey out of the cognized environment, through a liminal phase, and the subsequent return to that cognized environment as a socially transformed person. In other words, wonder tales are the core exoteric stories of many types of rites of passage, especially those of the initiatory type (cf. section 1.1.4). Wonder tales also serve to symbolically mark and identify the core stages in a rite of passage - the "blazes" through liminality that mark out a particular path (cf. Turner, 1967) - even though they do not reveal all of the particulars of the journey.

²⁸⁵ It must be remembered that these memes and memetic complexes are ideals rather than actualities. Their power lies in how people have internalized them and, as a consequence, constructed their beliefs and perceptions of reality.

All wonder tales, according to Propp (1984:102), follow a particular structure that serves to define the meta-genre as a wonder tale. This structure consists of a minimum of five stages:

1. Harm or villainy done to the protagonist or a desire to accomplish something.
2. The dispatch of the protagonist.
3. An encounter with a donor and the gift of magical objects that will allow them to achieve their goal.
4. Finding the object of their quest and engaging in combat with an adversary.
5. A return, usually with a pursuit and escape sequence.

In the 1970's, a number of stories start appearing which come to define the exoteric story of outplacement and follow this exact structure. This is not only an interesting curiosity. Together with certain specific types of atrocity tales (cf. section 7.4), these wonder tales serve to define the future role of the outplacement counselor as shaman/donor and define a popular understanding of the "path" through unemployment.

7.3.1 Walden's tale

The scene for Walden's tale starts at the beginning in January 1971 with an article entitled "The high-price men take it in the chin" (*Executive*, 1971a). While the article discusses executive unemployment, one of its most important contributions to the future development of the outplacement industry is the following statement (*Executive*, 1971a:59).

If there is any comfort in this situation [economic turmoil leading to executive unemployment], it is knowing that executive unemployment is not a rare phenomenon now; and it is certainly not the social disgrace for the man and his family that it once was. Men are failing to cope with

situations today but more and more people recognize that this doesn't mean outright failure.

This statement, appearing in one of the largest magazines targeted to the executive market,²⁸⁶ states openly what many executives realized, but didn't wish to talk about openly - executive unemployment was rising rapidly. The article goes on to highlight several reasons for this rise in unemployment: mergers, increasing stress, and the "misfit" between a man's skills and his position.²⁸⁷ Two related articles appeared in the March issue of *Executive*: "The unwanted executive" (*Executive*, 1971b), and Walden's tale (*Executive*, 1971c)

One of the earliest wonder tales relating to outplacement, Walden's tale, appears four years before outplacement was created as a separate industry in Canada. Entitled "You find out who your friends are", this story deals with the trials and tribulations of Norman Walden whose journey begins in 1968.

I was with them [Reckitt & Colman Ltd. As V.P. Marketing] for 22 years until the end of 1968. There was a personality clash between myself and the president so I resigned. It was one of those situations where you know you aren't going to win. (*Executive*, 1971c:33)

At the time of his resignation, Walden was living in Montreal where the mood was swinging against non-French-Canadian's, especially in executive positions. "I remember quite vividly an issue of the *Financial Post* at the time, which had five career ads for executive positions piled one on top of another over two columns. Each ad was in

²⁸⁶ *Executive* had a circulation of roughly 50,000 per month in the 1970's.

²⁸⁷ Interestingly enough, there is little mention of the number one reason for executive unemployment - poor fit between the individual and his superiors/peers.

French." (*Executive*, 1971c:33). In addition to the language/culture problem, Walden was suffering from other problems (*Executive*, 1971c:33).

I had been looking for a job before I left the company but three months before quitting I was rushed to the hospital for an emergency operation, a situation almost totally created by my work environment. I came back to work too early and my health started to deteriorate again. Psychologically, I was very low. My work had been a large part of my life. You know you are going to leave the company but, when you do, it still comes as a shock. I liken it to a relative who has a terminal disease; you know he is dying but it still shakes you when it happens. When I quit, I was in a poor state, physically and mentally. That isn't being dramatic; it is simply a statement of fact.

While Walden doesn't go into detail on the personality clash with the president, he does establish its negative effects quite graphically on his health and psychology. Clearly, the reasons for a dispatch are both a combination of a harm done (e.g. health problems arising from the personality clash) and a desire for a better position. The equation between leaving a job and death is made fairly often in both the popular literature and in the writings of outplacement counselors who use Kübler-Ross's (1969) model of grieving as part of their practice (e.g. Winegardner et al., 1984; Figure 9-II).

As with many wonder tales, there is a journey period between the dispatch and meeting with the donor. Often, this describes a series of encounters and situations which stand in the way of the protagonist achieving his goal. Walden's story is no different. In the section following the last quote, entitled "After one year", Walden describes a series of problems, mainly dealing with selling his house in Montreal and surviving after his twelve months of severance pay ran out. Three quotes illustrate this period well (*Executive*, 1971c:33).

Prior to leaving Montreal, I came to Toronto three or four times for job interviews. I wasn't saying to myself that a new job had to be in Montreal. We finally moved here [Toronto] in July '69, by which time the

economy had worsened and job opportunities well nil. I was run around from one consultant to another.

As that year without a job went by, I got very discouraged some days. The only thing to do is have eternal hope.... If you feel sorry for yourself, you've had it.

But we're only human. Over a period of time, you're self-confidence begins to erode. Nobody wants you and you become very aware that age is such a damning factor.

In Walden's tale, there are two donors: Ed Parker and Robin Merry. Parker, who ran a highly specialized PR agency, was an old friend of Walden's. Parker's "gift" was in the form of forcing Walden to open himself up to new possibilities.²⁸⁸ Walden (*Executive*, 1971c:34) describes this situation as follows:

It had been over a year since I had started looking for a job. By then, my own state of mind and finances forced me to start thinking in terms of a second career.... Ed Parker came along at a time when I was psychologically down, very down. He got me ready for my current job, and I'll be eternally grateful to him because today I feel I'm a very lucky man.

The second donor, Robin Merry, was a retired marketing director running a company in Toronto called Rent-an-Executive (a "headhunter" in business terms). While the description of Walden's meeting with Merry is limited, it is worth quoting in full (*Executive*, 1971c:34).

While I was with Ed, I got a call from Robin Merry and was interviewed for my present job. I showed him a stamp album I maintain as an indication of my interest in the arts. The collection isn't valuable; it doesn't include rare stamps, for example. It is based on the reproduction of works of art on stamps. This indicated to Merry, I guess, that I had an orderly mind and an interest in art to go along with my business background. I was interviewed by eight or nine businessmen and

²⁸⁸ It must be remembered that in the late 1960's, most people were highly specialized and conditioned by the hierarchical nature of organizations. If you were a VP Marketing, then it was assumed that that is what you would always be.

professionals, who were supporting and advising the performing arts organizations which make up our organization [Co-ordinated Arts Services]. Few of the men had experience in marketing but I was chosen for the job.

While Walden may have had trouble figuring out the importance of his stamp collection, it is obvious to anyone who knows the story of the *Pearl of Great Price* or similar wonder tales. The importance is simple: the "gift" is the realization that the searcher already has the object of their quest within themselves, and that is what Merry gave to Walden. Parker had "got [him] ready", and Merry helped him to realize he already had the "answer".

The meetings between Walden and the two donors highlights a core meme that becomes evident in both the exoteric and esoteric literature of outplacement: you hold the answer within you. This meme is a key to the operation of the outplacement process, at least in its ideal form, as an act of internal transformation of perceptions. In the case of Walden's tale, the transformation involved is that you can work in an industry that is totally different from where your career began and, as a consequence, your skills and competencies are not bound by industry and/or occupation.

Propp ((1984:102) noted that the "return" of the protagonist often involves conflict and trial, and Walden's tale contains these elements as well. In a section entitled "Rejoining society", Walden (*Executive* 1971c:34) makes the following observations:

When you "rejoin society" with a job, you start out very unsure of yourself, particularly if you are in a new business. For example, this organization is very unstructured versus the very structured organization I had been in for 22 years. I also had the feeling because of my conflict with the president of Reckitt & Colman that I couldn't get along with people, which was the key to this job. I felt I could do the job but I began to wonder. Events have shown I didn't have cause for concern and physically I'm now in fine health.

As with the "gifts" provided by Parker and Merry, the "enemies" who stalk the protagonists' return are internal perceptions.

Most of the remainder of the article contains generalized observations on being an unemployed 52-year old executive. Walden (*Executive* 1971c:34-35) mentions over-qualification, being patronized by "younger people in personnel", a lack of ex-employer responsibility towards their ex-employees, the development of outside interests, and the importance of staying in good physical health and having a strong marriage. He concludes (*Executive* 1971c:35) his observations by reinforcing the requirement for inner transformation when facing unemployment.

You can't afford to rush off in all directions. You have to sort yourself out and this might be the breather you need. I started searching for a job right away and the first question I faced was "What do you want to do?" This floored me. Unfortunately, the first time I had to answer that I was sitting in front of a prospective employer. When you are doing that self-examination and you see the inevitable, face up to it. Draw up a realistic, personal balance sheet. When you have defined what you want to do, your path should be a lot clearer. Situations arise you wouldn't have realized otherwise.

This final observation might have come out of one of the manuals from the outplacement industry. Several points need to be highlighted, since they are key to later developments in outplacement. First, the idea of a "breather" before beginning a job search. It is imperative to remember that outplacement, as an industry, developed to serve the needs of displaced executive, managers and professionals. The "luxury" of taking a "breather" is dependant upon the financial state of the individual, and this may well explain why continued attempts to apply outplacement technologies to lower level occupational groupings have not been as successful as desired.

The second key point is the question "What do you want to do?" As I have already argued (6.6), in the Late Industrial Age people, and especially executives and managers (the "Organization Men"), were defined both by self and others by their occupation and company. The idea of an executive doing something because he wanted to do something was anathema. Thus the idea that a person could choose what he wished to become, rather than rely on what the company told him to become, is a radical change.

The final few paragraphs of Walden's tale are quite fascinating. Unlike the rest of the story, they are in the form of question and answer; probably a direct transcription of the interview.

EXECUTIVE: Unemployment sounds like something every executive should go through.

WALDEN: God no. I wouldn't wish it on any man. You have wild dreams at night and you are always taut.

EXECUTIVE: But aren't you better off mentally and physically having gone through it?

WALDEN: Yes. At least I have had the opportunity to stand back and see myself. I now have a better sense of values. Before, I was putting in time on people and problems, which were irrelevant to me but relevant to my job. I now have a better way of life, I am more comfortable and happier, and I know who my business and social friends are. I just wish I could have become a better person a little easier, that's all.

What is fascinating about this section is the sense of horror relating to unemployment regardless of any advantages that may come out of it. The placement of unemployment squarely in liminality is clear, even though the article is, in part, designed to show some of the blazes on the path.

In many ways, Walden's tale is a precursor to later outplacement wonder tales. While the figures of Parker and Merry appear in the role of donors, their actions in supplying Walden with "gifts" are almost by chance. It is certainly clear that they exercise little control of the transformative process which changes Walden - they are catalysts, rather

than "magicians", although Merry does have some control (e.g. arranging the job interview). In later outplacement mystery plays (e.g. NFB 1981; sub-section 7.6.1), the control of the transformative process by the donor/counselor is emphasized and the specific magical/transformative "gifts" are discussed in much greater detail.

One of the most interesting points connected with Walden's tale is its placement immediately following another story entitled "The unwanted executive" (*Executive*, 1971b). In many ways, "The unwanted executive" is an atrocity tale that attempts to show a source for the problem of executive unemployment. One passage, in particular, captures the blame making sense of the piece (*Executive*, 1971b:30)

There are indeed thousands of men who rose into and above the medium income bracket in this country, many of them deservedly so. It's not that they have been failures personally. Some of them have not been able to cope with the strained environment in which they and their companies are forced to operate today. Others have simply been shown the door - admittedly with separation pay, best wishes and regret - because the tempo of business outside of Ottawa's spending influence is so depressed. Just last month, the senior officer of one of Canada's bigger companies found his company and himself so driven against the wall that he cracked.

As with the earlier article, "The high-price men take it on the chin", there is a clear attempt to establish a sense of "blame" beyond any individual failings. This point also comes out also in Walden's tale (personality clash rather than incompetence), and forms a core meme in modern firing rituals (cf. section 8.3.1 and Tyrrell, 1994).

7.3.2 Meme conflict in Walden's Tale

There are four meme conflicts discussed in these articles that are worth examining in detail. First, there is a clear assault on the at fault meme. This assault stems both from declarative statements (e.g. "... this doesn't mean total failure." *Executive*, 1971a:59) and

from examples (e.g. firing for fit rather than fault). The second conflict appears in the binary meme of “employment is good/unemployment is bad”. Clearly, at least in Walden’s case, employment may be bad, at least for your health. The reconstruction centers around a modification from “employment is good” to “appropriate employment is good”. The other half of the binary meme is also assaulted: unemployment may be “bad”, but it is also a learning opportunity. The third conflict is more of a redefinition where the “no complaints” strategy meme is reconstructed as an “act rationally” meme (e.g. “You have to sort yourself out...”, *Executive*, 1971c:35).

The final meme conflict is the most devastating to the LIA 4 contract: you are responsible for your career. This is a direct attack on the jurisdictional claim of organizations to define career paths, and draws on the concept of vocation for its legitimacy – the “you hold the answer within you” meme. This is a direct attack on the legitimacy of organizationally defined career paths.

7.3.3 Forty-Plus - a tale of repentance

While Walden’s tale and other articles were showing the emergence of a “no-fault” meme for unemployment, other articles were appearing with a different message. In August, 1971, an article appeared presenting a different solution to the problem of executive unemployment (*Executive*, 1971d). Entitled “Stompin’ at the Forty-plus”, the article introduces the reader to Forty-Plus, an organization founded in 1939 in New York to help older unemployed men which opened in Toronto in June of 1971. The organization is, in many ways, related to Alcoholics Anonymous; a point made in the opening paragraph. The basic message of Forty-plus comes through clearly in the article (*Executive*, 1971d:29)

"Here there is no such thing as the depressed, suicidal executive. Looking around, it's difficult to tell just who has a job and who hasn't", [Jean Toombes - executive director] says. "The concept of Forty-Plus tends to screen newcomers. Salesmen, conceited executives and the dregs don't come here because their very nature doesn't allow them to be as open and self-analyzing as most of our members are. Furthermore, they won't work for everyone's benefit, just their own."

Henry, a 42-year-old former advertising agency vice-president, is a striking example of the hard-headed and matter-of-fact attitudes which exist at Forty-Plus. He says quite flatly: "We deserve to be unemployed. There are any number of things we didn't do."

"We didn't play out our hand properly. We didn't put out. We failed to recognize the decline in our respective industries. We didn't comprehend the politics in our companies. We missed opportunities. We weren't suited for our particular jobs or our whole careers, for that matter."

The message of Forty-Plus in this article tends towards the AA model, where blame is placed not on the environment, but on the individual. For Forty-Plus, this means that the unemployed executive needs to concentrate on self-discovery and self-transformation in line with the current structures. The emphasis is not on "what can you do?" so much as it is on "What are you doing that is wrong?". While an emphasis on self-discovery is a core component of most outplacement programs, at least if there is enough money to support it,²⁸⁹ the focus of the emphasis is on "discovering" what the individual truly wants to do.

There is clearly no "no-fault" meme operating here, and the lack of such a meme may be why Forty-Plus was forced to change their program subtly within 6 months of opening. In a later article (*Executive*, 1972:47), Toombes noted that "In the early days, we

²⁸⁹ Many recent programs are of extremely limited duration - a two or three day seminar and several hours with a junior counselor working on your resume. The lack of time for proper self-discovery has been mentioned by a number of counselors as a key problem.

had a hard time getting men to do what other executives told them. Canadians aren't as 'self-helpy' [as Americans]"

By the time of the second article, "A moment of truth" (*Executive*, 1972), the emphasis on self-discovery has shifted in line with most current outplacement programs.

As psychologist Peter Moon notes (*Executive*, 1972:46):

"I tell them: you're very lucky to be unemployed. For the first time in your life, maybe, you're sitting down and thinking very carefully about what you want to do and what you really want to get out of life. So this experience is one of the most positive things that can happen. And they say 'yeah, you're right.'"

The shift towards a middle of the road version of the no-fault meme is important for an understanding of the ritual process of outplacement. The no-fault meme comes to define the specifics of that process as either a *via negativa* or a *via positiva*. This definition, in turn, sets both the parameters of internal self-discovery and also the emotional-symbolic interpretive system of the results.

In addition, the presence or absence of a no-fault meme conditions the possibilities for further change. If there is no such meme, then the possibilities are limited to transformations that align the individual with the structure that defines their "failure" – "We deserve to be unemployed". If the meme is present, then the possibilities are expanded to include for the potential to transform the system itself – "You're lucky to be unemployed".

The presence of this meme, however, creates certain problems. In order to operate effectively, there are two conditions that must be met. First, the individual must have the physical and economic prerequisites to survive an extended period of unemployment. Second, the individual must have a ritual specialist with whom they can

communicate. If either of these conditions is absent, then the process itself will be severely curtailed.

The two articles concerning Forty-Plus (*Executive*, 1971d, 1972) highlight the requirement for a ritual specialist in a way that does not really appear in Walden's tale. There, the ritual specialists ("donors") appeared almost by chance – an old friend, a headhunter – and did not appear to have specific programs or processes directly related to helping the protagonist. The articles on Forty-Plus, however, clearly emphasize the availability of a protagonist-centered process - either with or without the no-fault meme.

These articles are wonder tales that concentrate on the fourth stage of the story line, finding the object of their quest and engaging in combat with an adversary, where the adversary is within themselves. As such, they serve to set the scene whereby internal transformations are viewed as necessary to success in the executive job-search. We have already encountered this meme in Walden's tale; it is merely elaborated further in these stories.

7.3.4 Meme conflict in the Tale of repentance

While the Forty-Plus articles establish the need for a protagonist-centered process, they also reinforce certain attacks on the LIA 4 memes. The initial stance of support for the "at fault" meme comes to be moderated rapidly into either a "limited fault" or "no fault" version. At the same time, these stories also continue the attack on the "unemployment is bad" meme by showing that it may be positive.

As with Walden's tale, the Forty-Plus articles enhance the meme of "you hold the answer within you". Indeed, it is a necessary concomitant of Forty-Plus' argument for the necessity of a ritual specialist which, in and of itself, contradicts some of the basic

assumptions of the LIA 4 contract. After all, a ritual specialist who is separate from the organization means that the organization must abandon its jurisdictional claims on career paths.

7.3.5 Outplacement and wonder tales

Business metaphors are combinations of images and words that nourish the work-soul. Metaphors help to legitimize the language and concepts used in the career renewal process. The bringing together of head and heart, logic brain and artistic brain, outer work and inner work is a formidable task, but any effort to do so enhances the possibility of the "expectant extra", the "something extra", a transformational leap. Mainstream Access, 1996:19

The structural similarity between a wonder tale and the process of outplacement is more than just rhetorical, it matches the ideal typical process. As I noted in section 7.3, wonder tales are organized along a fairly strict sequence (Propp, 1984:102). This structure consists of a minimum of five stages:

1. Harm or villainy done to the protagonist or a desire to accomplish something.
2. The dispatch of the protagonist.
3. An encounter with a donor and the gift of magical objects that will allow them to achieve their goal.
4. Finding the object of their quest and engaging in combat with an adversary.
5. A return, usually with a pursuit and escape sequence.

Let us consider each of these five stages in the context of the outplacement and job-search processes.

The first phase stems from one of two options, either "harm or villainy done to the protagonist or a desire to accomplish something". The clear parallel is to either a) being fired/declared redundant, or b) being tired of your job and looking for a new one. Since

outplacement developed in reaction to the first option, it is not surprising to see that the majority of their process material is aimed at that assumption. The exact parallel is to the decision to fire an individual and, with that decision, to engage an outplacement counselor. This is known as the consulting phase. As I will show in section 8.3, the art of firing has been stylized scripted quite heavily by the outplacement industry.

The second phase, the dispatch of the protagonist, is, in most cases, conflated with both the first and third phases, at least for the "protagonist": they are fired and followed out of the firing by an outplacement counselor (see sub-section 8.3.1). At this time, it is rare for the outplacement counselor to be equated with the "donor" of the third phase by the protagonist, but that will come (e.g. Biff in *After the Axe*, section 7.6.1).

The third phase is an encounter with a donor and the gift of magical objects that will allow them to achieve their goal. In the outplacement process, this stage tends to be split into three main components: assessment, developing a plan, and gaining the skills and knowledge needed to find the right job, each of which may be considered a separate phase. This is, to use Turner's term, the start of the liminal phase, and I consider this stage in sections 8.2.1 and 8.4.

It is also important to note that the roles of the "donor", counselor, are split into two, and sometimes three, separate roles: assessment, training, and sometimes sales/psychopomp (see 8.2.3). The "magical objects" received from the donor vary with the type of donor but are either forms of self-knowledge and/or specific job search skills and/or ongoing aid - the "tribal gnosis" referred to by Turner (1967).

The fourth phase, finding the object of the quest and engaging in combat with an adversary, is matched by the phase of "active searching", and I consider this phase in

section 8.6. This phase may show up twice in the process, as it did in *After the Axe*, where the first instance takes place right after the act of firing, and usually ends in defeat. The second instance, after suitable immersion in the tribal gnosis (i.e. the acceptance of the assessment), ends in victory. By "victory" and "defeat", I do not mean that the candidate is necessarily offered a job but, rather, that they are getting serious interviews for appropriate positions.

The key words here are "appropriate" and "adversary". The quest is not for "a" job, so much as it is for the right job. The concept of "adversary" is somewhat trickier, having connotations of other people involved. There may be other people applying for the same job, but the "true" adversary is the candidate themselves; their attitudes, presentation, and motivation.

The final phase, the "return", is usually accompanied with a pursuit and escape sequence, and this may well happen in the job search process. The return phase in a job search deals blends the interview and job negotiation phase of the job search process. As such, there is sometimes competition with other people for the job, and conflict over what is contained within the job offer (salary, benefits, etc.). This final phase is what Van Gennep (1960) called a rite of re-aggregation, and it deals with the reintegration of the individual into society, usually via employment.

The discussion of the outplacement process in terms of myth is useful in understanding the rhetorical construction of the industry. It does, however, also serve to hide the operation of the process, as all good myth does. Myths, it must be remembered, are the exoteric explanation of a process. Once we turn from the exoteric to the esoteric, the process appears both more comprehensible and, at the same time, more complex.

It is important to note that wonder tales, as a general class of stories, create positive semantic reactions towards process-events that are considered "not normal" or "magical": i.e. towards process-events that are outside of current structures. This is especially effective in situations where the "normal" or "mundane" process-events do not achieve their supposed goals; in other words, when an institution is in a breach period (cf. section 5.6).

In wonder tales, this "not normal" process-event is made available via the agency of a "donor": a "magical" specialist who can guide one through the "otherworld" or, in short, a "shaman". The equation of the donor with a magical specialist is closer when the path offered is not yet fully institutionalized with social structural supports. The aura of "otherworldliness" is still useful in reinforcing jurisdiction claims by professional groups (consider, by way of example, the para-religious trappings of psychologists: cf. Abbott, 1988: chapter 10).

Wonder tales, however, rely on events that require the protagonist to step outside of the accepted structure. While this may be a desire to achieve a goal which may only be achieved through such a journey (i.e. an initiatory type of wonder tale), a more common form relies on the instigation of an "atrociousness".

7.4 Atrociousness tales in the press

In social constructionism, the atrociousness tale is viewed as an extreme form of emotional evocation tale that comes to be tied in with the representation of X as a social problem (cf. Best, 1987). In a broader sense, however, atrociousness tales fall into a number of different types including emotionally evocative vignettes, cautionary tales, and what may

be termed anti-wonder tales in which the protagonist does everything “right” and the results are always “wrong”.

The core purpose of atrocity tales, regardless of their form, is to establish an aversive emotional linkage between a process-event and certain types of actions or situations. Vignettes establish a negative reaction to the existence of something – a social “problem”. Cautionary tales establish negative reactions to acting in specific ways, usually those that are not socio-culturally sanctioned. Anti-wonder tales are probably the most seductive in that they establish a negative reaction to the socio-cultural system or, at least, towards certain components of it.²⁹⁰

The establishment of negative semantic reactions towards certain process-events allows for the creation of “taboos”. In part, the effect of the successful construction of a taboo is to allow the general populace to define and categorize the process event in simple terms. The successful creation of taboos allows for the classification of certain process-events as not only “dangerous”, but inevitable: situations that clearly require the intervention of ritual specialists. In effect, taboos may operate as forms of professional jurisdiction claims (cf. Abbott, 1988).

The period between 1970 and 1983 saw large numbers of atrocity tales appearing in the press pertaining to firings and unemployment at all levels including executives and managers. For executives, these stories highlighted the need for two forms of ritual

²⁹⁰ It must be noted here that the anti-wonder tale may be operating from a socio-cultural “moral highground”, as in the case of certain types of prophetic writing (e.g. 1st Samuel) or prophetic comedy (e.g. Tom Lehrer). Anti-wonder tales may also be revolutionary and or anarchic and amoral.

specialists: outplacement counselors to handle the fired executives, and wrongful dismissal lawyers to reduce the chance of lawsuits against the corporation.²⁹¹

In general, the atrocity tales concerning outplacement deal with two process-events: the unemployed executive as a social and/or moral problem, and failures in the firing process. Often, the two are combined into a single story, although the thematic emphasis is usually on one or the other. Very occasionally, a masterpiece of the atrocity tale genre will not only combine these two themes, but will also serve to create a whole series of semantic resonances that subvert an entire memetic complex (e.g. Axmith, 1975; sub-section 7.4.2).

7.4.1 The unemployed executive as a moral/social problem

Today, in Canada, there are scores of hundreds of talented businessmen, corporate-steeped managers and degree-laden specialists who would challenge Accountant Edgar John Benson to survive in the job market created by the policies of Finance Minister Edgar John Benson. These men – our bloodless, tortured columnist Eliot Janeway calls them the “unemployed salariat” – know first-hand just how much luck Accountant E.J.B. would need to find a job in these days.

Executive, 1971b:29

The central problem with the unemployed executive is that, according to the LIA 4 social contract (cf.7.2), he shouldn't be unemployed unless he is a total “failure”.²⁹²

The problem shown by unemployed executives from 1968-1982 (LIA 5/ESA 1) is that

²⁹¹ I deal with the jurisdictional claims of wrongful dismissal lawyers only inasmuch as they directly impact the outplacement industry. This period, however, did see a radical change in the way employment law in Canada was structured. As a result, I deal with the law relating to wrongful dismissal and termination in section 7.5.

²⁹² Throughout this dissertation, I use “he” to refer to the executive rather than “s/he” or any other politically correct (and grammatically incorrect) form for one simple reason: the vast majority of unemployed executives at the time when outplacement was being constructed were male, and both the popular literature and outplacement programs were designed initially for men.

there are too many who, clearly, are not “failures” but, rather, talented men who are being let go due to personality clashes (e.g. Walden’s tale) and economic conditions beyond their control. In fact, the “problem” is, actually, two highly interrelated problems: the existence of these men, and their inability to deal with unemployment precisely because they internalized the LIA 4 social contract – the “corporate-steeped” individual of the quote above.

The first problem is the “existence” of unemployed executives who are not incompetent failures. According to the LIA 4 social contract, an executive would not be fired unless there was a compelling reason which, almost always, was incompetence broadly conceived. As “Organization Men”, their loyalty was, in theory, to the company which, in turn, would provide them with security; an unofficial tenure system.

The second problem stems from the first. Most of the Organization Men who became the “unemployed salariat” were, literally, incapable of finding work without a lot of help. This inability isn’t a reflection on their intelligence or competence. Rather, it is a reflection of the fact that not only are the skills needed to find a job quite specialized, the *attitude* to successfully pursue a job search at the executive level is exactly the opposite of the LIA 4 social contract.

Attitudinal conflicts with the Corporate Man ideal were rampant in the late 1960’s and early to mid 1970’s. These conflicts are not only with the ideal of the Corporate man but, in some cases, with the very system itself. For example, one *Executive* (1973a) article makes the following heretical (to the LIA 4 social contract) observations:

“Traditional management tends towards specialization,” says Herman Smith of Smith, Caldwell, Hickling Ltd., Toronto management consultants. “It’s an industrial assembly line approach to work. Today’s manager has his biological needs satisfied and, in many senses, his social

needs satisfied. But he has the need to feel he's worthy, that he belongs, that he's accomplishing something."

This is a clear attack on the work equals meaning meme of the LIA 4 contract. The attack is aimed at the organizational instantiation of this meme, and not at the meme itself. In effect, while supporting the work equals meaning meme, Smith is saying that "work" must be separated from the organizational context, at least in the broad sense. There is a clear implication that the site of "inspiration" to work is within the individual, and not the organization.

The recession hit a lot of people right where they live. In the midst of ducking the axe, management was clubbed with charges of everything from pollution to genocide. What do you do when the old money/security/status bit goes stale? When even a philosophical sense of humour leaves you cold?

The article goes on to use a number of examples to show how the LIA 4 loyalty for security contract is both dead and deadening. Allen Cupples, an ex-V.P. and creative director of James Lovick Ltd., describes corporate politics as his reason for leaving (*Executive*, 1973a:25).

Corporate politics is a most demeaning, time-wasting, energy-sapping exercise. Sometimes it's fun. But when you get up in the morning, shave, shower, throw up and go to work, it's not fun anymore. Somewhere in all this there was a client. I wanted to minimize the political foo-fah and get to the client on a one-to-one basis.

Cupples goes on to talk about the destructive effects of the LIA 4 social contract (*Executive*, 1973a:26).

"I hang on to the belief that a man reaches his full potential in his 40s and 50s. At 40 I had seen too many of my colleagues neatly rolled into a little wax ball and tossed in the waste basket. As a friend of mine once said to me, 'the young guys going into the corporate world today have a pretty misguided search for security if they have to leave their balls outside the door when they go to work.' As a natural result of politicking

and infighting, one's self-worth tends to be eroded. I learned a lot at Lovick – I learned discipline. But I've learned twice as much since."

While this article deals with the demeaning effects the LIA 4 social contract has upon individuals, it presents an even greater challenge to the system. First, it challenges the loyalty for security meme upon which the contract is based – "What do you do when the old money/security/ status bit goes stale?". Second, it uses certain atrocity vignettes to show how the implementation of the contract is destructive and to reinforce the meme that "employment may be bad".

- "But when you get up in the morning, shave, shower, throw up and go to work, it's not fun anymore.";
- "the young guys going into the corporate world today have a pretty misguided search for security if they have to leave their balls outside the door when they go to work."

There is an even stronger, albeit less obviously visceral, image at work in this article in opposition to the LIA 4 social contract. Individuals can opt out of the organization and be more successful than if they stay within it: a clear subversion of the jurisdictional claim of organizations to control executive careers. As with any redistributive system, the LIA 4 social contract cannot survive and prosper if it has any serious competition who don't play by the same rules.²⁹³

While this article extolled the virtues, and costs, of going out on one's own voluntarily, the *Executive* ran another article dealing with involuntary second careers the

²⁹³ There are numerous historical examples of this. Consider, by way of example, the reaction of the Roman catholic church to the Cathars in the 11th century, or how well the Roman Empire produced by Theodosius the Great operated against the Goths, Avars, Vandals and Huns.

next month (*Executive*, 1973b). Entitled *Who's for early retirement?*, the article hammers the "at fault" meme behind the failure image of many fired executives. "Consider the case" the article asks at its' start "of Joseph P. McGowan whose name has been changed because, as you will discover, he's innocent."

"McGowan" is a fairly typical executive who climbed the corporate ladder and rose to "within spitting distance of a vice-presidency". "He had his health, a \$45,000 house, a cottage, a Buick, \$50,000 in savings, an intact marriage and two daughters in university." (*Executive*, 1973b:40) In many ways, he might be seen as a poster boy for the Organization Man.

The "description" of events that follows is worth quoting in full. In particular, note the semantic representations used in the descriptions, as well as the inversions of LIA 4 memes (*Executive*, 1973b:40).

Then the trouble started. With business booming, his company went on a buying spree, gobbling up three medium-sized competitors in less than 18 months. He was moved over to one of them – a soda ash operation – as one of three vice-presidents. Whether it was a promotion or a demotion was impossible to tell – call it a horizontal move; no damage to the ego.

Friction developed between new man McGowan and the old management and the division failed to hit profit projections in 1968. The situation seemed on the mend in the first half of 1969; then came the recession. The division lost more in the first-quarter of 1970 than it made in the entire previous year. Head office turned on the pressure and one of his colleagues, an old friend and younger, was fired.

In June, 1970 McGowan suffered a mild heart attack. Off for three months, he came back half-days for another three. The profit picture was abysmal. Rumours of massive staff reductions flowed through the corridors and when he tried to learn what was going on he got the impression head office was brushing him off.

In January, 1971 the company announced a new executive retirement plan that would allow a manager to retire on full pension after 25 years at age 60. The day he received the memo McGowan decided it was for him. He retires this June.

The picture presented in this description contains a number of interesting points. The first key point is the placement of blame for the failure in profitability. In the first place, the decision to acquire the three competitors was corporate, not McGowan's – "[w]ith business booming, his company went on a buying spree, gobbling up three medium-sized competitors in less than 18 months." Clearly, there is an attack on the concept of corporate infallibility.

While there is a certain amount of friction between McGowan and the original management team, that situation seems to have been worked out by 1969, only to run head on into "the recession". Head offices response was simple - to fire a colleague of McGowan's. In effect, the action of the corporate body, "head office", is to shift the blame for the failure of the division onto one person and fire them rather than to accept the blame themselves for their own over-expansion. But if this is the case, then how can the organization support its' claims for career control? It is irrational to give control to an irrational body, and this type of scapegoating is, as the passage implies, irrational.

The stress of this situation, the article implies, led directly to McGowan's heart attack; a clear argument that employment can be "bad". The next six months appear to be a time of limbo for McGowan; he is "brushed off" by headquarters, cut off from the information flow and subject to rumours. In some ways, he is approaching what the courts call constructive dismissal (cf. 7.5.1.1). The appearance of the memo offering early retirement for managers comes as an honourable exit point for McGowan, one that he doesn't have to think about too much.

The argument surrounding early retirement is presented on the next page in the article (*Executive*, 1973b:41).²⁹⁴

During the '60's the economy was strong. Companies could afford to be generous with their employees and many were. Salaries rose, new people were hired and existing personnel were promoted. Then, in 1969, the economy turned down. Retrenchment followed; the unneeded and/or slacker managers were let go; a few were catapulted into special services; still others were encouraged to take an early retirement that would allow relaxation, more travel and golf – in short, a generous corporate favor.

Let's look at the exits that are identified in this passage. In total, three are identified: firing for "the unneeded and/or slacker", "special services" for some, and early retirement for others. Each of these three exits serves, in some way, to chip away at the LIA 4 social contract.

Under the LIA 4 social contract, "slackers" and incompetents were always eligible for firing. They were viewed as the corporate "fat" that would, inevitably accumulate in any corporation during good times, and their dismissal during hard times was accepted as "normal". The "unneeded", however, are another matter. While they may be "excess", they are not incompetent or slackers.

Indeed, establishing a precedent for firing "unneeded" managers is quite dangerous to the LIA 4 contract, especially given the increasingly fast paced introduction of technological changes happening in the ESA 1 period. The danger comes from several points. First, it requires that managers become more than their original job descriptions. In many cases, managers must become highly adaptable, a situation that is contra the

²⁹⁴ This argument is, of course, a generalization – a point made in the article itself.

strict hierarchical guidelines of the LIA 4 contract, or else they will suffer from “executive obsolescence” (Westcott, 1975).

The second danger point comes from uncertainty. If people are “let go” for different reasons, how is one supposed to view them? They may be “incompetent”, they may be unable to adapt to current changes in the economic environment, they may be victims of the recession or of a personality clash (cf. Walden’s tale above). Regardless of the “why” of their situation, they are an indictment of the LIA 4 contract by their very existence. In the case of the last two options, victims of the recession and/or personality conflict, they may actually be better than the managers who were not fired from their previous companies.

This uncertainty is further encouraged by the increasing chance of technologically driven obsolescence, not of the individual, but of the office. As Westcott (1975) notes

The current profit squeeze is forcing many companies to reassess their need for high-priced executive help. One department store chain has eliminated an entire managerial level, and a manufacturing company has integrated its marketing staff into the field sales force.

The trend is being fanned by the availability of electronic data processing and jet travel. With a computer printout to keep him posted on latest developments, and the option of being in Vancouver within hours of any danger signal, a Toronto-based comptroller may decide the West Coast operation does not need a senior financial officer.

In this case, the positions are eliminated and the people who filled them are let go through no fault of their own. Obviously, these people are not “slackers” or “incompetents”; rather, they are victims in what would later come to be known as “delaying” – the systematic elimination of entire layers of a bureaucracy.

This brings us to the third danger point: if good people can be fired from jobs simply because those jobs are eliminated at the whim of the company, then why should

anyone be loyal to the company? And, if loyalty to the company may well be rewarded with a termination notice for “obsolescence”, why should the executive be loyal to anyone but themselves?

Before we follow the last question through, we need to consider the other two exits mentioned. “Special services” is an interesting category since, in general, it is hierarchically meaningless.²⁹⁵ Indeed, by 1975, “special services” is viewed as a way to shift powerful, but “incompetent”, executives out of line operations: a way of getting people to resign rather than fire them (cf. Axmith, 1975). In effect, “special services” may appear as a reward for corporate politicking.

Early retirement is in a similar position as a shift to special services. While appearing to fulfill the LIA 4 social contract by rewarding loyalty with security, it is only available to a limited number of people, usually at the higher echelons of the corporation; as the *Executive* (1973b:41) article notes “a generous corporate favor.” The problem with this, of course, is that if it is a “corporate favor”, it is not a corporate “right”: a justified reward for loyalty to the company.

Furthermore, early retirement has several other problems associated with it, at least as far as the LIA 4 social contract is concerned. While it may be a corporate “favor”, in order to get this favour, the employee must meet certain criteria; usually age and years with the company. As such, early retirement is, *de facto*, meaningless for “younger” executives (say younger than 55).

²⁹⁵ By its' very definition, “special services” stands outside of the hierarchical organization of offices, reporting, usually, to the CEO. While the concept was based on the use of troubleshooters during WW II, by the ESA I period, few corporate executives had the flexibility to actually fulfill this role (the role itself was usually left to management consultants).

The second problem is more subtle. In order for a corporate policy to be legally effective, it must be broadly based along lines of office, rather than set for individuals. As such, an early retirement plan must be made available to all office holders of a specific level, regardless of the corporate desirability of their retirement. This opens the possibility for early retirement by executives whom the company wishes to retain, making it a less than perfect tool for eliminating specific people.²⁹⁶

In addition to non-specificity, early retirement also implies that the class of people covered is "obsolete" and unable to adequately perform the duties of their office. This may be true in certain specific cases (i.e. the military), but it has little basis in most managerial areas. Why should an executive be loyal to a company that considers him to be obsolete? Peter Irvine (1977:47) poignantly captures the difference between the "new reality" of the 1970's and the promise of the LIA 4 social contract in an article for the *Executive*.

It seems like only yesterday that the world appeared to be so different. The soldiers returned from World War II and from Korea, but caused no glut in the employment market. Our economy, buoyant on the strength of unprecedented consumer demand, absorbed everyone who could possibly work, and continued to pay each of them more and more money each year for doing the same things faster, on newer and better machinery. The invincibility of North American technology was unquestioned throughout the world, and anyone who entered the work force with a college degree was virtually guaranteed a lifetime of full employment and increasing material well-being, in return for loyalty to the corporation, adoption of its moral and ethical codes, and "keeping one's nose clean."

²⁹⁶ This situation arises time and again in cases of blanket early retirement policies. In one example, the entire senior staff of a large computer company's purchasing department "retired", leaving the "senior" buyer as a forty year old with less than five years experience in the field. The "retired" staff promptly formed a "consulting" company and sold their services back to their ex-employer.

Today, things just don't seem the same. During the 1960s we carried our economic dream to its logical zenith, and in the 1970s we seem to be standing by helplessly watching it crumble.

The question of loyalty is central to the LIA 4 social contract: the loyalty for security meme. That contract cannot survive without loyalty and yet, as the articles noted so far clearly show, companies feel no loyalty to their employees. "Loyalty", at least in as far as it appears in the LIA 4 social contract, derives from two key factors. The first is the reification of an organization and/or institution to the point where it is considered to be an independent actor, capable of voluntary association and choice. In fact, this degree of reification is necessary if there is to be a successful loyalty for security contract, since this contract is based on our second key factor, one of Fiske's elementary social relations: Authority Ranking.

The Authority Ranking model is centered on mutual obligation arising out of a hierarchical form of organization (cf. 2.2.2.2). In many ways, it is the area of social organization studied by Radcliffe-Brown (1952) – the structure of mutual obligations between categories of people. The keys, of course, are the phrases "mutual obligation" and "categories of people", and we can see atrocity tales aimed at challenging both of these areas. For example, the concept of "executive obsolescence" is aimed at problems of category definition, while the concept of good people being fired is aimed at mutual obligation as is the recurring noting of the corporation inducing ill health.

The ultimate "breach of contract" is the severing of the social relationship: in our case, termination of employment. Firings were always possible in the LIA 4 social contract, but they could take place only in limited situations which were, on the whole, rather strictly defined such as incompetence, criminal conviction, etc. The changing

environment of LIA 5/ESA 1 brought about a whole series of situations where the option of firing was increasingly used and justified by a variety of means. The LIA 5/ESA 1 phase, say from 1968 to 1982 in Canada, was marked by increasingly strange forms of terminations and by a growing resistance to and resentment of them. One result of this trend was in an increasing use of atrocity tales that center around failures in the firing process.

7.4.2 *The art of firing a manager*

In an article entitled *The art of firing a manager*, Murray Axmith (1975) uses a blend of atrocity, comedy, and ego-stroking to produce a masterpiece arguing for retaining outplacement counselors.²⁹⁷ In this article, he not only manages to argue for outplacement services, but to make it appear that the act of termination is for the good of the (ex-)employee. The article starts with a large amount of ego-stroking.

You are a senior company executive and you have reached the conclusion that one of your managers is incompetent. You have tried to provide him with extra help, shift him to another slot within the organization or lighten his load, all to no avail. Reluctantly, you have decided that he will have to go. How are you going to handle the dismissal?

By 1975, the overall likelihood of a manager going through all of these “helping” actions is fairly low. Still, if the reader internalizes the paragraph, taking it as a personal representation (“You are...”), they are likely to “see” themselves as “described”: a kind, caring manager who has tried to help a “clearly” incompetent subordinate. Note the use

²⁹⁷ Given the fact that this article appeared on a single page, I have included the paragraph numbers in square brackets where the actual location is unclear.

of kinesthetic representational strategies - "reached the conclusion", "shift him", "lighten his load".

After talking about the difficulty in firing people, he argues that "...careful planning will minimize the trauma, help the fired person to become re-established elsewhere and counteract the internal problems which a dismissal often leaves in its wake." Such careful planning, it is implied is the professional stock in trade of outplacement consultants and, in order to illustrate this point, he provides a few basic points complete with examples. Since these "points" are rhetorical arguments in and of themselves, I have marked the grounds, warrants, and conclusions with { } brackets.

[point 1] Don't procrastinate. {grounds - extent estimate} Most companies wait far too long to fire an incompetent employee, as though hoping that the problem will disappear if nothing is done about it. It never does.

{conclusion} Once a manager's performance has been diagnosed as unsatisfactory, and all possible remedies have failed, that person should be informed as promptly as possible. {warrant} To do otherwise is unfair both to the employee and to the company.

{grounds - atrocity tale} In one instance, a vice-president was dismissed three long years after he had been stripped of his authority and classified as redundant. During those three years, {atrocity} he had cost the company \$150,000 in salary and fringe benefits; {atrocity} he had undermined the morale of colleagues and subordinates who watched him collect executive pay in return for little or no work; {warrant} worst of all, he had lost his self confidence, and with it his ability to compete for a responsible job with another company.

{grounds - anti-wonder tale} Employers who spend months or even years working up their courage to fire a manager sometimes end up doing it on an impulse, in the heat of an argument or under the influence of some company set-back. Such dismissals are apt to develop into emotional confrontations with dire consequences for the employer. {atrocity} In one company, a manager who was fired in such an impulsive way retaliated by dropping the inventory record down the incinerator. {atrocity} Another vented his resentment by tipping off a major client as to irregularities in the handling of his account: the client promptly took his business elsewhere.

Procrastination in terminations, or the make-work creation of managerial jobs, was a logical outgrowth of the loyalty for security meme: the meme of “terminations are evil”. It was also economically defensible in the heyday of the 1960’s. Indeed, in some ways it was a recognized cultural practice, embodied not only in “scientific” recognition (e.g. the Peter Principle; Laurence, 1969) but also in popular culture (e.g. *How to succeed in business without really trying*, MGM, 1968).

Part of the reason for procrastination in termination, however, lies in the personal difficulties many managers have in letting people go. Firing, in the LIA 4 social contract, is the equivalent of a death sentence. One of Irvine’s (1977:50) informants talks about it this way.

We’ve gone through an interesting phenomena [sic] in the past 10 years... In the past, in that sort of situation, a lot of companies would say ‘Joe’s a good guy – we don’t want to throw him to the wolves, let’s make a job for him.’ They felt a responsibility to him, but he’d be on a shelf and he’d know it.

Even as late as the 1990’s, the act of firing an employee was the most stressful part of a managers’ job (Murray Axmith & Associates, 1993: 9; for more, see 8.3).

The “don’t procrastinate” meme is an important one in the emerging ESA social contract, and it is especially important for the solidification of the claims of outplacement counselors. First of all, Axmith shows how acting slowly can be dangerous to corporate “health”. At the same time, he argues that it is also dangerous to the self-esteem of the soon-to-be-ex- employee. By bundling the two “dangers” together, he is creating a classic double-bind which he resolves by constructing terminations as positive for both the company and the ex-employee. This construction, of course, is an exact inversion of the LIA 4 construction of terminations. Of course, they are only made positive with the

advice and aid of the outplacement counselor. The second point illustrating Axmith's (1975) argument is similar to the first.

[point 2]* Make it a clean break. {warrant}Remember that the purpose of the dismissal is to improve the effectiveness of your organization; {conclusion}that purpose will not be served by giving the man lengthy notice, and letting him continue for weeks or even months in a job which he is not competent to handle. {warrant}Callous though it may sound, you will be doing him and your company a favour by asking him to clear out his desk, take his severance pay, and start job-hunting the following day.

Again, we see the meme of "termination is good for the company and the individual" placed in opposition to LIA 4 morality – "Callous though it may sound...". The importance of this inversion of LIA 4 moral norms lies in two areas. First, the LIA 4 morality just has no place in the developing economic climate of the mid 1970's. Second, while most executives and managers realize the environmental requirements of the time, they have internalized the LIA 4 social contract and have not adapted their internal moral representations to match the new environment. This leads to some interesting half-way adaptations, as Axmith notes

{ground – anti-wonder tale}Some employers make the mistake of suggesting to a redundant manager that he should look for alternative employment, on the understanding that he may stay until he finds something suitable. {conclusion 1 of anti-wonder tale}As a result, they are saddled for an indefinite period with an employee who, apart from being incompetent, is also resentful and only marginally interested in his job. If his performance was poor before, chances are it will be terrible from there on.

{conclusion 2 of anti-wonder tale} Alternatively, the half-in half-out manager may set out to prove himself indispensable to the company, in the hope that his dismissal will be rescinded. In that case he will devote too much time and energy to currying favour with his present employers, and little or none to his job search. Eventually, the company will be forced to take the decisive action which should have been taken to begin with.

Axmith presents two possible results stemming from the “half-in half-out” situation, both of which result in poor corporate performance and hinder the soon-to-be-ex-manager. The point is that a swift termination is good for both the company and the individual at a moral level and, at the same time, acting in a contrary manner is “evil” for both the company and the individual. While such half-way actions may assuage an executive’s feelings of personal morality, they are, according to Axmith, immoral (i.e. the stated goal not only is not met, but the actual ends are destructive of the individuals involved).

Perhaps more importantly, Axmith has established another double-bind. First he establishes that the person responsible for the firing is a “caring” person who has “tried everything” before deciding on termination. Next, by establishing that terminations must be fast, decisive and professional, he has created a situation where it is extremely difficult for executives to terminate people without the aid of an outplacement counselor. In effect, he is creating a double-bind which can only be resolved by the employment of the specific, professional services of outplacement counselors.

This double-bind is enhanced in the following paragraphs in a number of ways. First, there are a series of advice points relating to lawyers (para 12) and severance terms (para 13-14), “how to” points on the conduct of the actual firing (para 15-19), and some insight into how an effective manager terminates employees (para 20-24).

The rhetorical purpose of these thirteen paragraphs becomes clear in the lead line of paragraph twenty-five: “Make arrangements for competent relocation counseling.” These thirteen paragraphs (para 12-24) are designed to act as what Maltby (1999) calls a “stall”. They hold the conscious attention of the reader while they sub-consciously try to

resolve the double-bind presented in the earlier part of the work. The “appropriate” resolution is not only presented to the reader overtly at the end of the series, “Make arrangements for competent relocation counseling.”, but also presented covertly via the list of advice and “how to” points in paragraphs 12-24. After all, a good competent manager knows how to delegate to competent employees/professionals, so why should they learn all of this material when such a professional, the outplacement counselor, is available?

If both the overt and covert resolutions to the double-bind are not enough, then the final paragraphs of the article serve to provide additional reasons for retaining an outplacement counselor. These final paragraphs are well worth examining in detail, since they serve not only to reinforce the professional image of the outplacement counselor, but also to establish their jurisdictional claims.

[25] * Make arrangements for competent relocation counseling. Few managers know how to conduct an effective job search. For many their search efforts amount to leaving their resume with some recruiters, answering advertisements, and then sitting back and waiting for results. Relying on “friends in the industry” often leads the manager into a round of courtesy interviews which yield little in the way of results.

Few firing managers would disagree with the image presented in this paragraph, especially since many of them would have already been involved in such “courtesy interviews”. In addition, there is a subtle implication that managers who actually do know how to conduct “effective job search[es]” somehow gained that skill by shifting jobs frequently therefore showing a disloyalty to the companies that hired them. Overtly this may be applauded (i.e. they have the skills) but covertly this would be viewed as subversive (i.e. they aren’t “loyal” therefore they must be “evil”). Of course, if the skills

were gained via a “supernatural” agency, i.e. an outplacement counselor, then this is acceptable.

Paragraph twenty-five serves to establish the knowledge of conducting an effective job search as “dangerous”. It is knowledge that can only be achieved either by breaching the bounds of the LIA 4social contract and showing “disloyalty” or through the intervention of an outplacement counselor. The rhetorical intention is clear, to establish a jurisdictional claim to the entire area of job search skills and, by implication, career planning skills as professional knowledge and, therefore, safely employed only with professional help.

The message of paragraph twenty-five is reinforced in paragraphs twenty-six and twenty-seven, which have the heading of “False sense of dignity”. While these paragraphs are ostensibly concerned with how fired managers deal with job interviews, they also serve to reinforce the message that “good” managers will delegate responsibility to competent professionals.

[26] Few know how to conduct themselves at interviews or how to negotiate for salary. Many suffer from a false sense of dignity when it comes to describing their own assets, or contacting companies that might conceivably be interested in their kind of expertise.

[27] That is why specialized counseling is so essential to a displaced manager's rehabilitation. Outplacement counselors are not, as some companies believe, glorified under-takers paid to take away the bodies of useless executives. If anything, their function is resurrection rather than burial.²⁹⁸

²⁹⁸ Do you hear, playing softly in the background, the strains of Handle's music and the words “Behold, I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last firing.”

More than any other place in the article, paragraph twenty-seven establishes the role of outplacement counselors: “their function is resurrection rather than burial.” While the equation of firing with death has already been made, and indeed was part of the LIA 4 meme complex, the equation of outplacement counselors with ritual specialists has only been alluded to so far in this article. This paragraph outlines the core “mystery” served by the outplacement counselor – resurrection of the socially dead – a “mystery” that has strong resonances in western cultures.²⁹⁹

The operation of the “mystery”, i.e. the application of specialized knowledge to the “dead” executive, must, of course, have some effect. And, given the claim that the function of outplacement counselors “...is resurrection rather than burial”, the results of such a claim must be equally impressive. Not surprisingly, Axmith then presents a series of what might be termed “wonder tale vignettes” to illustrate his claims. Each of these “resurrection” vignettes breaches LIA 4 norms in some way, but still results in a solution that is “good” for the ex-executive.

[28] The results are often spectacular. One former vice-president who at first would not hear of approaching potential employers finally gave in and sent out 180 unsolicited “contact” letters saying in effect: “This is what I have to offer, this is what I can do for you.” Ten of the recipients invited him for interviews and within less than three months, he was back at work in a position equivalent in salary and prestige to the one he had left.

This first resurrection vignette is a direct play off the characterization of managers in paragraph twenty-five. Rather than “relying on friends”, the candidate sends out unsolicited contact letters. Even worse, from the LIA 4 point of view, he shamelessly

²⁹⁹ These resonances draw on the Easter Passion plays of Christianity and the imagery operates

engages in self-promotion - "This is what I have to offer, this is what I can do for you." – a clear distancing of the old boys network. The final irony is that he wins "...a position equivalent in salary and prestige to the one he had left." This result is somewhat disturbing, since if he was incompetent, he should not win an equivalent position. Axmith lets this disturbing result lie, and moves onto a more expected result.

[29] Sometimes, relocation counseling entails persuading a manager to trade a high salary and an impressive title for job-satisfaction and a more congenial work environment. One man whose booming clothing store was bought out by a powerful supplier was appointed marketing manager for the entire organization. He proved totally incapable of handling the job and was fired a few months later. After some soul searching, he acknowledged that his strength lay in running a store, not in managing people. He decided to return to his own level of competence, accepted a former competitor's offer to manage his store, and is doing a first class job.

Even though this result is somewhat less disturbing, i.e. there is a clear case of incompetence at some level, the results still contradict LIA 4 expectations in two overt ways. First, the candidate decides that he actually is incompetent at the higher level and chooses to return to his level of competency; an inversion of the Peter Principle (Laurence, 1969). Secondly, he returns to this level with a "former competitor".

In addition to these two overt contradictions, there is a third contradiction that Axmith does not elaborate on, but which appears more fully in other materials (see sections 7.3.1, 7.3.3, 7.4.1, 7.6.1). This is alluded to in the last two sentences where the ex-manager engages in some "soul searching", finds his strengths, and returns to a situation where he can more effectively use these strengths. Under the LIA 4 contract, people's motivation is assumed to operate on a desire for promotion and prestige based

even in a secularized society.

on holding particular offices. People are not supposed to follow their “inner leanings” and do what they want to do but, rather, what the organization tells them to do; the career jurisdictional claim of the organization. The idea of trading status for happiness, while acknowledged in some instances, is generally perceived as leading to chaos because it invalidates the legitimacy of bureaucratic organizations to define individual career paths and replaces it with the concept of individually validated legitimacy.

The final wonder vignette is, in many ways the most disturbing for the LIA 4 contract.

[30] But relocation does not necessarily entail a limiting of horizons. One vice-president who had been dismissed by his employer was hired by another at a salary \$5,000 above his previous one. Clearly the man is not incompetent: it is just that his style and talents did not fit the requirements of one employer, whereas they turned out to be dead right for another.

This vignette takes on the disturbing situation created by the first wonder vignette head on and offers a solution: “Clearly the man is not incompetent: it is just that his style and talents did not fit the requirements of one employer, whereas they turned out to be dead right for another.” This resolution is, in many ways, an optimal solution. The ex-executive is both incompetent and not incompetent, but the definition of competence turns out not to be absolute, but relative. As such, it is a matter of “fit” rather than skill and, if this is the case, then it is clearly in the best interests of both employer and employee to fire them so that they can go to a place where there will be a better fit.

These three wonder vignettes all present conclusions that are reached via methods that are, in some way, anathema to the LIA 4 social contract. As such, they involve the use of actions and perceptions that are outside of the “accepted” (i.e. LIA 4 accepted)

social structure. Equally apparent is that each of these solutions was arrived at with the aid of an outplacement counselor.

The problem with these “solutions” lies in the very fact that, while they are “successful”, they are only successful through actions that are opposed to parts of the LIA 4 social contract. As such, they may appeal to the “results oriented, forward looking executive” who is more heard of than seen. In order to “sell” outplacement to the more ordinary executive, even if they may appreciate the results achieved by the aforementioned *outré* actions, Axmith uses a more readily comprehensible argument.

[31] Outplacement counseling is not only a constructive and humanitarian way of dealing with a difficult problem; it is also good business, from a purely financial point of view. Assume, for instance, that severance terms guarantee to a senior executive his full salary until he gets relocated, up to a maximum of one year. If this executive was earning \$50,000 a year, and counselors help him find a suitable job within six months, the company's saving adds up to \$25,000 plus some \$7,500 in fringe benefits.

The monetary argument is important since it serves to validate a “disturbing” (i.e. anti-LIA 4) solution by drawing on an “older” argument: the “bottom line”. This type of argument shows up several times in articles from 1976 to 1982, most notably in conjunction with the idea of wrongful dismissal (Harris, 1976, 1977a, 1977b).

7.5 Atrocity Tales in the courts: wrongful dismissal suits

It was not so long ago that employment contracts and wrongful dismissal suits were almost unknown. A strong collegial atmosphere prevailed among senior management. Hiring at the executive level was inevitably done from among fellow members of the “old-boy network.” If things didn’t work out, a quiet chat over lunch was considered sufficient. The employee in question was expected to “do the right thing” and quietly resign. Suing his employer was simply not done, because to do so would result in the employee being labelled an untrustworthy maverick, seriously jeopardizing his future in the business community. By challenging the

doctrine of management prerogative and publicizing what was felt to be a matter that required absolute discretion, the ex-employee could quickly find himself isolated and cut off from alternate sources of employment.

Today's executive is a different breed.

Grosman, 1982a:5

For many corporations, wrongful dismissal suits were the “ultimate” in betrayal: the ex-employee not only does not leave gracefully, he has the “audacity” to sue the company – publicly. The bottom line cost of such suits must be measured not only in terms of dollar cost (awards, damages and legal fees) but also in terms of ruined corporate reputation (note the resonance with Axmith’s anti-wonder tale vignettes in point 1 of sub-section 7.4.2).

The problem with wrongful dismissal suits stems from a number of quirks of employment law. While the law in the 1970’s was fairly clear regarding unionized employees and dismissal, it was much less clear for non-unionized employees. Harris (1976) notes that in order for a wrongful dismissal suit “...to succeed, the employee must be able to prove the three essential elements of his case: the dismissal, that there was no just cause, and the damages that he or she has suffered.” Before we can get into a discussion of the specifics that created so much uncertainty, it is necessary to examine the chain of logic followed in deciding a wrongful dismissal suit.

7.5.1 Mapping out wrongful dismissal

One effect of the changing economic climate of LIA 5/ESA 1 was a shift in the patterns and meaning of dismissals. And, as with any rapid change, the legal interpretations struggled to catch up with the new reality. If terminations in the LIA 4 contract were handled by expecting the man to “do the right thing” and resign (see above

quote), terminations in the LIA 5/ESA 1 period were much more turbulent, especially in cases involving “questionable” terminations.

Figure 7-III: Wrongful dismissal

The flowchart shown in Figure 7-III maps out the process involved in examining a particular situation to see if a case of wrongful dismissal has occurred. In particular, there are several key questions that must be answered, in order, before a ruling and/or award can be made, namely:

1. whether or not a termination has taken place;
2. was the terminated person an “employee”;
3. was there “just cause”;
4. was there “reasonable notice”; and finally
5. is the offer (award) fair.

7.5.1.1 Has a termination taken place?

The idea that a dismissal may be unclear is somewhat strange. However, in light of some corporate practices relating to executive termination strategies, a number of pseudo-dismissal situations have been interpreted by common law as equivalent to an outright dismissal. Specifically, these situations include requests for resignations, demotions and, in rare cases, "... by the conduct of the employer – such as refusing to assign further job tasks to the employee, and simply ignoring the employee's existence." (Harris, 1976). These "pseudo-dismissals" are, collectively, referred to as "constructive dismissal".³⁰⁰

The doctrine of constructive dismissal operates in situations in which the employer refuses to fulfill the terms of the employment contract and thereby releases the employee from that contract.³⁰¹ This refusal of the employer to fulfill the terms of the employment contract, either written or assumed, creates a series of situations where the employer changes the duties of the employee by fiat. The unilateral change in the nature of an employment contract has been held to constitute constructive dismissal, as have

³⁰⁰ It is a peculiarity of Canadian employment law that, in order for a plaintiff to receive legal remedy in cases of possible constructive dismissal they must no longer be employed: they must "quit" their jobs before they can legally know if they have been fired.

³⁰¹ It is important to note that the use of the word "contract" here does not require the existence of a written contract. Indeed, the establishment of such a non-verbal contract, and the discovery of what is in that contract, is a major component of many wrongful dismissal cases (cf. Grossman, 1982:14-16).

demands for resignation,³⁰² reductions in salary,³⁰³ and demotions in job responsibility,³⁰⁴ to name just a few (cf. Grossman, 1982a ch. 3; Harris, 1980, ch. 3).

While the doctrine of constructive dismissal may serve to answer the question of whether or not a person has “quit” in cases where a termination may be in doubt, in and of itself it does not answer the question of whether or not they are entitled to severance. There are several types of situations where a person may be involved with an employing organization but they are not considered to be “employees” for legal purposes.

7.5.1.2 Was the terminated person an “employee”?

Who is and is not an “employee” in the legal meaning of the term has importance not only in cases of wrongful dismissal suits, but also in terms of tax law and legal liability. Under Canadian tax law, an independent contractor is able to deduct many items from their personal taxes that an employee is not able to. Independent contractors, however, are not eligible for severance pay, and fall into the category of “non-employees” that includes agents, directors, shareholders, partners, joint venturers and independent contractors (cf. Levitt, 1992).

While who is and who is not an “employee” may be understood in a common sense” reality, the legalities are somewhat confused and, at least in the case of professionals and executives, subject to negotiation. By way of example, doctors are not

³⁰² *Shtabsky v. Dubeta & Dubeta Interiors*, [1974] 2 W.W.R. 324; *Thiessen v. Leduc*, [1975] 4 W.W.R. 387 (cf. Harris, 1980:25).

³⁰³ *Evans v. Fisher Motor Co.* (1915), 8 O.W.N. 19.

³⁰⁴ *O'Grady v. Insurance Corporation of B.C.* (1975), 63 D.L.R. (2d) 370, *Thompson v. Norcen Energy Resources* [1977] 1 A.C.W.S. 250 (cf. Harris, 1980:25-26).

considered to be employees of a hospital while anesthetists are (cf. Grosman, 1982a:20-22).³⁰⁵

The situation is even more confused when we are examining upper level executives who may, at the same time, be both employee, shareholder and director (cf. Harris, 1980:14-15). This is especially the situation when one deals with the president of a corporation. In general, the courts have held that a person is eligible for dismissal benefits if a) their roles can be separated, and b) at least one of these roles is that of an employee.³⁰⁶

7.5.1.3 Was there "just cause"?

While there was no legal requirement for stating cause for termination, a "just cause" argument is the only one that can allow for an immediate termination with little or no severance. "Unfortunately," as Harris (1976) notes, "the law offers no definite criteria for this term, providing only loosely phrased definitions." And, while many causes have been accepted as "just" (e.g. intoxication, willful disobedience, repeated illness, etc.; see

³⁰⁵ It is important to note that doctors are only not considered employees as long as they receive no remuneration from the hospital. This was established as an important criterion in *Koch v. The Trustees of the Ottawa Civic Hospital*, [1979] 3 A.C.W.S. 201. This was established using a test known as "the organization test" where it was found that a person who is "hired" to perform actions crucial to the operation of the organization is, in fact and law, an "employee".

³⁰⁶ A similar position has been noted in the question of an employee-partner. In this instance, the existence of profit sharing is not considered to be the test of partnership but, rather "The real test appears to be, whether the parties are constituted agents in contracting liabilities in respect of the business which is being carried on." (*Sproule v. McConnel*, [1925] 1 D.L.R. 982, p.988; Harris, 1982:15-16).

Grosman, 1982a:30-44; Harris, 1980, ch. 3; Levitt, 1992, ch. 6), "... the more senior the employee, the "most just" the cause must be." (Harris, 1977a:43).³⁰⁷

What is more important is the question of what is not cause. This point is noted by Grosman (1982a:44) when he notes that

When we speak of cause, we refer to justifiable cause to dismiss an employee because of his individual shortcomings, not a general need or legitimate desire on the part of an employer to pare the size of company staff for reasons of economy unrelated to individual job performance.

This does not mean that employees may not be terminated for economic reasons, as is evidenced in the many cases of general downsizings that have happened. Rather, it means that employees who are let go for "reasons of economy unrelated to individual job performance" must be paid severance.

This is the key point to remember: "just cause" allows for the termination of an employee with little or no severance, while "non-just cause" terminations require severance arrangements that are subject to "reasonable notice".

7.5.1.4 Was there "reasonable notice"?

The question of "reasonable notice" centers around the test by which severance payments are decided. In general, terminated employees must be given "reasonable notice" that their employment will cease. In Canada, it is a matter of law that cash settlements may be given in lieu of notice in an amount equivalent or greater than the pay would be for the notice period.

³⁰⁷ In effect, common law allows less leeway in dismissing senior employees than in dismissing junior employees. In the case of senior executive, especially older men, this leeway may be quite extensive.

The uncertainty of what constitutes reasonable notice is at the heart of many wrongful dismissal suits. As Grosman (1982a:74) notes

The employer's opinion of what is reasonable notice may differ sharply from that of the trial judge, but once a wrongful dismissal claim has gone to court, it is only the judge's opinion that is of any practical significance.

Throughout the 1970's and early 1980's, the courts awarded increasing notice periods to plaintiffs (cf. Grosman, 1982a: ch. 4; Harris, 1980, ch. 4; Mole, 1990, ch. 6 and Appendix A) shifting from simplistic formulae to much more complex ones.

The standard for the more complex formulae was set in 1960 in *Bardal v. Globe and Mail*, [1960] O.W.N. 253 (p.255; quoted in Harris, 1980:66)

There could be no catalogue laid down as to what was reasonable notice in particular classes of cases. The reasonableness of the notice must be decide with reference to each particular case, having regard to the character of the employment, the length of service of the servant, the age of the servant, and the availability of similar employment, having regard to the experience, training and qualifications of the servant.³⁰⁸

The basis for the differential treatment of executives and, indeed for the plausibility of outplacement as a component of severance arrangements, derives from this decision.

In particular, *Bardal v. Globe and Mail* establishes four key points of differentiation:

1. The "character" of employment;
2. The length of service;
3. The age of the servant; and

³⁰⁸ The use of the term "servant" is peculiar to British derived employment law which is based on the Master-Servant relationship. As such, employees are referred to as "servants" and the employer is referred to as the "master".

4. The availability of similar employment.

The main effect of this decision is to produce a generalized uncertainty and anything that promises a reduction in this uncertainty will have a competitive advantage. The key criterion is the availability of similar employment given the age of the ex-employee, since the character and length of employment are amenable to generalization.

Since there are no hard and fast tests of "fairness" in notice, anything which would serve to show a trial judge that the ex-employer is attempting to meet the burden laid down in *Bardal v. Globe and Mail* would serve to modify the judges' perception of reasonability. In some ways, this point was made by the trial judge in *Blakely v. Victualic Company of Canada Limited*, [1979] 1 A.C.W.S. 351

The evidence that I would like to have had if it was available to assist me would relate to the ability of a man in the position of the plaintiff to relocate in a position close to, if not equal to that which he left in the period of time that such relocation could take.

This criterion is exactly where outplacement enters the picture. Consider, for example, the claim made by Axmith (1975; 7.4.2)

[28] The results are often spectacular. One former vice-president who at first would not hear of approaching potential employers finally gave in and sent out 180 unsolicited "contact" letters saying in effect: "This is what I have to offer, this is what I can do for you." Ten of the recipients invited him for interviews and within less than three months, he was back at work in a position equivalent in salary and prestige to the one he had left.

The key point here is the time period – "within less than three months". Considering the character of employment, a vice-presidency, it is unlikely that three months would be enough to secure a similar situation. Indeed, Axmith's claim strikes at the heart of the *Bardal v. Globe and Mail* decision by claiming that outplacement

counselors are able to reduce the time required to find a similar situation. If this is true, then the offer of outplacement services should serve to reduce the notice period and, in some situations, the total cost of termination (a claim made by Axmith (1975) in his concluding paragraph).

7.5.1.5 Is the severance offer (award) fair?

Considerations relating to the “fairness” of a severance offer flow from many considerations, not just those listed in *Bardal v. Globe and Mail*. Case law has supported awards for pension benefits, moving costs, bonuses and fringe benefits that would normally accrue to an employee as part of their employment (see Harris, 1980:79-91). In addition, the courts have also awarded damages, on top of “normal” severance payments, in several cases (cf Harris, 1980:91-100, 109-119).

Without going into extensive detail which is clearly beyond the scope of this work, we can state that, in general, the question of specific awards tends to revert to the test established in *Bardal v. Globe and Mail*, mitigated by any potential damages and/or other factors.

7.5.2 Wrongful Dismissal and taxation

One final confounding factor when terminating executives stems from Revenue Canada, which operated with a dual definition of taxability on severance pay (Harris, 1976, 1977a; Davies, 1979). As Davies (1979) notes

Suing a former employer for loss of office through wrongful dismissal has become a favorite piece of tax flim-flam for executives over the past couple of years. The reason for this surge in court actions is that as the law stands, damages awarded by the courts arising from the loss of employment are tax-free in the hands of the ex-employee.

Since the court generated awards may well exceed a years salary (cf. Harris, 1977a, 1980:71-77; Mole, 1990: Appendix A) and “normal” severance benefits are taxable, the desirability of receiving court ordered “damages” rather than severance is obvious. This particular tax loophole was changed in 1981 and, as a result, the vast majority of court awarded severance benefits were considered taxable income (cf. Grosman, 1982a:130; for the pre-1981 situation, see Harris, 1980, ch. 5).

7.5.3 Wrongful Dismissal and rhetoric – concluding remarks

The use of wrongful dismissal as a threat in the establishment of the outplacement industry was established as early as Axmith's 1975 article. At the start of January, 1982, the *Executive* hired Brian Grosman, a well-know Toronto-based wrongful dismissal lawyer, as a columnist. In a series of articles, Grosman (1982b, c, d, e, f, g, h, i) refines the legal dangers current for businessmen, including wrongful dismissal suits.

The ties between Grosman and the outplacement industry become blindingly obvious in November of 1982, when he organizes a conference on wrongful dismissal in Toronto in conjunction with Murray Axmith (Grosman et al, 1982). The idea that there should be strong ties between outplacement counselors and wrongful dismissal lawyers is unsurprising since each can support the others' jurisdictional claims. Outplacement counselors counsel taking legal advice, while wrongful dismissal lawyers suggest using outplacement services - a nice symbiosis.

While I have characterized Axmith's (1975) article as a masterpiece, it is troubling in many ways. In particular, it tries to establish the legitimacy of outplacement in relation to two particular factors: the danger of a poorly handled firing, and the length of time it takes for the ex-employee to find a new position. Indeed, it is doubtful if

outplacement could have been sold on any other criteria, and yet it firmly establishes the industry as contingent on these two overt factors.

Unfortunately, at least for the outplacement industry, these two overt factors rest on a disjunction between various structural and cultural components. In particular, the dangers of poorly handled firings can fairly easily be met with practice and the dangers of wrongful dismissal suits can be mitigated by employment contracts (cf. Grosman, 1982a, ch. 8; Mole, 1990, ch. 5).

The remaining overt factor, the time to find a new position, rests on two unstable assumptions. First, there is the assumption that similar employment is available, a situation which proved increasingly rare during the 1980's especially in the manufacturing sector. The second assumption is more invidious. There is an assumption that the ex-employee will not be experienced in job search skills because, if they are, then they will have an "easier" time in finding a new position.

While this second assumption may have been warranted in the 1970's, it became decreasingly valid as time went on. Job search skills, at least in a pre-packaged form, were readily available for a few dollars in any book store. But, as we will see more clearly in the next chapter, the outplacement industry was not selling job search skills by themselves but, rather, an attitudinal "remake".

The placement of the monetary argument at the end of Axmith's (1975; see above) article illustrates a central problem for outplacement from its beginning into the mid 1990's: how can you explain what, exactly, you are "selling" in terms that "make sense" to the average businessman? While the solution offered by Axmith worked, it has

certain major problems with it. Specifically, how can you explain an attitude change to people who can only officially examine the dollar cost?

While many of the solutions offered sought to use both tangible, economic arguments (e.g. long term severance savings, reduced chances of corporate loss and/or wrongful dismissal suits, etc.) and ethical arguments (i.e. corporate responsibility), there was still the problem of communication. Several outplacement firms, most noticeably Stevenson & Kellogg (later *KPMG*) came up with a rather “unique” solution: the use of “mystery plays” designed to give the audience a full sensory appreciation of the “product”.

7.6 Mystery Plays

The use of mystery plays to communicate concepts and experiences that are “unintelligible”, at least as far as the normative E_c of a given culture is concerned, is a fairly normal occurrence throughout history (cf. Kerényi, 1955). Mystery plays rely on the evocation of empathic experience from their audience creating an internal validity, regardless of the dominant representational strategies of the culture. In many ways, the use of mystery plays to explain outplacement is a natural outgrowth of the core of the product: attitudinal change.

7.6.1 After the Axe

In 1981, the National Film Board of Canada released a film entitled *After the Axe* (NFB, 1981). Shot in 1980, the film is an intriguing blend of dramatization and documentary. It presents the story of Douglas “Biff” Wilson, played by actor James B. Douglas, a 44-year old vice president of Universal Foods (a fictitious company). Outside

of the actors playing Biff and his family, the film notes that “all characters in this film appeared as themselves”.

After the Axe marks a dramatic change in the presentation genre of outplacement wonder tales, shifting the focus from “real life” stories to semi-fictional “mystery plays”; a form that comes to be used by the industry to “explain” their processes to clients later on. The story line presented in this film is little different from a similar mystery play I observed in 1994.³⁰⁹

The story of Douglas “Biff” Wilson is an ideal type story in the Weberian sense, and is presented almost in terms of Jungian archetypes. Biff is a 44-year old vice-president of Universal Foods who has been with the company for 15 years. He was one of two candidates for the job of President. Unfortunately for him, he didn’t get it. After six months, the new President finally decides to eliminate his rival. There is clearly no question that the decision is based on a personality conflict.

As the audience is being introduced to Biff, there are cuts to the president meeting with Eric Barton, Stevenson & Kellogg’s premier outplacement counselor.³¹⁰ Biff is to receive 12 months continuance (severance) and no company credit cards. Eric and the president talk about various ways to break the news to Biff, and settle on an immediate exit style (see 8.3.1). Eric will be waiting next door to finish the process.

³⁰⁹ The sole major difference being a meme complex surrounding the idea of the “corporate warrior”. The myth of the corporate warrior peaked in North America around 1985-86. It was a component of a memetic complex that blended social Darwinism’s “survival of the fittest”, with the idea of a “corporate Jungle” (cf. Jay, 1971), and drew on the then current fascination with Japanese organizational culture and the *Book of Five Rings* by Musashi – the “bible” of Japanese businessmen.

³¹⁰ Eric Barton and Murray Axmith are considered by most people to be the founders of outplacement in Canada. Axmith popularized outplacement in the press, while Barton operated behind the scenes using contacts from his extensive network. Barton, in and of himself, is a fascinating psychological study.

After a short scene of Eric and Biff interacting, Biff turns over his keys and cards and leaves. As he packs his possessions, the voice over talks about being “shaken” and “numb”. He considered his corporate allies and the chance of making a fight out of it, but decides there is “not much point”. As Biff leaves, he tells his secretary – he “couldn’t think of anything to say.”

At home talking with his wife, Biff talks about the experience and about his reaction to Eric. He describes him as “clinical”, and the experience as being “dismembered and out of the door in ten minutes”. Biff asks “Whose side is he [Eric] on?”. In a fit of anger, he says that he “sweated blood for the company. Now what do I do?”.

The next scene introduces a wrongful dismissal lawyer talking about how the company paid \$10k to Stevenson & Kellogg to avoid wrongful dismissal suits. The lawyer notes that

“...the use of relocation counselors has come into being in the last 4 or 5 years and, in my assessment, the use of their services... is not necessarily motivated by humane considerations. I think probably the first concern an employer has is to avoid the likes of myself in that a lawsuit is detrimental not only to their image to the public but also to employees in a similar situation.

The company, by giving Biff the use of a counselor and 12 months severance gets to maintain their “nice guy image”, sooth their conscious, and make a lawsuit unlikely.

The scene shifts to the preliminary interviews and program description. “Wilson had been shattered and the program was designed to put him back together again.” A Psychologist and various job search professionals measure Biff’s talent and temperament

in order to produce an assessment. The image presented is that of a "hospital ward" with Eric Barton as the "doctor".

The next scene talks about the founding of relocation counseling in New York in 1968 by an "adman marketing fired executives." Eric, an ex-insurance salesman and born-again Christian sees "something spiritual" in counseling. Eric draws an analogy between the fired executive and lepers, saying "we do it without the bodies falling apart".

The next few scenes show Biff getting health and psychometric testing. The results could have been better. Biff is inclined to sleeplessness, rationalizations at night, and hyperventilation. Psychologically, he is inclined to be blunt and judgmental. He does, however, rank in the 80th% in intelligence, sales skills and competitive nature. His skills and past achievements are quantified and measured and put into resumes.

Before going on, it is worth looking at the imagery used at this point. Ever since Biff started his orientation, the imagery has been high tech (1980 style) aimed at rebuilding the ex-executive. The analogy with hospitals and doctors is strengthened through the high tech imagery, and use of "scientific" testing, both physical and psychological. The use of this imagery, outside of conjuring images of the Six-Million Dollar Man, draws from the legitimacy of science and medicine to reinforce the professional legitimacy of outplacement. The imagery, and the semantic responses it is designed to elicit, are the lead in for the "new" Biff: repackaged and ready to go - at least in his own mind.

In order to test the new Biff, Eric arranges a mock interview with another S&K professional; Marg Fortin. In a twist that is characteristic of mystery plays (and good comedy), Biff blows it. In answer to the question of what kind of job he is aiming at, he

replies, haltingly, "the same as at Universal". Throughout the interview, Biff's answers are clichés, characterized by a lack of eye contact. His anger is apparent when asked "Have you been fired from Universal foods?" Fumbling for an answer, he growls back that he was "edged out". As Marg points out to Eric in the post-interview analysis, Biff tries to destroy the current president and shows clear paranoid reactions that make him look bad. He has no emotional control. When asked why General Foods should hire him, he has no answer.

The next scene clearly shows two different attitudes: Biff's and Eric's. Eric argues that Biff must shift his aim point from \$500m/y companies to \$50-200m/y companies, branch out of packaged goods, and change industries. Biff characterizes these companies as the "minor leagues", disagrees with the assessment and decides to go out on his own. Eric comments that he should try it and that "over time he will experience rejection. Everyone will give him meetings and not hire him."

These attitudes characterize the liminal state of a classic rite of passage. At this point in the mystery play, Biff has the overt appearance of a transformed person, but the interior is unchanged. Eric argues that he must "lower his sights" and rework his interior attitudes about his desires and previous employment. Until he does so, Eric believes that he will be a "failure" – "[e]veryone will give him meetings and not hire him."

The scene shifts to an interview with Herb Smith, a well-known headhunter, who characterizes fired executives as self-defensive, having a lost ego. Smith sums them up by saying that "unemployed is unemployed", and that "these people need help, need counseling" and nothing and nobody will open up the gates for them until they are "cured". Smith's commentary is a clear endorsement of the professional requirement for

outplacement counselors. The scenes that follow point out that Biff is not only not used to asking for help, he doesn't know how.

This type of in-story analysis highlights the phases of unemployment constructed by the outplacement counselors: an ideal type of the unemployed executive. This presentation of the ideal type is carried on in a piece of self-reflection by Biff. He talks about having no other interests encouraged by his father, and how he drifted into marketing and felt that he belonged there; he "couldn't start all over again, it was too late. In a side note to the self-reflection scene, Eric notes that the alternatives "would scare the wits right out of you and that's one of the significant roles that we can play."

This self-reflective scene, along with interpretation provided by Eric, is followed by a series of scenes dealing with the general cultural environment and some of the alternatives to outplacement. In the first follow-up scene, set in and around Toronto's Cambridge Club, the emphasis is on the businessman warrior. Images of lunch hour karate sessions, interspersed with an interview with the Club's resident doctor, Papst, center around a discussion of the "business man warrior" mythos.

A fair amount of the time in this scene centers around the use of military idiom in business: "how I can kill him", etc.³¹¹ Papst specializes in stress related diseases "the wounds of a businessman warrior". He notes that his number one predictive tool is the *Financial Post* which he says contain "dispatches from the front". Papst argues that Biff "had it good" with a "1st class" generous settlement. Otherwise he might have ended up in Forty-Plus (cf. 7.3.3).

³¹¹ There are some interesting linkages between the mythos of the businessman warrior and the popularity of Japanese business organization that peaked in 1984-85 with the publication of *Musashi's Book of Five Rings* by the Harvard Business School.

The Forty-Plus scene is incredibly depressing. The offices are dingy and dark, and the person interviewed is incredibly “downbeat”. The message is quite clear, Forty-Plus is for losers; executive who have been discarded with no support. The Alcoholics Anonymous memes come through quite clearly, but their presentation associates them with failure, despair, and a distressing lack of technology.

One of the most interesting facts in this entire movie is that the NFB chose to profile Forty-Plus of New York, rather than Forty-Plus of Toronto. There is no reason given, and the only “justification” offered is that Forty-Plus was founded in New York. It is quite plausible that the entire scene is produced to highlight the differences between the programs in a manner that makes outplacement appear to be the only real option.

The plausibility of this interpretation is strengthened in a following scene where Eric is discussing why people get fired. Eric argues that the main reason is personality conflict rather than competence: someone doesn’t like the ex-executive. Drawing from Biff’s example, he notes that “he is a threat” to people. Eric argues that Biff, and others like him, cared about the company and people and get mad if something goes wrong.

The scene interposes shots from the interview with Herb Smith, the headhunter, talking about the topic of company loyalty. Smith says that “company loyalty is about as progressive as moats and drawbridges in my book.... Business is a contract entered into in enlightened self interest by shareholders and employees” The corporation can’t be loyal because they could be gone tomorrow. To give your life to an organization, “fealty”, is a license to become obsolete.

These two scenes, with Eric talking about personality conflict and Smith talking about why company loyalty is obsolete, highlight several key themes: in the movie, in the rhetorical construction of outplacement, and in the competition between outplacement and Forty-Plus style groups. The message is clearly an attack on several LIA 4 memes: the “loyalty for security” meme and the “at fault” meme.

The corollary message is also interesting: keep the loyalty for security meme and end up unemployed and hanging out at Forty-Plus. If, on the other hand, you get rid of the loyalty for security meme and work hard in your own self-interest, you will get support (via the outplacement companies) and get a good job. The fact that there is little overt discussion of the “at fault” meme is indicative in and of itself. This is especially true, given that the Forty-Plus scene essentially supports the “at fault” meme, while it is replaced by a “no fault” meme in the rest of the movie.

There is a clear linking strategy operating here where LIA 4 memes are associated with depressing results and ESA 1 memes are associated with hopeful results. This interpretation is strengthened in the following scene where Eric is talking to people who have been on the program for some time. In a style reminiscent of a Baptist preacher, Eric harangues the audience arguing that they must keep going and not lose confidence. He says that you have to find a potential employer and, in order to do so, you just have to organize everything “right” and “work harder”: you must “set your sights” on an *appropriate* employer, and this requires a lot of research and thought.

This is followed by a scene that notes that the statistics on white collar unemployment show that it is at the highest level since turn of the century. This extent

estimate clearly reinforces the message in the previous scene that you have to a) work at finding a job, and b) you must target an appropriate employer.

In another scene designed to attack LIA 4 memes, we are shown the King-Bay chaplaincy. Graham Tucker, the minister, has constructed this office-chapel in order to handle many of the problems experienced by people in the workplace. Interviews with various people at the chaplaincy, and with Tucker, establish a clear message that the LIA 4 concept of “work as the source of meaning” is dangerous and, ultimately, treacherous. Tucker “pit[ies] people for placing their faith in a career.” The current spate of downsizings, layoffs and shutdowns offers little concern for members of Tuckers group, one of whom comments that “the lord will look after me”.

The scene shifts to a general discussion of the future of work: competition will be fierce, with elites holding jobs. There will be no more “traditional work”, so it is time to start rethinking. Companies will be faced with increasing competition, and terminations will increase. Eric takes up this theme of increasing terminations, and characterizes the career of the future as having shorter time horizons and multiple career changes. He argues that companies are expecting more from, and placing more pressure on, their executives. He believes that the era of the hardnosed manager is coming back

The scenes from the showing of Forty-Plus to the discussion on changes in jobs are characterized by increasingly analytic attacks on LIA 4 memes. I have already discussed the attacks on the loyalty for security meme, and the career change scene strengthens the attack on the “at fault” meme. It is also interesting to point out the use of the King Bay Chaplaincy to attack another core LIA 4 meme: work is meaning. The use of an overtly religious and, hence, ostensibly “moral” source for this attack is important,

since it draws on the moral legitimacy of Christianity in opposition to the LIA 4 social contract. The fact that this is followed by a scene discussing the changing nature of work, jobs and careers adds a “rational” dimension to the “moral” argument against equating work with meaning.

The next scene returns our attention to Biff who has, at this point in time, taken Eric’s advice about research and self-presentation, but is still aiming too high. This time, Biff has got an interview in New York with a US firm that is looking for a president of their Canadian division. He looks good, but doesn’t get the job. In an interjected commentary, Eric explains that Biff just isn’t up to jobs in companies at the \$500m/yr level. He is “obsolete” and “too old”, and cannot catch up to younger men. While these comments would, in all probability, be interpreted by the viewer as “ageist”, at least consciously, they also reinforce the key observation that the tempo of organizational and technological change is increasing. As a result, “older” men like Biff, who have had long careers, cannot take the time it would require to be retrained.

After reading the rejection letter, Biff thinks to himself “and for me, it felt like it was all over.” He thinks about buying a marina, or “packing it in, but I wanted to stay in business. So I faced facts. Lowered my sights.” Or, in other words, he accepted the last piece of Eric’s diagnosis – that he must change his corporate aim point.

The next scene is a montage showing Biff on the phone networking towards a particular job with a 50m/yr company. In a series of shots, he researches the company, meets with people who know about it and gets inside information, passes a series of preliminary interviews and is finally offered a job. In one short shot, Biff discusses Eric’s role in his job search

Sure Eric understands the job market and he helped me deal with my situation. But he also helped create it. Don't kid yourself. He makes it easy for companies to get rid of people.

Biff summarizes what he has learned: don't give loyalty to any company, distance yourself emotionally from the job, and always follow your own interests. In order to get a job you must know how to network properly and how to research a job opportunity fully.

This, according to Eric, is Kubler-Ross's state of acceptance.³¹² The narrator says that 80% of people with relocation counseling end up with a job after four to six months. Even so, the existence of relocation counselors has made it more easy to fire people. The final scene of the movie shows Biff being led around by the president of the company and introduced to people. Part of this introduction is a series of *sotto voce* comments on who they are and what they do. For the final person Biff is introduced to, the comment is "Ted doesn't know it, but you're his replacement."

7.6.2 Summing up mystery plays

Outside of chronicling the current operation of outplacement, *After the Axe* established a mode of communication that effectively conveyed the meaning of the product: attitudinal change. It also served to effectively establish the jurisdictional claims of outplacement counselors to career planning, even if the overt message produced places the responsibility on the fired person.

³¹² Several points need to be made here. This is the first instance I have found of a direct public reference to Kubler-Ross's model of death and dying. This model is the core emotional reaction model used inside the industry to describe the reactions of people to job loss.

The problem with mystery plays in our society, however, is that they are not normally considered as "acceptable", especially in business. This did not stop Stevenson & Kellogg (later *KPMG*) from hiring a Toronto theatre company in 1987 to produce a one hour mystery play that could be produced at any office as a sales technique (see 7.8.1). Nor has it prevented the film industry from producing movies based around the same types of themes (e.g. *The Full Monty* and *Jerry McGuire*) and spreading many of the same memes to an even wider audience.

7.7 Key memes and semantic reaction modifications in LIA 5/ESA 1

Figure 7-IV: LIA 4 key memes

Outplacement was constructed during the LIA 5/ESA 1 period and was firmly established in Canada by 1983. In the past four sections, I have illustrated this construction using exemplary articles, and showing how each of the primary memes of the LIA 4 social contract has been attacked and, in some cases, replaced.

The purpose of this section is to pull the previous sections analyses together. In order to do this, I will go over each of the major memes and meme complexes mentioned

in the past four sections, and show a) how they have been modified, and b) where this modification came from.

Figure 7-V: ESA 2-3 meme complex

7.7.1 Permanence of the Organization

In the previous sections, I did not talk about this meme very much for the simple reason that I didn't have to. While it is a primary meme of the LIA 4 social contract, it was also subject to extensive attack via the general business press, most notably in articles on bankruptcy, downsizings and plant closings. Anyone who gives the business papers even a cursory glance during this period will inevitably come to the conclusion that no organization can be permanent.

7.7.2 Employment-Unemployment

The "employment is good/unemployment is bad" binary meme is generally intact, but with certain very important modifications. In a number of cases (e.g. Walden's tale), work may well be bad for the individual (e.g. stress, heart attacks, etc.). The first key modification to the equation is to a variant that goes "appropriate employment is good,

while inappropriate employment is bad" (cf. 7.3.1,7.3.3,7.4.1,7.4.2,7.6.1). This change relies on a shift in the vocation meme (see 7.7.3).

The second key modification may be stated as "appropriate unemployment may be good, IFF it is a growth/learning experience". While this is normally associated with the provision of outplacement services, there are some exceptions (e.g. Walden's tale). There is also an unmentioned modification which redefines the fluidity of non-employment statuses such as "retired" and "student". In the LIA 4 period, both of these non-employment statuses were fairly tightly linked with age. During the ESA 1 period they start to be disassociated from age, although this trend doesn't really become "accepted" until the ESA 2 period with the extensive spread of temporary and contract employment.

7.7.3 Vocations and Meaning

One of the key shifts from the LIA 4 social contract that took place in the complex surrounds the "vocation" meme. This complex provided the moral basis for many of the other memes in the LIA 4 social contract, most particularly the "work equals meaning" meme, the "faith in the organization" meme, and by extension, for the "loyalty for security" meme. The concept of "vocation" derives from certain specific metaphysical and theological assumptions (cf. Weber, 1958:exp. Ch. 3). For our purposes only a few of these assumptions are important, two in particular.

The first assumption is that all individuals are born having a purpose in life, a "calling". Following one's calling is moral, while abandoning one's calling is immoral. This moral conclusion is valid regardless of the source of the calling: Genetics, God, Karma, or the Organization. The ESA 1 shift in the concept of vocation returns it to an

earlier, more Protestant form, where the knowledge of what the calling is, is to be found within the individual rather than via any organization. The nature of the calling is found by getting the individual to examine their talents and how they can be applied.

The second shift derives from the first. If no organization can provide you with meaning, then work, defined as working for an organization, cannot either. Rather, one must expand the definition of "work" beyond what is possible within organizations. There are several corollaries to this. First, one must not place one's faith in an organization, only in one's self, one's Gods, and one's personal network. The second corollary is that loyalty is to that which you place faith in: self, Gods, and network rather than an individual organization.

In many ways, the meme complex surrounding vocations provided the moral grounding for the LIA 4 social contract. The same meme complex was around in the ESA 1 and 2 phases, but it provided support for, among other things, the outplacement industry. The concept of "vocation" has not, in any way disappeared but, rather, mutated into a more introspective, opportunity driven form.

7.7.4 Terminations and Fault

The "terminations are evil" meme of the LIA 4 phase underwent a radical transformation during the LIA5/ESA 1 phase. In the LIA 5a period, we see a shift towards terminations as "good" for both the company and the individual (Axmith, 1975) if there is a poor fit between employee and organization. During the LIA 5b/ESA 1b period and later, the meme mutates again to something approaching "terminations are inevitable".

This shift, where terminations move beyond the control of individuals and/or companies, mirrors a shift in the "at fault" meme. As unemployment became increasingly common due to mergers, downsizings and restructurings, the "at fault" meme moved to a "no fault/limited fault" version of decreasing utility (cf. Tyrrell, 1994). At the same time, an increasing number of employment opportunities shifted towards contract, term employment and flexwork (part-time), much of which was arranged through outsourcing agents (cf. Rifkin, 1994). Given this shift in employment forms, an "at fault" meme is no longer feasible.

7.7.5 Career Control

In the LIA 4 period, individual organizations exerted a fairly strong jurisdictional claim over executive career development. By the end of the LIA 5 phase, this control, and the concomitant jurisdictional claims, were rapidly disappearing. Part of the reason for this was the increasingly mobile nature of executives, while another part derived from the increasingly frequent use of employment contracts with generous severance terms (the so-called "Golden Parachutes"). Jurisdiction claims over career development for executives moved increasingly into the hands of the executive themselves, aided and abetted by outplacement counselors and a host of popular authors (e.g. Bolles, 1993; Bridges, 1994; Côté, 1993; Snodgrass, 1996; Swartz, 1997).

7.7.6 Summarizing the shift

None of the memes of the LIA social contract survived the shift to the Early Silicon Age intact, outside of peoples' desires. As one industrial sector after another was hit with the waves of restructuring, the memes shifted to a newer social contract.

While the new Silicon Age social contract has not yet stabilized, there are certain core features that are apparent (see Figure 7-V). In particular, there is an increasing reliance on a personal network that may, or may not, be the equivalent to the old boys network of the LIA 4 contract and a reliance on the self. Increasingly, we find a meme complex developing that is resonant with the reciprocity systems of hunting and gathering groups, albeit much less formalized (see 6.7, Tyrrell, 1996a, forthcoming).

The development of this new meme complex was not, by any means, solely produced by the development of the outplacement industry, although they were vocal proponents for it. If we can say that economic and technical shifts forced the birth of the new social contract, then it is equally valid to say that outplacement counselors served as both midwives and shamans for that contract.

7.8 Outplacement Rhetoric after 1983

Best (1987) argued that there are two rhetorical phases involved in the construction of any social problem. The first phase involves what he termed a "rhetoric of rectitude" while the second involves a "rhetoric of rationality". Obviously, the strict division of phases is a generalization, and there are clear elements of a rhetoric of rationality involved in the first phase, while there are elements of a rhetoric of rectitude involved in the second phase. The shift between these two phases in the construction of outplacement, while clear, is somewhat hard to pinpoint in time taking place somewhere between November, 1982 and July 1983, at the height of the 1982 recession.

In many ways, characterizing the rhetoric involved in the initial construction of outplacement as a rhetoric of rectitude is misleading. A better descriptive term would include the elements of terror and confusion evoked both by the rhetoric and by the

situation. One possible term would be a "rhetoric of salvation". Consider, by way of example, the consistent representation of the outplacement counselor as an agent who is able to resolve potential and actual atrocity situations or Axmith's (1975:[27]) claim that "their function is resurrection rather than burial."³¹³

7.8.1 Corporate Mystery Plays

As I mentioned in section 7.6, there has been some difficulty in conveying the "reality" of the outplacement process to corporate clients. The success of the film *After the Axe* (NFB, 1981; see 7.6.1) highlighted the utility of using a performative mode of communication to sell programs. As early as 1982, Stevenson & Kellogg (later *KPMG*) were using a performance based sales presentation in addition to their normal sales efforts. In 1987, they hired a Toronto theatre company to produce a one hour "mystery play" script, the "Career Consultancy Simulation", that became the standard.

In 1994, I attended one of the presentations of the Career Consultancy Simulation, along with 15 Human Resource people from a variety of local companies. After a quick introduction and statement of purpose, the play was presented with the counselors playing the various roles. As far as performance standards go, the play was pretty amateurish, but the "audience" reaction was quite good. In the question and answer session following the performance, and in the coffee break that followed, many of the attendees commented that they now, finally, understood just what outplacement was all about. Interestingly enough, while the attendees were unable to put their understanding in words without reference to the events in the simulation, many of them stated that they

³¹³ For more on the "death-birth" or "resurrection" cycle and the outplacement counselor as

were more inclined to recommend outplacement. Clearly, they had gained a new understanding as a result of the play.

7.8.2 New Atrocities

In addition to occasional comments on wrongful dismissal, two new "atrocities" start being discussed: firing violence and resume fraud. The claims put forth in the case of firing violence match the claims surrounding the wrongful dismissal atrocity, i.e. proper outplacement services can reduce the risk.

The situation surrounding resume fraud, currently estimated by some sources as high as 40% (Bachler, 1995), is more ambiguous. There are no claims that outplacement services can stop this, indeed, any such claims would be laughed at in all likelihood. The response has been a condemnation of the practice, and several atrocity examples of "what happens" to people who do lie on their resumes (Bachler, 1995).

7.8.3 New opportunities - Layoffs and Plant closures

Even in the pre-1983 period, there was some attempt to transfer outplacement practices to plant closures and layoffs (RDT). In general, the results were limited in their effectiveness, since the program offerings were minimal, usually a on or two day seminar program (see section sub-section 8.2.2.1 for the limitations of this type of program). Increasingly, plant closures and corporate downsizings have been used as an opportunity to create career centers within the company. These centers are frequently outsourced as contracts to particular outplacement companies, and may deliver program services to everyone from assembly workers to vice-presidents (RDT).

psychopomp, see section 8.3.1.

7.8.4 New Opportunities - Career Hardiness

Career Hardiness (aka career resilience) is a movement towards providing general career planning and counseling services to people who are currently employed. David Craig (8/7/97) talked about the idea this way

Career resilience or career hardiness is pretty much the same stuff that we provide to people who come in here.... I think I've indicated to you that my career has been very resilient but that's only because of me. I've been resilient, I've made it resilient and I've made it kind of...I've taken it for granted, only to discover that I'm kind of unique and wouldn't it be nice if other people saw the world like I have for the last 3 or 5 years, more or less? Seen the world the way I have and have looked at jobs and opportunities and challenges the way I have? Why not give people that kind of training so that the workforce can start to think that way and take charge of themselves and their lives and their outcomes and their destiny and all of that. Why not bring that to them? I do remember thinking to myself when we were doing this and I started to do this, why the hell don't we teach people this in the first place? Rather than wait for them to be fired and say: Ok I got a tool kit in play, why not make that tool kit available right away?

The answer to David's rhetorical question is, however, simple: employers won't pay for it, and there is no extra-niche mandate supporting it. While figures relating to the various career hardiness programs are impossible to come by, anecdotal evidence indicates that a) the programs are not that successful, and b) very few have been sold (RDT 28/2/00).

7.8.5 Globalization

While global restructuring has had a clear impact on North American industries, at least in terms of plant closures and downsizings, it has also had an increasing effect on the outplacement industry. In particular, executive, managerial and professional mobility

resulting from global restructuring has led many outplacement providers to develop international networks to providers in other countries.

As part of a more general discussion on future trends in the industry, Bruce Merklinger of Right Associates talked about the global networking phenomenon this way (9/6/97).

But more and more companies now are global in scope, and they're looking for a single phone call to provide global service. And I think that that's what the survivors [surviving outplacement companies] will need to do. They'll need to have global operations. And they'll need to provide seamless global service, of consistent quality and consistent cost and consistent content. So that the president of a company, whether its located in Ottawa or New York city, if they have to terminate someone in Singapore wants that client, that candidate, to receive the same quality and level of service as someone terminated in Ottawa or New York city. And they don't want to have to call around the world to make it happen, they want to be able to call their local contact and say "I need such and such assistance in Singapore".

While claims of a "global reach" have not shown up in the popular press, they are apparent in the sales literature and on many corporate websites.

7.9 Concluding notes on the Rhetorical construction of Outplacement

Outplacement had become an established part of Canadian business life by the start of the ESA 2 phase, being offered, in various forms, to everyone from CEO's to plant workers with varied success. As this chapter made clear, the industry had established jurisdictional claims to resolve a number of double-binds surrounding terminations. In the next chapter, I will examine the process of outplacement with an emphasis on how it operated in the ESA 2 period; the "Golden Age" of the industry.

8 Outplacement processes

In the previous chapter, I discussed the rhetorical construction of the outplacement industry in Canada. One of the main points coming out of this analysis was that the rhetoric surrounding outplacement presented it as a "wonder tale" (see 7.3). This had the somewhat surrealistic effect of presenting outplacement as a neat, linear process which followed particular stages in an almost mechanistic manner. The reality, as will become apparent in this chapter, is quite different. While there are clear stages or phases in the outplacement process, they have a tendency to bleed together, especially those phases that take place in the liminal stage.

8.1 Towards an analysis

Turner (1967:50-51) argued that any analysis of symbols must take place on at least three levels: the exegetical (both esoteric [specialist] and exoteric [layman]), the operational (i.e. social structural) and the positional (i.e. the place of the symbol in the systemic gestalt). The supposition he operated under, however, assumed that while the symbols were inherently polysemic (i.e. multiple meanings), they were perceptually static.³¹⁴ Given this presupposition, attempting to apply Turner's analytic methodology to a temporally flexible system of symbols is of limited utility.³¹⁵ Despite these limitations, it is possible to retain Turner's three levels of meaning if and only if we extend the

³¹⁴ At least in the sense that the changes in meaning over time were beyond the perceptual threshold of individuals.

³¹⁵ The temporal flexibility of the symbol sets is clearly shown in the preceding chapter, at least in terms of a shift between the LIA 4/5 meme set and the ESA 2/3 meme set.

meaning of "symbol" to that of a process-event (see 5.3): that experience which becomes symbolized.

Process-events follow simple rules which may, or may not, be understood by the participants (see 5.3). These rules create a situation in which and through which a flow experience (see 5.3.2) may be attained by the participant that will allow them to "ground" the rules of the process-event in their "knowledge" (i.e. they encourage the "learning/experiencing" of situations that should produce specific responses and attitudes). This is similar to the claims that certain team sports encourage and produce certain specific attitudes. It is not the attitudes themselves that are produced but, rather, that the rules structuring of the process-event differentially rewards specific attitudes.

What this means in terms of our analysis is that we have to analyze the rules and, hopefully the effects, of the different process-events that are grouped together as the "outplacement process". Given the wide range of reactions to the experience of unemployment, it would be impossible to produce a complete analysis of each and every response to a process-event. As such, the analyses in this chapter will concentrate on generalized reactions, both as they are conceived by the outplacement counselors and presented in corporate outplacement material (two different esoteric-exegetic analyses), and on an operational analysis.

Since I have already spent the previous chapter showing the rhetorical construction of outplacement, and its interactions with the LIA 4 and ESA 2-3 meme complexes, I have limited the positional analysis to one small section (8.2) which ties back into the analyses presented in the previous chapter (esp. 7.7). This analysis is also extended in the various discussions of PAR stories (see 8.4.5).

8.1.1 Data sources and legal-ethical constraints

Before we move on, I need to make several points both about the data collected and presented, and about the data that could not be collected. I have mentioned in several places that the outplacement industry, as a whole, does not keep accurate, long term records. What is kept, is on a company (and sometimes office) basis and is used for sales purposes.³¹⁶ In addition to this data, which is restricted to landing times and basic demographics, there is a rather large amount of confidential data in the form of counselor notes and psychiatric assessments. Needless to say, this material was not accessible and, even if it had been available, it could not have been used due to ethical restraints placed on both the researcher and the counselors who collected the data.

In addition to ethical constraints, there were also legal considerations. A significant proportion of the candidates on any particular program may well be subject to extreme stress. As such, any "unwarranted" interference, which might possibly include being interviewed, could, in certain circumstances, lead to highly inappropriate reactions on the part of the candidate (i.e. suicide). Given this, I was "requested and required" to not talk with any candidates unless they approached me and, under no circumstances, to quote them in any way which could identify them. This requirement was not only based on an ethical injunction, but also on the quite reasonable fear of some counselors of law suits.

³¹⁶ Even this data is useless for most analytic purposes since it is usually not kept for more than a couple of years.

Within these constraints, I was, however, given free access to most seminars, meetings and materials.³¹⁷ As such, the data presented in this chapter is derived from a combination of fieldnotes, printed material (i.e. manuals, memos, etc.), and formal interviews. In addition, I have been in fairly continuous communication with my key informant, now retired and acting as an independent consultant, regarding the "actualities" as opposed to the printed material. In several instances, I was granted formal interviews but no signed consent forms were forthcoming. In addition, I was handed a number of manuals and materials on the understanding that this was "background material" that would not be quoted.³¹⁸

These constraints have, needless to say, led to certain limitations in the presentation of the data. In particular, I have found it expedient to use such phrases as "in general" and "sometimes" to refer to interpretations drawn from material that may not be quoted.³¹⁹

³¹⁷ Access to seminars and meetings, with the exception of the "basic" two-day seminar, was on a look and listen basis where I could be excluded at any point in time if any of the participants didn't want me there. Since the vast majority of meetings were "one-on-one" sessions, I ended up not attending any of them but, instead, would talk informally with the candidates and counselors after the meetings.

As far as material were concerned, I was swamped with paper. At present, I have manuals and workbooks from 9 different companies, usually handed to me by their competitors, and, in some case (e.g. DBM and KPMG), I have multiple variants of their manuals. In addition, I was given literally thousands of pages of memos, articles, and pamphlets, and also audio and video tapes. Most of seminars follow the workbooks and manuals quite closely, indeed many workbooks contain the Powerpoint overheads used in the seminar.

³¹⁸ All material that is quoted in this dissertation is quoted with specific permission and the copyright remains with the original copyright holders.

³¹⁹ The term "in general" means that at least 75% of the unquotable material agrees, while "sometimes" means that less than 75% agrees. While unpleasant, and giving a somewhat detached impression, this is the only way of referring to the contents of unquotable background material that meets the intention of the givers (i.e. for information and support, but not for quotation).

8.1.2 Organization of the chapter

The chapter itself is organized into four main sections. In section 8.2, I discuss outplacement as a rite of passage, and present several different models of its operation. Since the main analysis is based on an ideal typical, larger program, I also discuss some of the special considerations that may impact upon programs (8.2.2), and spend some time looking at the counselors themselves (8.2.3).

This is followed in section 8.3 by an examination of how the outplacement industry ritualizes individual firings.³²⁰ Since it was unthinkable that I would be allowed to "tag along" on a "pick-up", the slang term for the firing process, I have relied extensively on one particular firing script that appears to be typical of the industry,³²¹ and on informal discussions with various counselors.

The outplacement industry does not, in and of itself, recognize "liminality" as a formal stage in the outplacement process. Despite this, I have heard the phrase "betwixt and between" several times used to describe the feelings experienced after the candidates have been tentatively stabilized, and my descriptions of the liminal state have been easily understood by many counselors.

In the formal exegetic models produced by the industry, there are three main areas recognized that would fall into the liminal phase: assessment, training, and the active search. Since each of these areas is quite different, I have created separate sections for each one. In section 8.4, I discuss the assessment phase, which contains both self-

³²⁰ Large parts of this section have already been presented as Tyrrell (1994). The section has, however, been extensively rewritten.

assessment and "objective" "scientific" assessment components. The object of this phase, its "charter" (5.1.2), is to both stabilize the emotional swings of the candidate while, at the same time, allow them to define a goal.

In the manuals at least, the goal produced in the assessment stage is then operationalized with specific skills training in the next stage. As I argue in section 8.5, this is a simplification of the actual process, and the training stage is frequently used to both gain job search skills while, at the same time, to refine the goals of the candidate. The third phase, the "active search", again varies from the manuals, and folds back into component areas of both the assessment and training phases (see section 8.6).

In most rites of passage, the re-aggregation phase holds the same ritual importance as the separation phase (see Chapter 1.1) but, in the case of the outplacement process, this is quite problematic. In most rites of passage, the ritual specialists involved in the rite of separation and in the liminal phase have, at least, a part to play in the rite of re-aggregation. This is not the case in the outplacement process. To put it bluntly, outplacement counselors are chartered to help people develop the skills to find jobs, not to find jobs for their candidates. As such, the counselors have little to do with the actual hiring of any given individual and the act of hiring is the rite of re-aggregation.

Despite having little or nothing to do with individual hirings, outplacement counselors do play some small part in the re-aggregation of individual candidates. Outside of training the candidates, the counselors also sometimes act in the role of a coach/trainer during the active search phase and may well help the candidates decide

³²¹ I have had the opportunity to examine several firing scripts, and they are all very similar. The one presented in this section is quite typical of the genre.

whether or not to accept individual offers and/or negotiate specific offers (see section 8.7).

Given the constraints listed in sub-section 8.1.1, the purpose of this chapter is to present a synoptic view of the outplacement process. While many of the headings are drawn from rites of passage theory, the actual organization of the stages discussed in sections 8.3 to 8.7 are drawn from the exegetical understandings of the counselors and from various manuals.

Figure 8-I: The outplacement process

8.2 Outplacement as a rite of Passage

Throughout this dissertation, I have used the terms "ritual" and "rite-of-passage" and have taken for granted a specific relationship between them. I believe it would be

best to examine the relationship between them in further detail, since they are crucial to the following examination of the outplacement process.

In *Les rites de passage*, Van Gennep had noted that many rituals involved a three stage structure; a) separation, b) margin or limen, and c) reaggregation. As such, a "rite-of-passage" may be seen as a sub-set of the general class "ritual" which conforms to this three stage format. However, as Turner (1974:197) points out, there are certain aggregates of rituals which also exhibit this three stage structure. Furthermore, these aggregates of rituals, or in some cases ritual cycles,³²² contain separate components that are in and of themselves fully recognizable as separate embedded rituals. It is in this later sense, a three stage aggregate of rituals, that I use the term "rite-of-passage" (with the hyphens). Given this usage, the term "ritual" then refers to specific clusters of

Figure 8-II: Dynamics of Transitions

symbolized and scripted actions which take place at symbolic "nodes" in the overall rite-of-passage.

The outplacement process, as a rite-of-passage, is an interconnected series of process-events some of which are also scripted rituals - the

³²² The difference between an aggregate of rituals and a ritual cycle lies in the specificity of the rituals involved in the aggregate. The class "ritual cycle" is seen as a sub-set of the class "aggregate of rituals", and the sub-set is defined by the strict adherence to set rituals in specific order. I would argue that the relocation rite-of-passage is an aggregate of rituals, rather than a ritual cycle.

nodes in Figure 9-I marked in italics. This is not to say that the other nodes in the process are not conducted ritualistically (i.e. formulaic). Frequently, they are, at least in the same manner as any other process-event may be said to be "ritualistic" - a "game" following specific rules (cf. section 5.3).

Ideally, the process or program is tailored to meet the need of individual candidates. In reality, the amount of tailoring is dependant on the size of the program and, in some cases, there are candidate needs that just cannot be met, usually severe psychological and/or medical problems.

If we restrict our analysis to the main, ideal typical, forms of outplacement, we find the process described in Figure 8-I. The process illustrated in this figure, however, is not how the process is presented to potential clients and candidates. Rather, there are two, separate, processes described: one psychological and one more general. The psychological process (see Figure 8-II) is drawn directly from the work of Kübler-Ross (1969) on grieving, while the more general process (see Figure 8-III) is a generalization of the entire process.

In Figure 8-II, there are some interesting parallels to the rites of passage model, especially in the three-fold division of general phases: the ending, neutral zone, and new beginning. More importantly, the model serves as a default psychological map for the

counselors, allowing them to place individual candidates on the process-continuum shown in Figure 8-III.

The process-continuum shown in Figure 8-III serves as a general, linear, orientation to the outplacement process. The use of a linear model is quite important given the difficulty of communicating the actuality of the outplacement process to people who have not gone through it (see section 7.6). Linearity carries with it an implication of control and comprehension allowing clients to perceive that the counselors are able to control the transition.

While Figures 8-II and 8-III describe the maps used by the counselors, I have already introduced several other maps, specifically that of the wonder tale (sections 7.3 and 7.3.5), the standard rites of passage model (Chapter 1.1), and the flow chart in Figure 8-I. Before going any further, I believe that it is important to show the overlaps between each of these maps so that the reader can see why I am basing my analysis on that presented in Figure 8-I. This comparison is illustrated in Table 9 by presenting each of these models in a synoptic table which shows their relationships.

From the outline in Table 9, it should be apparent why I have constructed the model in Figure 8-I. Clearly, there are a number of process-events that may and/or do take place that are not covered by any other single map. Most of the features in Figure 8-I should be familiar to the reader since many of them were discussed in Chapter 7. Several of them, however, are not mentioned in the rhetorical construction of outplacement such as the concept of "program shopping", and any landing that is not an "appropriate job" (e.g. retirement, formal retraining, self-employment). In several cases I have highlighted the parallels between rites of passage terminology and the outplacement

process; for example, the use of the general terms "tribal lore" (professional knowledge) and "magical objects" (résumé's, letters, business plans, etc.).

Figure 8-I	Figure 8-II	Figure 8-III	Rites of Passage	Wonder tales
* Termination Decision * Preliminary meeting	state before an announcement	Consulting	Pre-separation State A	Harm done to protagonist
Termination meeting	The ending	→	Rite of separation	Departure
Program shopping	na	na	na	na
* Initial meeting * Divination * Accept testing?	Neutral Zone	Orientation & Priorities	Liminal I ¹	3a encounter with donor
Accept testing - "No"	na	na	Liminal - off the path ²	Na
Accept testing - "Yes"	Acceptance	Developing a plan	Liminal IIa - testing ¹	Accept gifts
* Access to tribal lore * Training	Adjustment & Discipline	Training & Practice	Liminal IIb - learning ¹	Learn to use gifts ²
* Magical objects * Job-search supported	Growth & Direction	Active Searching	Liminal IIc - search for exits ¹	Discovering object of quest
Exits	na	Integrating	Rites of re-aggregation	Return
Notes: In any complex rite of passage, the liminal phase may be analytically split into separate sub-phases. "Off the path" refers to movement in liminality that is beyond the accepted trails. While this is not recognized as a core requirement of wonder tales (cf. Propp 1984), many wonder tales require that the hero learn how to use the gifts they have received.				

Table 9: Synoptic Table of Maps

Each of the boxes in Figure 8-I is a separate process-event, although several of them include multiple process-events (e.g. "Training"), while others may be grouped together into distinctive patterns.

8.2.1 A note on liminal complexity

... the process and state of liminality represents at once a negation of many, though not all, of the features of preliminal social structure and an affirmation of another order of things and relations. Social structure is *not* eliminated, rather it is radically simplified: generic rather than particularistic relationships are stressed.

Turner (1974:196)

In the particular case of outplacement, the "messiness" of the liminal stage depends on a number of different factors ranging from program size, the degree of program automation, individual reactions to unemployment and individual training needs. Any and all of these factors may well influence the actuality of a candidates experience of the liminal stages.

8.2.2 Mutations from the Ideal Form

While the model presented in Figure 8-IV is an ideal type, there are certain mutations of the ideal type that are of particular note, namely the different patterns of accessing outplacement services, and the compaction that can arise in very small programs. While I deal with the typical process of access in section 8.3, it is worth examining the atypical process of access in some detail (sub-section 8.2.2.3). It is also worth examining how the process can be mutated due to constraints of program size (sub-section 8.2.2.1) and program automation (sub-section 8.2.2.2).

8.2.2.1 Mutations caused by very small programs

While most programs for upper level managers and executives follow the ideal type described in Figure 8-IV, those for lower level employees, especially in situations of mass downsizings, are much smaller. The size difference derives from differences in program cost and the competitive bidding nature of a firm gaining contracts. The smallest programs, the "basic" program, include a one to three day seminar and help in producing a resume. They may or may not include an individual pickup like the one described in section 8.3. The process stemming from this reduced program is shown in Figure 8-V.

Figure 8-V: The outplacement process in small programs

There are four key mutations from the "normal" process that are of paramount importance. First, the termination meeting may or may not happen. If it does not happen, and if there is not a widespread knowledge of the coming terminations, then any anger and resentment produced by the termination will be unrestrained. While this may increase the chance of workplace violence and/or other problems, it may also have the effect of reducing the likelihood that the individual will benefit from the program. In the two-day "basic" seminar I attended in June 1994, fully half of the first day was spent overcoming these negative reactions.

The second major change is in the area of testing. In "full programs", the ideal type, testing is conducted in a "scientific" manner, with all the trappings and authority of modern psychology (consider the testing scenes in *After the Axe*). In most basic programs, however, testing is either not conducted or, if it is, it is run through a computer program or self-produced without expert interpretation.³²³ The crucial element that is

³²³ These self-produced tests are reminiscent in many ways of the popular "psychology" tests appearing in *Cosmopolitan* and other magazines. While there are self-tests that have a cachet of scientific

missing, outside of an appearance of scientific/medical authority, is the expert interpretation of the results personalized for the individual.

Psychological testing, the scientific divination of talents and skills, requires expert interpretation not only for reasons of validity but also for reasons of credibility. This is one of the reasons why licensed psychologists are brought in on most full programs; they are able to project a credible image in the evoked Doctor-Patient role pair required for testing to be credible (cf. Lundberg, 1994)

The third key mutation is the conflation of access to tribal lore with training. These basic seminars present a lot of technical information on how to conduct a job search, but they give the participants almost no chance to use that knowledge. As a result, the information is present, but it is ungrounded in any practice. This is in sharp distinction to the availability of additional training in normal programs.

Even when there is an opportunity to practice the information, the shift between receiving knowledge and trying to practice it can cause disruptions. In the seminar I attended, there was only a single opportunity to practice the material presented. This was an interview simulation with the participants switching off between the interviewer and interviewee. The results were a dismal failure, and confusion was rampant with people asking questions ranging from "what is the job for?" and who does which role?" to the outright rejection of role-playing as "old hat" and a "waste of time". These reactions had a number of clearly adverse affects of the efficacy of the seminar as a ritual, reducing

authority (e.g. some of the sorting tests such as the Career Architect Expert System used by Drake Beam Morin (see <http://www.lominger.com/cases/ego.htm>). See Laughlin, 1994 on the importance of ritual specialists in interpretation of divinations.

confidence in the entire seminar and acting as a focus for uncertainty (Fieldnotes, June 9, 1994).

This brings us to the fourth major difference between the basic programs and the normal programs - interaction with the counselors. In a normal program, candidates will be working with counselors over a length of time and, hopefully, will develop a rapport with them. This rapport serves both as the interpretational basis for ongoing candidate experiences by the counselor, and also as an important component in the feedback loop that monitors and guides the candidates progress. In basic programs, there is little time for such a rapport to develop. Indeed, outside of the seminar itself, the only structured contact between candidates and counselors is in the preparation of their resumes; a task usually conducted by the most junior, and hence least expensive and experienced, counselors. Even when candidates are encouraged to network with the consultants during the basic seminars, this may not be believed and/or acted upon (fieldnotes, June 9, 1994). Indeed, of the fifteen candidates in the seminar I attended, of those on basic programs (eight out of fifteen), only one was still networking with the other participants and counselors after his resume was completed.³²⁴

From the preceding, the limitations of small programs should be quite apparent. There is an insufficiency of time to integrate the material and a lack of contact with the counselors. David Craig (8/7/97), talking about the interplay between information and the proper process, described it in this way.

³²⁴ This person was quite extraordinary. He had been a security guard with a major Canadian bank for twenty-two years and was disabled. He took the encouragement to network with the counselors at face value, and was still contacting them for advice and help six months after the seminar. In fact, he was still contacting me eighteen months after the seminar for job leads. As one counselor noted six months after the seminar, he probably got a \$3,000 program simply by staying in touch (RDT 12/94).

So, I believe its very important... not to give the person the book and a couple of binders and say here you go, work your way through it, its really easy and its great material. The best thing that a counsellor, a consultant can do is to help the person through that no-man's land, that space which is in between having had the job and lost it and the future. And help them through that period of uncertainty.

Later on, Craig went even further in his thoughts on the limitations of small programs. In particular, since smaller programs tend to be provided to people lower down on the occupational scale, he noted:

So you can bring all of them for two days, train them and that's it. The industry is doing that and that's the way its all set up as you said at the outset, you know, its 80, 90 percent of the executives get it [outplacement] and so on and so on and so on. This is what you're coming to, so what about the poorer people down at the bottom who perhaps should be given more attention rather than less attention? I mean, frankly, as I said, I've never really given it any thought but I wonder if we got it ass backwards.

There was a clear recognition from all of the counselors I talked with and interviewed that a constant feedback during the process was, if not required, then at least to be desired. Still, the mass deployment of basic programs was an inevitable consequence both of competition within the outplacement industry driving prices down and of the spread of outplacement as a component of severance packages beyond the managerial and executive levels. In the next section, I examine the second consequence of these two factors: the automation of program components.

8.2.2.2 Mutations caused by program component automation

The growing spread of outplacement services and competition between providers has led several companies to automate a number of their program components. This automation took the form of replacing certain seminar/lecture components initially with

either video or audio tapes and, later, with CD-ROMs. This allowed outplacement providers to charge less money for the "same" product. One consultant, talking about a company that had automated heavily, stated the following.

You see, it was all a matter of driving up the volume and how can you handle the numbers and keep the cost down, that is, your consultant costs and all of that, how could you keep that down.... Using technology more and templating a lot of stuff and getting the clients to do more themselves by introducing the net, introducing software, you take a template and install it because you're giving them some computer training... Its not that the idea of introducing the tools, the technology and the templates and all of that was in itself bad; it was what was behind that and the philosophy. And the philosophy was this will free up consultants' time so consultants can take on a greater case load and that's why I refer to...it was quickly becoming a high-tech, low-touch operation and we could all see it. (DC 8/7/97)³²⁵

The problem, of course, is that it is not the same: there is no interaction, "low-touch", and, as a consequence, there is no personalization of the learning experience. Since there is no interaction, there is also no ongoing feedback loop between the counselor, who isn't even there, and the candidate. Even if the candidate does have access to talk with a counselor about the material, they are likely to have much less common ground for communication since the experience was not shared. Inevitably, the counselor will say things differently and this may raise doubts about all the rest of the material presented in the tape.

The root of the question of automation goes back to a philosophical question: is the counselor there to help people or to make as much money as possible? In talking about this, DC stated that the decision had already been made - go for the money.

³²⁵ It must be noted that, since the interview was conducted, the particular company being discussed has undergone a complete reorganization.

But this was the thinking and it was fundamentally wrong. It was bullshit. It was fundamentally wrong; this was not the nature of our business and that is a line that I'm referring to that was crossed over, fairly rapidly. In fact, there was no awareness that there was a line, it didn't matter that there was a line. We would forge ahead and we would leap over this line which wasn't understood anyway. And we would get a point where we would do it fast and slick, high-tech organization that could roll 'em in and roll 'em out. No way. So, we're talking about philosophical differences here. (DC 8/7/97)

The question of automation, and the philosophy behind it, raises another serious point. In order to automate a process, you must be able to a) understand it, and b) replicate it. The problem with this, at least for outplacement, is that the core of the process is interaction between the counselor and the candidate.

MT: In my mind that's a core difference between a professional and a technician. And it sounds as if that's the line that you're talking about. That they're trying to make technicians.

DC: That's exactly what we're talking about. In fact, to come back to the [company] model, there was actually a reference to hiring two people for the price of one DC. So if they were paying me 60 thousand dollars at the time someone was looking at it in terms of - we can hire two people at 30 grand to cover the waterfront - in fact, double the waterfront. Of course you got to ask the questions: well what kind of person are you going to get for 30 thousand dollars, is that indeed the kind of person you want in this kind of organization. So when I left and a week later when someone else was fired, it was about my image and my salary, they hired a couple of lay-people, and they hired people who did not have the age or the wisdom, so to speak, did not have any business background, maybe a sociology degree or a bachelor of education degree or something like that. And these were the people who were going to be sitting down around a round table like this....

Now I still have to come back to your point about professionalism and I think its a very good point that you raise. And the reason why I use the expression "high-tech, low-touch" is that this is a profession, this is the kind of work that really does require special people who understand what is involved in the psychology of change and the journey and the transition and it comes right back to my point from earlier this morning when I said there's some strategic stuff happening first.

In order for the kit-bag, the tools, to be made available to the individual, if you think for one minute that you can give the person "What Colour is Your Parachute" and a hammer and a nail and go to it, already, it doesn't work.

There comes a point where you have to step out of that, have a look at what you're doing and say: where is the line that we do not want to cross and how close to that line are we and what are we going to do fundamentally when we realize we are at that line? Do we cross over or do we not cross over? Frankly, wherever that line may be, I suggest, because of the nature of our work, the business, its got to remain high-touch, low-tech in relative terms.

But a "high-touch, low-tech" program requires a lot of individual counseling and means that a counselor will be able to handle possibly 15-20 clients. In the "high-tech, low-touch" company discussed by DC, he was expected to handle a case load of up to forty clients or more thereby generating more money for the company and less interaction with the candidates.

8.2.2.3 Atypical access to the outplacement process

While the typical access to outplacement services follows the pattern described in *After the Axe* (7.6.1), there is an atypical pattern that appeared in the late 1970's and has gained popularity since then. This pattern involves the negotiation of outplacement services as part of a separation package. What is unusual about this is two things. First, the negotiation takes place between the candidate and their company, and bypasses the termination meeting phase that is the core of the typical access (see 8.3). Second, the candidate generally negotiates the rights to select a program from more than one outplacement service provider. This is what I have called "program shopping" in Figure 9-I. While the practice of program shopping appeared early in the development of the

outplacement industry, it has never been the normal practice. Even today, it is relatively rare, with maybe 5% of all candidates using it (RDT 2/1/00).

The practice of program shopping is, in some ways, a danger to the rhetorical grounding of outplacement, since it removes the threat of a "bad" firing. In other ways, however, it reinforces the legitimacy of outplacement as an "expected" component of a severance package. Indeed, as the industry grew, the practice of program shopping came to be supported by most industry members, and became a normal component of their sales literature by the mid 1980's. The reasons for this support appear to have been varied but, on the whole, seem to stem from marketing decisions where the smaller boutiques would use it to attempt to crack a market and the larger companies would use it to gain entry to exclusive contract areas (RDT 2/1/00).³²⁶

8.2.3 Who are the outplacement counselors?

I noted in sub-section 7.3.5 that outplacement counselors fill two and sometimes three separate roles, even though these roles are rhetorically conflated into the single role of the outplacement counselor. The general roles for counselors consist of specialists in counseling, business and, sometimes, sales. In addition to this, there is a psychopompic function, discussed in sub-section 8.3.1, but this is a general function of the counselor in that particular ritual rather than an overall professional role.

This role differentiation emerged over time. As Rob Notman of Murray Axmith notes:

³²⁶ For example, Canada Post had an exclusive contract with DBM for the provision of services. Several other companies continued to lobby the HR executives at Canada Post using the program shopping option for executives, and were successful in modifying Canada Post's stance to allow dismissed managers and executives to choose from a list of approved services (RDT 02/1/00).

...certainly in the Murray Axmith business, when we established our business, and for the first number of years most of the people, most of the counselors that we had in the business were psychologists, sociologists, social workers, human resources types. They were the counseling, the nurturing type individual, which is still very important in our business. But there has been a shift now to also make sure that those individuals come from environments where they are practical, where they have a practical knowledge of the marketplace, and they are accomplished in their own rights so that they have a knowledge about what really happens out there. (RN, 24/6/97)

The original emphasis on counseling, the "human resources types", operated not only in Murray Axmith, but also in Stevenson & Kellogg. Robert Tyrrell (8/6/97) described new hires as follows

They had taken a university degree in a counselling area and they would have worked as a counsellor in that field somewhere. It could have been in a hospital somewhere or working in a career counselling firm.... That's one of the reasons why a lot of the clergy and priests were interviewed - they did counselling work, courses as well - they had some training, as well as their priestly training.... We also looked, and increasingly so in the latter years, to people who were more knowledgeable about industry, and what was going on in the industry. And these tended to be people who were doing quite drastic career changes that would come - like we had several people we placed, for instance in, things like sales and marketing, manufacturing, and so on, who suddenly became counsellors in the program. Their counselling skills were nowhere near as good as some of the counsellors but their knowledge of the industries and the opportunities and the way they talked to people in the industry was so much better, that it became important to have that balance.... Initially we had become mostly counsellors, the career counselling people, but as we got larger and larger we found an overload with career counselling and we needed to bring back more of the substantive industry-type people.

The reasons for the differentiation were simple: credibility and efficacy. These two reasons were nicely expressed in a story by Rob Notman (24/6/97).

Another story that was told me one time by a senior consultant was a vice-president of finance was touring an organization, laughed and went with another firm. He called back and was asked "how come you didn't

come to our firm" and said, "well, I didn't see anyone who looked like me".

Credibility, and especially the credibility that comes from life experience, is a key component of counseling. When asked what he meant by "life experience", Notman replied (RN, 24/6/97)

Somebody who has been there. Somebody who has gone through a fair number of life transitions themselves. If they themselves have been laid off, it's a definite plus. Now we don't put that on the application form, but if they've gone through it themselves where they've had a rough go, a persons called them in the office or their career is not being fulfilled the way they want it, that's a definite plus because then they can relate to what the candidates going through.

Also, maturity. Not just based on age, but life experiences from a standpoint of having achieved success in one field or another is very important. Because I believe it is very difficult to counsel somebody unless you have something to share with them from a standpoint of "I did that one time" or "I knew someone who". So I have a real difficulty with individuals that would come out of school per se and go right into counseling in an outplacement setting. They certainly could get life experience in counseling in other areas, and there's training programs for that, but to go into the outplacement side, I'm probably a dinosaur in that regard, but I don't think it works. I've been interviewing people before. There was one individual in particular who I was really keen on, very sharp, the whole bit, but that individual was about 26 or 27 years old and I could not see that person counseling a fifty-two year-old man. I'm sorry, but I couldn't.

There is a common thread running through both of these descriptions: experience in career transitions from the candidate side. This thread is, perhaps, not surprising since the experience of having gone through a career transition would allow the counselor to establish a rapport with candidates based on a shared experience ("communitas"). This form of rapport would be of especial use to counselors who were lacking in counseling certifications.

Credibility is the *sine qua non* of authority for counselors with respect to both clients and candidates. For those with a background in counseling, the psychologists,

human resources specialists, and priests, credibility is present either via credentials or counseling experience. For business specialists, however, credibility is another matter, and having experienced a transition is an important part of that credibility, as is general success in their chosen fields.

The issue of the counselor's age was important for both *KPMG* and Murray Axmith, but less so for other companies. Lousie Currier of Drake, Beam Morin³²⁷ had a somewhat different view of what a good counselor should be.

I think the nature of our business is that you need someone who has done this a little bit before. I probably wouldn't be as keen on a green person, just because of the volume and the level of individuals we get on our programs. We need people who have done this before. They have credibility in terms of life experience, and have excellent listening and mirroring skills. They are very able to take the patterns, the messages in what people are telling them, and reflect that back and help people put things in perspective. So, people who have done a fair amount of one on one coaching, who have done some group training or group presentations, and, ideally in this organization, I look for bilingual people... not a lot of those in Ottawa, that have all of that.

There are still a certain amount of organizations that look for years and age as opposed to wisdom. And I find that that is unfortunate, I think, that people are still kind of hung up on the age of the counselor or the consultant. Because I think there are some younger folks that have so much to offer, yet there is still that bias. So, I need a balance in my team is what I'm saying. So I will have some people from different... you know male/female, different ages, different kind of backgrounds. Most of which will have a certain amount of business background, psychology background, counseling.... It's not necessarily the education, but more the approach with people. And I think you can see that easily. Maybe it's because I'm in that business; that and I think I read people well. I look for that in people I hire; the ability to read people quickly and to be able to react appropriately at different levels. And to be able to push people when they need to be pushed.

³²⁷ Vice-president of Drake, Beam Morin Ottawa at the time of the interview and now an independent Human Resources consultant.

The differences expressed are more than those of mere opinion. At the time of the interview, Drake, Beam Morin's programs, at least in the Ottawa office, were highly automated (see 8.2.2.2). This use of automation not only allowed DBM to make extensive use of less senior counselors, but also to use different criteria for counselors.³²⁸ It is interesting to note that the other company in the Ottawa region that used extensive automation, Right Associates, had quite different criteria for counselors. As Bruce Merklinger noted (9/6/97):

...our company has a philosophy around the delivery of services that is different from other companies. Many of our competitors require their consultants to do two things: market the services and deliver the services. When I went through the company I went through when I was outplaced that's what I found. I found my consultant was a very nice person, but was usually not available to me because he was out on the road marketing when I wanted him to be available to me.

Our company, from the moment I joined, said to me "your role is to market the company". We have two different kinds of people employed. We have people who market, and we will employ people who deliver service. And they are two different people.... So, that philosophical difference is fundamental to our company. I find it a strength, because I am able to tell the candidate when I meet them that whatever happens in the office with their consultant is private, and I am not privy to that information. Yes I report back to the client organization, I am the interface to the client organization, but all I give the client organization back is general information about general progress of the candidate, so that the candidate is assured privacy. So that's a philosophical difference that's found in our company and I don't believe it's found in other companies.

³²⁸ This situation changed as of January of 1999 with DBM moving back to increased one-to-one contact.

Despite the fundamental split in counselors being along the marketing-delivery line, the competencies were essentially similar to those looked for by *KPMG* and Murray Axmith.³²⁹

I think we look for people who've got a varied background, that have worked for different companies and that have worked in different functional areas, or have worked in different economic sectors.... Obviously people have to want to do this type of work. They have to have a desire to help people, and to demonstrate empathy for people. And yet they have to be able to move the progress of the candidates. So, I think commitment, dedication, caring and knowing when to push and when to hug is important. A sense of "this is a business". We are here to help people land new jobs, it's not a not-for profit, none of these businesses are not-for-profit, so we have dual responsibilities. We have a responsibility to the company to ensure we work efficiently. We have a responsibility to the client organization that purchased the service from us to deliver those services, and we have a responsibility to the individual to make sure that that person gets the best that we can give them. (BM 9/6/97)

The division into a formalized marketing role may seem an obvious advantage but, at the same time, some consultants see problems with it. Rob Notman (24/6/97)

What we were concerned about was that in some respects our business was cocooning the people.... So there was a gradual shift of having the importance of being a good counselor with listening skills and so forth together with a knowledge of the marketplace. That's one of the reasons we don't differentiate marketing from counseling.

There's a strong pressure to do so, it's something that I face all the time because, well Right Associates is an example that does an excellent job of stroking the customer with one group of people while another group of people handle the candidates. The main reason we don't do that is that our experience has been that if you counsel all the time, 10 hours a day counseling, you burn out because you can't be just totally empathetic with people all the time. And you don't have any contacts.

The presence of this three-way role tension appears to be endemic in the industry, and different organizations have adopted different solutions to that tension. Regardless

³²⁹ Bruce also expressed a desire for counselors to have at least a Masters degree, but that this was a purely personal preference and not one shared by Right Associates in general.

of the solutions employed, each company was faced with the problems of marketing, efficiency and credibility. This tension, to my mind, derives both from the environment, “for-profit” and constantly changing business environments, and from the nature of the service itself which relies equally on experiential and academic authority.

Outplacement is not a simple, linear technology that operates in a one, two, three progression. At its best, it is a systematic examination of the needs of a particular individual and the crafting of a series of exercises and experiences designed to help them become confident and skilled.³³⁰ The “proof” of the program’s efficacy lies in the experience of the candidate and not in the authority of the counselor or their academic discipline. The epistemological basis of “truth” in outplacement is γνῶσις (“experiential knowledge”) rather than λόγοζ, (“authoritative knowledge”), a characteristic that outplacement shares with sports enthusiasts, mystery religions, and many rites of passage.

This epistemological basis creates tensions. How can an employer know that a potential counselor has what it takes to guide a candidate? The answer for most companies is “life-experience”, however that may be conceived, coupled with “credibility”. The inability of λόγοζ-based counselors (the “human resources types”) to provide solid programs was recognized early on, and their limitations were balanced out with other counselors who had a solid grounding in business experience (γνῶσις) and, in some cases, by requiring all counselors to be involved in marketing.

³³⁰ One person who wished to remain nameless described his experience in an outplacement program as “systematic mind-fucking”. The counselor he worked with was subsequently fired and blacklisted in the Ottawa area.

But involvement in marketing creates its own problems, as does the development of highly efficient and adaptable programs. In a “for-profit” organization, each unit must pay its own way. Without profit, the service cannot, and will not, be delivered. Furthermore, as outplacement programs became more accepted by Canadian businesses, they became more standardized and, as a consequence, less adaptable. This is especially true of the smaller, “basic”, programs (see 8.2.2.1). Given these trends, there is a clear danger that the programs would be designed more for group marketability than for individual efficacy.³³¹

The compaction of programs, brought about by increased competition and automation, has not been all bad since it has acted as a spur for counselors to develop interactive “technologies” that are as efficient, but are able to serve more people simultaneously. A good example of this has been the development of facilitated self-help groups operating within some programs. While these were always encouraged in classic programs, in recent years they have become formalized with the consultant acting more as a facilitator than as a lecturer (RDT 12/99). Of course, in order to be effective, they require a highly skilled counselor with experience in both counseling and business.

While the tensions inherent in the general role have not all been resolved, there is a general recognition of at least two specializing roles: the “counseling” expert (the “human resources type”) and the business specialist. Each of these specialized roles has

³³¹ A situation I observed at *KPMG* in 1994 when changes were introduced to the accounting practices of the outplacement group. Previously, counselors had been able to “fudge” billable hours, based on individual candidate need, within a full client group so that, while the overall charge to the client would remain the same, there was some flexibility in program delivery. The new accounting practices effectively made this very difficult to do.

its own sources of authority and credibility, and each has a particular role to play during the liminal stages of the outplacement process.

8.2.4 Conclusions

In some ways, this section has been a "grab-bag" of differing factors affecting any individual outplacement process. The joining thread that unifies the various sub-sections lies in that vary diversity. In order to present a synoptic view of the outplacement process, it has been necessary to consider the major, external (i.e. non-candidate) factors that can and do affect the process.

In particular, it has been important to look at two key areas: the social structural factors that impinge upon the process (small programs [8.2.2.1] and automation[8.2.2.2]), and the role and recruitment of counselors (8.2.3), since the counselors are the "ritual specialists" of the process. Now that these factors have been considered, we can move towards the production of a synoptic analysis and description of the outplacement process.

8.3 Firing: a rite of separation

For most people, the journey from employment to an unknown future starts with termination. The actual termination may come in any form from one year's advance notice, to turning up at the office and finding out that your key doesn't work. Most corporations, however, don't have the luxury of being able to give one year's notice, and few are foolish enough to change the locks as a termination notice. Most terminations fall somewhere between these two extremes and involve a specific termination meeting.

Once the decision to use a termination meeting format is made, there are a number of structural factors that condition the meeting. First, assuming that the dismissal is as a result of either a downsizing decision or individual poor fit in the organization,³³² the terminating manager must present the dismissal as a) inevitable, and b) non-prejudicial. In essence, the manager must convey to the dismissed employee that the dismissal is not for *just cause* (i.e. performance).³³³

These two criteria, inevitability and non-prejudice, are important for several reasons. First, if a dismissal is inevitable, for example as a result of a general downsizing, then the corporation may claim that the dismissal is "due to an unforeseen event".³³⁴ By claiming an "unforeseen event" as the cause of termination, and by stressing that the termination is not due to poor performance or for just cause, the employer significantly reduces their chances of being involved in a wrongful dismissal suite (cf. 7.5.1)

This point is supported by several practices. First, a large majority of corporations require a release agreeing to the terms signed by the employee before any severance payments are made.³³⁵ Furthermore, corporate policy often requires the withholding of

³³² According to Murray Axmith & Associates 1993 *Canadian Dismissal Practices Survey*, (p. 2) major reasons for dismissals included: poor performance/fit - 76%; "economic staff reductions" - 50-60%; "*Just cause*" - 45%.

³³³ Just cause is a legitimate reason for termination without notice in Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, Nova Scotia, Ontario, Prince Edward Island, Saskatchewan, the North West Territories, and under the Canada Labour Code. The term itself is only currently defined in Manitoba and Ontario. See also section 7.5.

³³⁴ "Due to an unforeseen event" is an acceptable reason for termination without notice in Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, New Brunswick, Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, Ontario, and Quebec.

³³⁵ Murray Axmith and Associates (1993: 8): release - 73.6%; occasionally require a release - 16.6%; no release - 9.8%.

some or all of the severance package if a dismissed employee launches a legal action.³³⁶

Finally, many termination scripts contain injunctions such as

These Meetings are NOT intended to be:

- ♦ A forum to justify the company's decision.
 - ♦ The place to discuss performance issues or grievances.
- (Emphasis in the original)

While the legal strictures that condition a termination meeting are important, there is an equally important point that must be considered. According to Murray Axmith & Associates (1993: 9), "firing employees is the most stressful task performed by managers, according to 71.1% of the participants [in their 1993 Canadian Dismissal practices survey]".³³⁷ And, unlike the terminated employee, the manager will continue to work for the corporation and directly influence its economic performance. This possible negative influence is known as the "survivor syndrome" (Noer, 1993).

I want to consider the role played by the outplacement counselor as ritual specialist in these proceedings since it is significantly different from their "normal" roles (see 8.2.3). First, at least in the more ethical outplacement firms and when there are sufficient funds, there is usually a meeting between the outplacement counselor and the terminating manager before the termination meeting itself. During this meeting, the counselor and the manager go over the essentials of both the severance package for the employee and complete an assessment of the employee geared to their future job search. The counselor also rehearses the manager in the use of their firing script.

³³⁶ Murray Axmith and Associates (1993: 9): statutory minimum paid - 32.5%; all payments withheld - 22.4%; paid without prejudice - 20.3%; no experience with litigation - 21.6%; Other - 3.2%.

³³⁷ According to the same survey, giving negative performance reviews was the second most stressful task (23.4%).

8.3.1 Firing

On the day of the actual termination meeting, the counselor may be in one of two places: either in the room with the manager, or in an adjacent room. While their role to the firing company in the termination meeting depends on their location, their role to the (ex-)employee is quite different (see below). Their general role for the company depends on their location. If they are in the room during the meeting, then they will act as a witness and as an expert on the severance terms. If they are in an adjacent room, which is the preferred location, then they will act as the person who makes sure the dismissed employee gets home. Both of these settings are referred to by counselors as a "pick-up". Regardless of their physical location, the counselor acts as a psychopomp,³³⁸ withdrawing the terminated person from the corporate landscape.

This psychopompic function of the counsellor is a very necessary one for a number of reasons. First, there is an obvious fear that an unwatched terminated employee will choose to cause major damage to the former employer. Indeed, this fear of workplace violence as a result of terminations has been used as the main form of atrocity tale to support the retention of outplacement counselors since 1983 (see 7.8). Second, most outplacement counsellors who perform pickups are trained to handle a variety of reactions from terminated employees and are usually able to gauge the individual's reaction. Finally, if the act of terminating an employee is the major cause of stress for

³³⁸ The term "psychopomp" comes from religious studies. It refers to a figure who carries the souls of the dead from this "world" to the next (e.g. Death, Anubis, Charon, etc.).

managers, how much more stressful would it be for them to have to escort the former employee out of the building?³³⁹

The psychopompic functions listed in the preceding paragraph are shown from the viewpoint of the company, not the ex-employee. Here we see a very different and, for most counselors a more important, array of functions. First and foremost, the counselor acts to assist the employee with internal coping problems, i.e. coming to initial terms with being unemployed. This handling of the "shock" of being fired also includes the second function, introducing the candidate to the counseling services available. This emphasis is not surprising, given the expected model of reaction to firing (see Figure 9-II) and, combined with the introduction to available services, the intervention should serve both to stop any potentially damaging candidate reactions while, at the same time, countering a "downward" emotional spiral.³⁴⁰

The "walk-out" function is probably the least important one for the counselors. Indeed, many counselors will do a quick assessment of the candidate to determine if they can drive and, if they cannot, they will give them taxi chits to get home (one to get home, one to come back later and pick up their cars). In rare instances, the counselors will actually drive the candidate home. For the counselors, the important point is to see that

³³⁹ Especially if the employee decides to focus their anger and resentment on the person of the manager. The added threat of personal danger would induce an unwarranted burden of additional stress on the manager.

³⁴⁰ It would do so by acting as an "irritant" which would interfere with the "I'm fired! Oh my God!" thought patterns flooding the attention of the candidate. Since the attentional area of individuals is limited (see section 2.3), the introduction of a "there's hope" thought may well serve as a counter balance that will limited a downward anger/depression cycle.

the candidate gets home in one piece, relatively sane, and open to the idea of counseling.³⁴¹

The counsellor also plays another role for the terminating manager. During the rehearsal and pre-termination meeting session, they serve to reassure the manager that the termination was inevitable. The pre-termination meeting rehearsal becomes, in effect, a ritual for the manager to reduce their anxiety by converting potential guilt into a recognition of "fate" or "circumstances beyond their control".³⁴² The termination "ritual" is completed with the manager turning the terminated employee over to the counsellor at the end of the meeting. This act marks the conclusion of the first stage of the relocation "rite of passage"; entry to the liminal phase.

8.3.2 Ritual Scripts

Most of the scripts developed over the past 15 years by outplacement consultants are very similar. I have decided to concentrate on one main text, produced by *KPMG* Canada in July, 1990, since it is a good exemplar of the genre. Physically, the script is 3 pages long, and is printed on a high quality, medium *ecru*, rag bond paper. The document is entitled "Preparing for the termination", and is divided into two primary sections: A. The Termination Interview, and B. How to say it.

³⁴¹ Indeed, many counselors prefer not to do walk-outs at all, getting the Human Resources personnel to perform them, since the action may later be viewed as being in conflict with their overall support role.

³⁴² Of course this assumes that the manager is feeling guilt about the termination in the first place. While this is a potential situation amongst managers who grew up in paternalistic corporate cultures, there are, however, other situations where the managers feel little or no guilt.

Part A contains an overview of how the interview is to be conducted. It centers on two primary areas. First, it details what the interview is supposed to be and what it is not supposed to be. Second, it contains a number of short aphorisms for the terminating manager.

Part B, "How to say it", is the actual script, including both suggested wording, stage directions, and props lists. It is structured into three main parts, each with appropriate monologue and stage directions (see appendix A). These three parts are titled:

1. The News
2. The Support
3. The Close

The script itself assumes the presence of three main characters: the terminating manager, the terminated employee, and an outplacement counselor. As I noted above, all of the script lines are "rehearsed" by the manager and the counselor before the termination interview.

The first section, "The News", is the shortest of the sections, being only a single paragraph in length.

"John, I am afraid that I have bad news for you today. It is with regret that I must advise you that, as a result of the reorganization and changes in the department, your employment will cease effective today, May 10th, 1990."

This section focuses on two major points. First, it acts to announce the termination of the individual effective immediately. Second, it serves to place the reason for the termination outside of the individual, in effect stating that the termination is brought about by "fate" ("... as a result of the reorganization and changes in the

department..."). This is a clear use of the "no fault" meme and applies the lack of fault to both the (ex-) employee and the firing manager.

The second section, "The Support", consists of two paragraphs and aims to produce five main effects. The two parts of this section may be described as "material support", and "psychological support".

2a. Material Support

"What I would like to do now is to review with you the details of your termination package. The company is prepared to offer you a separation package which includes statutory requirements, plus a severance for a total of, etc."

2b. Psychological Support

"The company has retained, at our own expense, the firm of KPMG Canada to help you in your job search. While it is entirely up to you, I would encourage you to take full advantage of their services and programs to help you find other employment."

I mentioned that there are five main effects that this section aims to produce. The first two are descriptive, in that they describe first the material support and second, the psychological support available for the terminated employee. The third effect is an attempt to stop the employee from arguing with the decision.³⁴³ The fourth effect is an attempt to reduce the guilt of the terminating manager.³⁴⁴ The final point is that the section serves as a bridge between giving the employee their notice and getting them out of the office.

The third, fourth, and fifth points need to be examined in somewhat more detail. First, by forcing the terminated employee, who may or may not be in shock, to

³⁴³ And, by arguing, attempting to turn the dismissal into a *just cause* situation.

³⁴⁴ Of course, this assumes that the manager is feeling guilty or stressed over the termination decision, a situation that does not always exist.

concentrate on what resources they will have available to them, the section attempts to shift the employees internal time focus from the past (e.g "Why me? What did I do wrong?"), to the future. This phenomenal time shift to the future is a clear "dispatch" statement that serves to fix that future as being a state of unemployment. By this I mean that the employee is forced to accept the future, "unemployment", as fixed. This should serve to reduce the chance of them attempting to argue the decision. One of the aphorisms in the first section of the script clearly illustrates this:

You [the manager] should not use this meeting to sort out differences or allow the employee to bargain his/her way back into the company. Be firm. The termination is a business decision which is final and non-negotiable.

The fourth effect, reducing terminating manager guilt, is a result of forcing the manager to enumerate everything the company is doing for the terminated employee. This should reinforce the message of the pre-termination meeting with the outplacement consultant, that the termination is a result of "fate", and is not the fault of the manager. By reinforcing this message, the act of termination may become less stressful for the manager.³⁴⁵

The fifth, and final, effect is the section serving as a bridge between the termination notice, and removing the employee from the office environment. Such a bridge is necessary for a number of reasons. First, the bridge serves to stabilize the terminated employees reactions. Second, the bridge is necessary to fill "dead air". By "dead air", I mean the awful feeling of there being nothing left to say, on the manager's part, after they have just emotionally hurt the terminated employee. Finally, the bridge

serves as vocal sensory input to draw the terminated employee's perception out of any internal emotional turmoil they may be in, and to ground them back in material reality.

The third and final section of the firing ritual is "The Close". In many ways, this section is the fulfillment of the grounding process for both the terminated employee and the terminating manager. As with the previous section, "The Close" consists of two paragraphs, the first of which is a psychological "close", the second is a physical "close".

3a Psychological Close

"I am really sorry I had to tell you this, John. I know you are going to have a lot of questions and that is quite understandable. I will be available to discuss them with you later today, tomorrow and through the next few weeks. However, because I have a number of people to speak with, let me take you and introduce you to _____, of the consulting firm."

[Ensure that the employee has a contact name in human resources for questions]

3b Physical Close

"You probably have a number of personal effects to take home from your office. If you would rather do this later, let me know and I will arrange a time for you to return. John, there is not much more that I can say, except that I have enjoyed working with you and I would like to take this opportunity to personally thank you for your commitment and loyalty. It goes without saying, if I can be of help, let me know.

[Escort the employee to the consultant, introduce them and shake the employee's hand as you leave.]

The first paragraph, the psychological close, serves as an attempt to sever the current emotional bonds between the manager and the employee. If we look at the structure of the paragraph, we can see that each sentence places the terminated employee at an increasing emotional distance from the manager. The first sentence is still highly

³⁴⁵ As already noted, the action of firing is considered to be the most stressful task performed by 71.1% of managers in Murray Axmith & Associates 1993 Dismissal Practices Survey.

personal, "I am really sorry I had to tell you this, John." It also implicitly places the blame for the termination on some transcendent factor, since the manager is sorry that s/he had to "tell" the employee, rather than had to "fire" the employee.

The second sentence serves to objectify and transform the employee's emotions into "questions", while the third sentence puts the temporal locus for resolving these "questions" into the future. The final sentence completes the psychological distancing process by transforming the employee from an individual, "John", into just a member of a group; "... I have a number of people to speak with...". The implication is clear, "John" is merely one of a number of people who are being terminated. The phrase "... let me take you and introduce you to..." completes the distancing by transferring responsibility for continued interaction with the employee from the manager to the consultant.

The second paragraph, the physical close, completes the closure process. The first sentence draws attention to specific material objects, "personal effects". The second sentence reinforces the temporal future of any additional interaction. The third and fourth sentences attempt to modify the effects of the psychological closure and to reinstate a new form of emotional interaction. In effect, these two sentences reinforce the attempt to shift further interaction into the future ("... if I can be of help, let me know."), and to shift the emotional relationship into one of "friends" rather than business associates.³⁴⁶

The final "stage direction" completes the closure process: "Escort the employee to the consultant, introduce them and shake the employee's hand as you leave." The

³⁴⁶ It is hard not to draw a parallel between this attempt, and the "But we can still be friends, can't we?" that frequently accompanies the breakdown of sexual relationships. However, much more research would have to be conducted before such a parallel could be shown to have more than superficial and intuitive validity.

employee has already been psychologically distanced, now there is physical movement to reinforce that distancing. As I mentioned earlier, the preferred placement of the consultant is in an adjacent room. This requires that both the manager and the terminated employee leave the "scene" of the termination, an act of both physical distancing and psychological closure. The action of introducing the employee to the consultant is a physical reinforcement of the psychological closure noted above. Finally, the act of shaking hands and the manager walking away completes the process of closure. The termination ritual is now completed, although this set of ritual actions constitutes only the "separation phase" of the rite-of-passage.

8.3.3 A ritual, but for what purpose?

For the terminated employee, the termination ritual is a ritual of separation, the opening ritual in the relocation rite-of-passage. The termination ritual forces the employee to enter into the liminal stage, and introduces them to the counselor (psychopomp, donor, ritual specialist) who will mediate their transition. In discussing the liminal stage of rites-of-passage, Turner(1974:196) noted that

... the process and state of liminality represents at once a negation of many, though not all, of the features of preliminal social structure and an affirmation of another order of things and relations. Social structure is *not* eliminated, rather it is radically simplified: generic rather than particularistic relationships are stressed.

Many of the points noted by Turner are apparent in the analysis of the termination ritual. There is a negation of most of the "preliminal" social structure and relations. The terminated employee no longer has an occupationally defined social role except "unemployed", which is certainly "...an affirmation of another order of things and relations."

The social structure is not eliminated: the corporation still exists, and personal relationships outside of that corporate structure still continue. However, the scope of the individual terminated employee's social relations is radically reduced with the severance from their occupational relationships. Turners' final point of generic versus particularistic relationships is shown in the process of closure where the terminated employee is shifted from an individual to a member of a group with whom the manager shares exactly the same relationship.

The conclusion that a termination ritual is a ritual of separation is obvious. However, that conclusion is based on an assumption that the ritual is centered around the terminated employee. I would suggest that termination rituals are equally centered around the terminating manager and, in this case, the termination ritual is not a separation ritual, but a cathartic and cosmologically integrative ritual.

As evidence to support such a position, consider the following. First, the ritual scripting is solely for the manager. In effect, by attempting to control the managers' actions through the script, the consultants try to provide the manager with a specific set of categories to comprehend the emotional forces and changed social relations brought about as a result of the termination.

Second, the script continually invokes transcendent "fate" as the reason for the performance of the ritual ("... I must advise you that, as a result of the reorganization and changes in the department..."). The category of transcendent "fate", the "no fault" meme, as a cause of terminations already exists in most corporate cultures. As such, it is a readily available meme that allows for the transference of anxiety, guilt, and blame to some "Other". As such, it has a cathartic value, but since it is also part of most current

corporate cultures, it also has the effect of reinforcing the current "just-in-time" cosmology.³⁴⁷

Third, the second section of the script ("The Support") aims to produce within the manager a belief that s/he has attempted to do everything they can for the terminated employee. As Scheckner (1986) has noted, the repetitive performance of actions may well induce a preselected emotional response. I would argue that one of the effects of managers performing repeated termination rituals is that they may well come to believe the words they are scripted to speak, and that this belief would serve to reinforce the cathartic and integrative effects of the termination ritual.³⁴⁸

Fourth, the aphorisms section of the script (section A) consistently argues that the terminated employee should not "... use this meeting to sort out differences or allow the employee to bargain his/her way back into the firm...". While the injunction is placed on the employee raising these issues, there is also an implicit injunction against the manager raising these objections. The manager is forced into a double bind where they must suppress any resentment or glee they feel at the dismissal. If they do not suppress this reaction, then they may well hurt the employee or the corporation which they will continue to work for. One result of such a double bind may be the development of a survivor guilt syndrome within the corporation (cf. Noer, 1993).

³⁴⁷ For more on this, see Tyrrell (1996). The cathartic value and the reinforcement of cosmology derives from the interjection of meaning interpretation by a ritual specialists, the outplacement counselor amongst others, in the cycle of meaning (Laughlin, 1994) that is coming into existence as a result of corporate globalization (cf Bridges, 1994; Tyrrell, 1996).

³⁴⁸ This point raises a number of additional issues. First, there are other possible reactions to the repeated performance of termination rituals. Second, I would argue that there is a difference between terminating managers who have gone through a positive relocation rite-of-passage and those who have not. The difference would be the difference between belief (or faith) and knowledge.

I believe that these four points support an argument that the termination ritual is not only a ritual of separation for the terminated employee, but is also a cathartic and integrative ritual for the manager.

8.3.4 Summarizing the separation

The separation of an individual from their job is often a traumatic experience for both the firing manager and the ex-employee. The use of termination rituals, such as those based on the script analyzed above, helps to mediate the trauma and, hopefully, serves as the basis to ease the emotional repercussions stemming from the termination (e.g. survivor guilt, unemployment trauma, etc.).

For terminated employees who are lucky enough to have full outplacement programs, this ritual is only the start of the process. Where the process goes depends upon the length of their program, the skills of their counselors, and their own desires. Indeed, as outplacement services have increasingly come to be the norm, there are increasing numbers of people who have been on programs before. This has lead to the interesting situation where the candidate's initial meeting with the counselor may take the form of "Hi. I think I would like to work on X this time around."³⁴⁹ Even with an increased familiarity with job search skills, the majority of people in programs have not been through them before.

³⁴⁹ I have heard of increasing numbers of situations like this where both the counselor and the candidate know each other and know exactly what they want to work on. Possibly the most bizarre example of this took place in September, 1999 where the head of one outplacement practice was terminated and the counselor who performed the pickup was a person he had counseled several years before.

8.4 Liminality: Phase I - The Quest for the true Self

As far as work is concerned, the soul has its own simple tastes, intentions and imaginings. It knows what it wants to do. It thrives and grows on connections, not disconnections nor disharmony nor opposition.

Mainstream Access, 1996:208

Figure 8-VI: The quest for the "true self"

In section 4.3, I introduced the concepts of a skills continuum (skill, know-how, and competency) and talents. This distinction is not only recognized by outplacement counselors, but plays an important role in how the liminal stage of the outplacement process is both conceived and organized. Put simply, the concept of talent is separated from the concept of "skill" (used to cover the entire skills continuum) and is held to be an indicator of the true "calling" of the candidate.³⁵⁰

³⁵⁰ The concept of "calling" is somewhat different from the "classic" concept analyzed by Weber (1958). It lacks the deistic impetus and draws on an ill-defined, experiential metaphysic for its authority. This shift allows for the individual candidate to insert whatever predestinarian factors suits their own prejudices - "fate", "God", genetics, etc.

The way this is expressed is that our "talents" and "interests"³⁵¹ indicated our calling, what we "should" be doing, while "skills" indicated what we had felt we had to do (Fieldnotes, June 9/94).³⁵² In a number of cases, there was a sharp disjuncture between our developed skills, our talents, and our interests, and this disjuncture led to feelings of frustration, disgust, and self-loathing that would impact our career choices, both in terms of specific jobs and in overall career.³⁵³ These feelings were not the only result of this disjuncture; the belief that we "must" find a job following our skills would force us to continually recreate the environment that lead to these feelings in the first place (Fieldnotes, June 9/94). The implication is clear that, in order to break the hold of this vicious cycle, we must engage in an act of assessment that, conveniently, happens to be a major part of the outplacement process (see Figures 8-I and 8-VI).

In order to escape from the vicious cycle of planning our careers based on the skills we have, we are encouraged to take the time to examine our talents and interests and, if necessary, to develop a new set of skills surrounding them. This, it was hinted, would make us healthy and wise, if not necessarily wealthy. The way to achieve this result was to complete the exercises in our self-assessment workbook, and to reflect on the results (Fieldnotes, June 9/94). Lest the reader think that I am exaggerating the "call

³⁵¹ Several counselors, including the one who was leading the session I attended, have a tendency to conflate the concepts of "talent" and "interest". Since the two are quite separate, this can easily cause a number of problems, such as having the talent for something and no interest in it, and vice versa.

³⁵² Similar distinctions were made by other counselors in informal discussions. This distinction between skills and talents, and the equation of developed talents with "happiness" appears to be an endemic assumption in the industry or, at least, amongst the senior consultants. See also Bolles, 1993 and Snodgrass, 1996.

³⁵³ There is an implicit equation of these results with anomie, and for similar reasons to those proposed by Durkheim (1984). In this model, anomic reactions are produced by the lack of an adequate socio-cultural technology for the discovery and expression of talents, rather than by a form of social strain.

to self-discovery", consider the following passage that appears in the *KPMG "Getting Started" seminar workbook (KPMG, 1994:4).*

As you begin this Job-Search Program, you are embarking on an exciting journey of self-discovery. By completing various exercises, you will enhance your self-esteem, discover your inner wishes, plan your future career direction and develop balance in the various aspects of your life.

Self-assessment is not, however, the sole tools available for discovering individual talents. Indeed, it is not even the major tool described in the sales literature. It is, however, a component of all programs regardless of their size. In larger programs, we also find the extensive use of psychological tests such as the Myers-Brigg, Strong Inventory, and Kiersey Temperament tests.³⁵⁴

The purpose of these tests is twofold. First they help to determine the temperament, skills, and interests of the candidate and act as a guide for the counselor in aiding them to negotiate a new identity (Amundson, 1994) based on their talents and interests. Second, they serve as a technique of forcing introspection; a psychological "mandala" which, if used correctly, will induce an experiential understanding of the self ("directional self-analysis"; see Huczynski, 1978).³⁵⁵

The use of both "objective" and "subjective" testing material should serve to reinforce a similar message of personal empowerment through self-discovery. In theory,

³⁵⁴ There are numerous tests used, and they vary from counselor to counselor and firm to firm. The Strong Inventory, Myers-Briggs (see Furnham and Stringfield, 1993), and Kiersey (see <http://kiersey.com>) seem to be the most common, and are in use internationally. Indeed, the US Department of the Interior has produced a web page linking personality types from the Kiersey Temperament Indicator and possible careers (available at <http://www.doi.gov/typescar.html>).

³⁵⁵ It is also important to note that, especially in the case of the self-assessment tests, many of them serve as "irritants" to short circuit thoughts of depression, in part by giving the attention something to

this process should lead to "success" for the candidate. Many counselors argue that "success" is decided by the individual, based on their talents, and not by some outside agency.

Success for one of my clients is helping that person to reach a point where there is sufficient clarity in their thinking for them to trigger a process to which they become committed - there's lots of drive, lots of energy to get to that point to where they have decided they want to be. And what is that point? It is the point they have decided they want to go to. Its not my point, its not *KPMG's*, its not someone saying: "what you really want to do is..." or "no, no you mustn't do that, what you must do, given our assessment in all this work shows on what we've done with you what we want to do with you is the following...." I don't think its appropriate in our business to do that. It might be appropriate to point out the pros and cons of plan A against plan B but we're not in the business of telling the person what their success is. Its up to them. DC (8/7/97).

This "self-driven" definition of success goes well beyond what is and is not appropriate for the individual in their career choices. As I mentioned earlier, there is a distinction drawn by many counselors between our talents and interest, what we "desire" to do, and the skills that we have developed. The concentration on skills in most people's thoughts also spills over into the areas of occupations as well whereby a particular skill-set comes to be equated with an occupational title, a "role", and/or a particular segment of the economy - the vicious cycle leading to unsuitable jobs. Louise Currier (6/2/98) discussed this in terms of role options: learning to think outside of occupational boxes.

The starting point is your knowledge, in terms of what roles it includes. So you start with what is real for the individual, what they're aware of, what they've been exposed to. And the value of the coach is to think about how you've ever succeeded, you know, have you thought of this or considered something like this. So then you're missing the networking, why don't you talk to a few people who do this? You know, different kinds of roles that you've never done but that include the types of things that you're strong in such as the strengths that you have, the area,

focus on and, in part, by providing satisficing solutions. This is especially true of the Cosmopolitan style "tests" included in the workbooks.

the professional areas you're interested in. So its exploring, its having them talk to real people who are in those kinds of roles, that can identified through discussion and brainstorming and looking at what's out there. What are some possibilities? So it's not like here are the only jobs you can look at. It's not like that at all. In fact, it's quite the opposite. It's a kind of link to create or design something, you're creating your own opportunities.

The requirement to think outside of occupational boxes can be stressful, especially if your talents and skills are in conflict. David Craig tells a story about one candidate who had a very heavy conflict between his skills and talents.

Someone who came with a university degree, a commerce degree, went into the insurance industry, got all the training from the insurance companies, became an appraiser, had a relatively successful career in the insurance business except, and I discovered this once he and I were working together he always had this, or often had this wrong feeling that he was doing something that was running against the grain and didn't know what it was.

Well, he eventually lost his job in the insurance business because his real personality came out. His real likes and dislikes came out. That fellow came to me and he sat at this table and he told me right at the outset before we did any psychometric testing or any sort of assessment that he felt that he wasn't an organization man, that he didn't like structure, that he didn't like processes and procedures, that he wanted to be his own boss, that he cherished freedom.... But he had lost his career, he lost his job in an industry that he pursued and thought he would be successful in.

I think he is going to be successful and I feel that I have been successful with him because he's pursuing a little bit of a dream of his. And he wants to become a restorative carpenter. As an insurance agent going out and looking at claims and appraising houses that had been burned and need restorative carpentry, he looked at this from this perspective, over the years, because he is a hands-on mechanical sort of person probably thought: "why am I not doing that?"

So he came to me and we talked about these things and then we put him through a battery of tests and, lo and behold, there was tremendous evidence in that process that he's not a data-oriented person, he can take or leave the human aspect of work, he's not the management type that likes to influence others and influence the direction of an organization. But he sure as hell is somebody who likes to use his hands, who likes to start with a piece of clay and over time mould it into something. So he psyched himself up for the necessary training to pursue this, to get the qualifications, to venture into this sort of realm of work that is obviously very different from the insurance business. And to me that is a success story.

This to me is an example of success. And I've had a couple of other situations like that where people have taken a radical change in their career path to do something which you could call a dream, something that has been a desire, and now having lost their job due to circumstances beyond their control they have the choice. And it is a choice. They have the choice of pursuing or not pursuing this opportunity, this dream, what in their mind might be worth success.

The process of self-discovery, at least in the outplacement context, is both limited and multi-faceted. It is limited in that the object is to achieve enough of a change in behaviour and attitude that the candidate will be able to pursue an effective job-search for an appropriate job. It is multi-faceted in the sense that in order to achieve such an attitudinal change, the technology available must be able to deal with many different factors - job search skills, reactions to firing, individual psychological problems, financial concerns, stress, etc.

Indeed, the process of self-discovery is a core component, not only of the

outplacement process but also of certain types of rites of passage, usually initiatory. But "self-discovery", as it is promulgated in outplacement, is not so much a process of self-discovery as it is a state of self-examination. Consider the story above discussing radical career changes where the individual knew what they wanted and just wanted validation and a safe space in which to

explore. And this state of self-exploration is certainly found amongst candidates who have been involved in the outplacement process more than once. Analysis, whether it be

self-analysis or scientific testing, is merely the collection of tools designed to encourage candidates to reach a state of self-exploration.³⁵⁶

This state of self-exploration is an introspective process-event space (cf. 5.3) which, hopefully, creates a distancing of the individual from their immediate concerns and allows them to focus on creating their future goals. The key word here is "creating". Every outplacement counselor I have talked with stressed the creative aspect, the ability of a candidate to transcend socially defined, occupational boxes, and to create a position that would fulfil them.

Our active imagination, with the help of business metaphors, builds the bridges between our outer work and inner work. These images help us to tap into our hidden creativity that to date has been inaccessible. Through our imagination the business mind is freed up from paralysis, repression and depression that so often occurs when only the linear, logical and analytic brain is utilized. (Mainstream Access, 1996:19)

Figure 8-VII shows the process involved in achieving a state of self-exploration. For some, it involves a requirement to clear the "blockage" that stops them from achieving their dreams and using their talents, and this is one of the places where assessment plays a crucial role. Even if there is a minimal amount of blockage or none at all, the assessment process may serve as a re-enforcement of the candidates' desires ("So he came to me and we talked about these things and then we put him through a battery of tests and, lo and behold, there was tremendous evidence in that process..." DC, quoted above).

The endpoint of the process is, above all, the definition of a goal. This endpoint is necessary not only for expedience, but also because the definition of the goal in turn

³⁵⁶ This holds true even if the state of self-exploration is not achieved. The process of analysis

defines what new skills or presentations of self the candidate will require. The point at which a goal is defined from talents, rather than from social expectations, is the point where the candidate's intention, attention and awareness come into alignment. It is not the point of transformation but, rather, the point from which the results of transformations may be glimpsed and the path to that final transformation perceived.³⁵⁷

The perception of the path towards final transformation, and most especially the potentiation of this perception, is the responsibility of the outplacement counselor. In this situation, there is an exact parallel between the role of the counselor and that of the shaman - the interpretation of signs and portents (cf. Laughlin, 1994). Indeed, in order for the candidate to move onto the next phase of the process, access to "tribal gnosis", it is imperative that the counselor know exactly which components the candidate needs. For example, it is useless for the counselor to push the candidate towards developing interviewing skills if they are interested in starting their own business - everyone's time and money would be wasted.

In order for a goal to be perceived, and decisions made on how best to achieve that goal, there are a varying number of adjustments that must be made to the candidate's interior environments (see 3.3). The actual number of adjustments will depend in each case on the interior needs of the individual candidate and the conditions of their program.

then becomes a "ritual activity" with all of the pejorative implications (cf. Merton, 1967).

³⁵⁷ The use of a "mystical" language genre in this paragraph is mandated due to the lack of a non-mystical genre that conveys even half of the same information. Should the reader doubt this, I would refer them to the ways in which C.G. Jung attempts to describe similar experiential states.

8.4.1 The neuro-somatic environment

In many instances, especially in the earlier days of outplacement, there was an extensive need to readjust the neuro-somatic environment of candidates. This was illustrated in *After the Axe* by Biff's starting an exercise program and the more general discussion on stress related to job loss (see 7.6.1, and Leana and Feldman, 1994:272-274 for a summary).

In general, the primary neuro-somatic changes induced by job loss tend to be stress related, and associated with rapid shifts in the autonomic nervous system and rapid fluctuations in neuro-transmitter production - e.g. increased depression (Tiggemen and Winefield, 1984), a loss of time sense and structure (Jahoda, 1982), and an increase in apathy (Hill, 1978).

Except in extreme cases, these changes are temporary and amenable to control via the imposition of structure and self awareness.³⁵⁸ The imposition of a temporal and "work" structure upon candidates strives to replicate the structural pressures, in limited form, that the candidate experienced when employed. Indeed, this imposition of structure is behind one of the most commonly heard aphorisms: "you have a job; your job is finding a job."

While attempts to impose a temporal structure on candidates are external, there are also a series of self-assessment tools that are used to increase self-awareness of neuro-somatic changes and ways in which they can be controlled. In addition to vague

³⁵⁸ There was one story told to me of a candidate who was so depressed that his counselor had to talk him out of bed every day on a step by step basis ("sit up, put on your socks, put on your shoes, etc."). This situation lasted for several weeks until the candidate came to the conclusion that it was less trouble to get up, get dressed, and go into the counselors' office every day than to stay at home.

injunctions to develop health and exercise plans, one commonly finds "Health Assessment" tests which look at smoking, drinking and other drugs, eating and exercise habits, safety habits and stress control techniques (e.g. *KPMG*, 1994:14-29). In a number of cases (e.g. *KPMG* 1994:27) meditational exercise are suggested as a counter to stress.³⁵⁹

In general, neuro-somatic fluctuations tend to achieve a new equilibrium point (cf. Leana and Feldman, 1994:275-279; Ashford and Taylor, 1990). There is also some limited evidence that candidates on outplacement programs fare better than those in self-help organizations in achieving a more positive equilibrium point (Davy *et al.*, 1995).

One final point needs to be made: reactions to job loss are not perfectly predictable. While the reaction during the ESA 1 phase was predominantly the shock, anger, denial model used by outplacement companies (cf. *KPMG*, 1994:4-8), there have always been exceptions to this, and the probability of a non-"standard" reaction has increased during the ESA 2 and 3 phases. Most counselors I talked with recognized this change, but stated that the "standard" model was still the most common.³⁶⁰

8.4.2 The neuro-linguistic environment

As might be guessed from the language I used in section 8.4, there is a clear shift in the neuro-linguistic environment of candidates during the assessment stage. This shift

³⁵⁹ Indeed, the specific exercise suggested in the *KPMG* workbook is one that is used by many modern magicians, witches and students of meditation (cf. Tyrrell, 1992:fn 186).

³⁶⁰ Indeed, some of the reactions are quite amazing including "Thank God that's over! I was about to quit anyway." and "Good enough, now let's find another one." It is important to note that few companies have kept long term records on reactions to firing and, even if they were kept, they would be unavailable for study due to doctor-patient confidentiality, thus the major evidence of non-standard reactions is observation and anecdote.

is marked in a clear preference for visual, "mystical", representational strategies over the kinesthetic representational strategies more common in everyday business settings.

This difference may be due to the goal-oriented focus of most business talk (Drew and Heritage, 1992:22-23) and/or to the predominant visual coding of religious and mystical genres (cf. Happold, 1970, esp. ch. 26) and some psychological genres (e.g. C.G. Jung). Another source of the difference may come out of basic human experience in that objects that we "see" are further from us and less able to influence us than objects that we touch.

Regardless of the source of the difference, there is a clear use of visual representational strategies in the assessment phase. This use serves to sequester the assessment phase from "normal reality", producing a "sacred space" which endows the counselor with a certain amount of "structural charisma" (see sub-section 4.3.2) that allows them to serve as shamanic interpreters of the assessment results (see above and Laughlin, 1994).

In addition to any external structural support, the use of visual representational strategies has one other major effect: it provides the candidates with a verbal way of distinguishing between everyday process-event spaces and "reflexive" process-event spaces. The use of visual representational strategies encourages a "distancing" of the individual candidate from the task at hand, and this distancing effect becomes very important in the next phase of the outplacement process.

8.4.3 the Neuro-Semantic environment

The changes noted in representational strategies (8.4.2) serve to support the initial

Figure 8-VIII: Neuro-semantic

establishment of a neuro-semantic ecosystem (see 3.3.2) that is separated from the everyday world of work/unemployment. These differing neuro-semantic ecosystems (N-S ecosystems) serve as different environments

with differential rewards for different types of action or, in other words, they are differing ecological niches. As with any ecological niche, there are different relationships established between differing factors, and successful adaptations to one ecosystem will not necessarily translate into successful adaptations to the other ecosystems. Thus, for example, an excellent employee may be terrible at finding a job, while someone who is excellent at finding jobs may be terrible at keeping them.

As I mentioned in sub-section 3.3.2, neuro-semantic ecosystems are composed of a collection of semantic reactions linked to an external environment that is recognised as "distinct". N-S ecosystems support a different number of process-events, "games" (see 5.4.2), that serve to define the distinctiveness of that space by defining the potential of the roles involved in that space (see 5.5.2), including the perceptual parsing (see 4.1.1.2) that takes place there. This is shown in Figure 8-VIII.

Shifts in the neuro-semantic environment are, generally, changes in second order neuro-semantic structures (i.e. those derived from cultural conditioning; see 3.3.2). Indeed, the model I encountered in my fieldwork at *KPMG* described the process of shifts exclusively in terms of second order effects.

This model, which was called the "Action-Belief-Consequence" or "ABC" model, is based on simple semantic reactions: one perceives an action or event, interprets it based on a belief, and reacts accordingly producing a consequence. The example used was of standing in an elevator and feeling a tapping on your leg coming from behind. The tapping keeps on, until eventually you get mad and turn around to attack the person. You then see that it is a blind man who is tapping you with his cane, and your reaction changes. The ABC model is used to illustrate the effects of often erroneous beliefs on our actions. We "react", rather than act, and that reaction is often to our detriment.

In and of itself, the ABC model is a simple stimulus-response model where the response is conditioned by the candidate's interpretation ("belief") of the stimulus. The utility of the model is apparent in several areas. First, it shows the candidates that interpretation or "belief" is a crucial component of action. Second, it shows the candidate that beliefs may be incorrect or inaccurate, thereby producing erroneous results. Finally, it shows that changes in belief may well have an effect on changes in consequence, thereby opening up greater potential for action.

In addition to what the candidates can draw out of the models, the ABC model also serves counselors by giving them a model to map out the candidates' beliefs and, by corollary, their strengths and weaknesses. This mapping may take place during the assessment phase and/or as an ongoing process during the next phase of liminality.

8.4.4 General foci in the assessment phase

There are three general foci in the assessment phase: the candidate's presentation of self, the candidate's information search abilities, and the candidate's goal. Each of these foci operates at different levels throughout the search process and conditions the material that is taught during the second phase of the liminal stage (see Table 10).

Table 10 : Foci and Levels			
	Presentation of Self	Information Search	Goal/Intention
Core	Talent/Calling/Desire/Interest		
	Self-Knowledge/Awareness/Skills		
	Goal/Decision/Intention		
Strategic	Basic Role Credibility Technical Cultural	"Big Picture" General opportunity identification General opportunity analysis	Area identification Role identification Requirement identification
Tactical	"Seller" role Presentation of Self Applied culture	Opportunity identification Opportunity analysis Opportunity context	"Buyer" role selection of "fit" selection of "flow"

The different levels shown in Table 10 refer to different operational levels. The "core" level refers to the interior environments of the individual: the skills, abilities, desires, passions and dreams. The strategic level is the general focus of the job search, and pertains to general areas such as industry, overall roles, general opportunities, etc. The tactical level refers to specific opportunities that are available in a single strategic area. For example, at a strategic level, a candidate may wish to become involved in the insurance industry. After examining the industry in general, they may identify a particular opportunity in a company and pursue that at the tactical level.

While the ideal calls for each candidate to know what their goals are before leaving the self-assessment phase, and this ideal is supported in the manuals and handouts, the reality is often quite different. It is much more common to have a limited

goal definition, the "perception of a goal" (see 8.4). The operationalization of this perception then takes place in and through the exploration of various strategic alternatives. For example, a candidate may know that they want to have something to do with helping people, but have no idea which form this would take or what industry it would be in. The specifics would be worked out later in the liminal phase at both tactical and strategic levels.

8.4.5 Crossing the liminal phase: Financial counseling and PAR stories

Exact goal definition is not the only process-event that crosses between the various parts of the liminal phase. There are also two technological/ritual components that are sometimes used in the self-assessment phase which play a major part in the second part of the liminal phase: financial counseling and Problem-Action-Result (PAR) stories. In general, a limited form of financial counseling may be used as a "stop thrust" to pull candidates out of a fear feedback loop, and show them that they do have sufficient time, and monetary resources, to survive until they get a new job.³⁶¹

Problem-Action-Result, or "PAR", stories are a core technology used by all of the outplacement counselors and companies I have examined, although the exact term for the stories may change from group to group (e.g. Situation Task Action Response - STAR). The idea behind PAR stories is simple: the candidate is asked to recount a particular story about a problem they had to deal with. The story is cast in the form of stating the problem, outlining the actions they took to solve the problem, and highlighting the results of these actions.

During the self-assessment phase, candidates are introduced to the idea of PAR stories and, occasionally, asked to tell them based around problems they enjoyed solving and problems they hated to solve. In this phase, PAR stories may be used as levers to help candidates clarify their goals, if only in negative terms (e.g. "I never want to be in that situation again!"). PAR stories are, however, much more than self-assessment tools. In the second phase of liminality, PAR stories are used both to refine goals at strategic and tactical levels and are integrated into the candidate's presentation of self (cf. Table 10).

One of the most interesting facets of PAR stories is their flexibility. While the crafting of a PAR story may take hours to get all of the components in the story together, they can be used in multiple situations. For example, if I was to construct a PAR story about my Introduction to Anthropology class, I would point to the course web page as a major accomplishment.³⁶² In PAR format, this would come out something like the following.

In the Fall/Winter term of 1999/2000, I had to teach a 300plus student class in a large lecture theatre. I wanted the students to concentrate on what I was saying, rather than on what was on the overheads. Since I was already using MS PowerPoint for my overheads, converting them into a web-based format was simple, so I ended up making all of my lecture overheads available before the classes. I found that this also allowed me to put lecture specific web links on the appropriate lectures, letting the students have a record of them, and also significantly reduced the "must copy overhead" reflex many first year students have. The result is more attentive students who are listening and learning, rather than copying and regurgitating.

³⁶¹ Of course, this only operates if the candidate actually does have a settlement that will hold them over their period of unemployment.

³⁶² I used this example with RDT to try and understand how PAR stories operate. We spent about half an hour working it through into its present form.

The "obvious" use of a story like this would be in response to some form of interview question dealing with course web pages. However, with a little modification, it could also be used to answer questions relating to pedagogical philosophy and style (learning not regurgitation), familiarity with web-based distance learning technologies, integration of new technologies into teaching, and how I would teach an Introductory course.³⁶³

While PAR stories have a great utility, i.e. a couple of good PAR stories can answer many questions in an interview, they have one other major importance: PAR stories force the candidate to rehearse success and, in so doing, re-entrain some of the affective responses to that success. Even as the counselors will use a quick initial assessment to stabilize the affective states of the candidates by trying to show them that there is "hope" (see 8.3.1), the creation, maintenance and modification of PAR stories creates a series of symbols, the stories, that reinforce a belief in personal accomplishment and an ability to express it.

8.4.6 Summation

The first phase of liminality, the assessment phase, has two main components in its charter: to stabilize the candidates' reactions and to help them glimpse a goal. While the techniques vary from group to group and counselor to counselor, the goals are the same. One might almost describe this first phase of liminality as an enculturation process which attempts to stabilize the candidate into a state of consciousness appropriate to unemployment. What this stabilization actually involves will depend not only upon the

³⁶³ As a side note, I have actually constructed course web pages for every course I have taught

program, but also upon the needs of the individual candidate and these needs will, in turn, define the personnel, norms and activities involved. In the next section, we move on to an analysis of the second stage of liminality and what I referred to as access to tribal lore, training, and "magical" object in Figure 8-I.

8.5 Liminality: Phase II - "Tribal" Gnosis and the Presentation of Self

Figure 8-IX: Liminality phase II

It is important to note that while the manuals and literature assumes that a goal has been decided upon in the self-assessment phase, this is often inaccurate. As I argued earlier in the previous section, the most probable result is a "glimpse" of the

since 1996 in both Sociology and Anthropology, from first year to fourth year.

candidate's goal. It is during the second phase of liminality that this "glimpse" is explored and refined into a more concrete set of goals.

The methods of refining goals are also the methods used to produce usable job search skills. In general, these methods can be divided into three main groups: the A list, the A₁ list, and the B list. The A list is composed of the absolute, core competencies necessary to find a job: research/networking skills, resume preparation, and interview skills. The A₁ list consists of core material that is not directly related to a job search: financial counseling and entrepreneurship skills.³⁶⁴ The B list consists of specialized techniques and templates that supplement the job search process.

The interplay between the various components of tribal gnosis, the seminars, workbooks, workshops, one-on-one training, etc., is a good example of emergent complexity. If we consider the A and A₁ lists only, we arrive at the linkages shown in Figure 8-IX. While each of the individual components is relatively simple, the interplay between them is not.

Before going into detail on the individual components, it is worthwhile to look at the key role played by the "Information" component". In the previous section, I argued that candidates get a glimpse of their goal, and this is later refined into a specific, tangible target. The information component is the filtering process which serves to refine goals. As can be seen in figure 8-IX, goal redefinition is a feedback loop that draws in a number of different sources: financial, entrepreneurial, research/networking and PAR stories.

³⁶⁴ Also known as the "how to start your own business" seminar series. The majority focus of most job search programs is on obtaining employment within an organization rather than becoming self-employed. However, given the general employment trends, it is not surprising that many people opt to create their own businesses. This is considered a viable option by most counselors, depending on the candidate, and workshops are available in most programs.

The financial branch of the feedback loop serves to answer questions of possibility, e.g. "Do I have the financial resources to achieve the goal?". The entrepreneurship considers the question of the candidate starting their own business. The PAR stories link treats PAR stories as important pieces of information about the candidate (see 8.4.5). Finally, the research/networking component provides information on the nature and scope of work in specific firms and industries.

8.5.1 The A List

The A list is composed of three core competency areas - training in resumes, interviewing techniques, and research/networking skills³⁶⁵ - each of which, if successfully completed, should arm the candidate with an appropriate "magical object". Put simply, the competencies cover how you find out about a job, how you get your foot in the door, and how you negotiate getting hired. Each of the A list areas is also used in an effort to refine the candidate's goals, so the product of the area is not a single entity (e.g. a resume, etc.) but, rather, a competency which is flexible in specific production.

8.5.1.1 Research/Networking

The core of the research/networking competency is the ability to tap into both the formal (research) and informal (networking) information flow as it relates to the nature and scope of work in specific firms and industries including, but not limited to, job opportunities. At its core, the competency refers to the ability to conduct a scan of the

³⁶⁵ In many cases, research and networking are separated into two workshops with "research" concentrating on corporate intelligence and networking concentrating on how to build a network of contacts. While common, the separation is artificial and, in many ways, unimportant since both are required in order to gain the necessary information.

environment, to gather information about opportunities, and to spread the "word" that a candidate is looking for opportunities.

The development of research and networking skills will, in theory, allow the candidate to gain information on opportunities. This information is not restricted to their existence, i.e. tapping into the "hidden" job market. At the strategic level (see Figure 8-IX), it allows the candidate to examine industries which they may not be familiar with to see if there may be opportunities in that industry. At the tactical level, it allows the candidate to access the hidden job market, gain information about the operational reality of particular opportunities, and identify key personnel and issues surrounding that opportunity.

The core product, outside of the development of skills in research and networking, is the construction of a short description of what type of opportunity the candidate is searching for. This capsule description is important for two reasons. First, the construction of the description helps to clarify the candidate's goals and second, the description will be broadcast throughout the candidate's network.

One crucial point surrounding this competency is that the exchange networks built as a result of networking operations may well survive after the candidate has successfully landed a new job. One good example of this comes from a recent downsizing in an Ottawa based high technology company. One downsized ex Vice President showed up on the first day of his program, said hello to the counselor whom he had worked with seven years before, and proceeded to make forty phone calls to let his immediate network know that he was available. He accepted a new position three weeks later.

Of all of the A list competencies, networking is the one that is least under the candidate's control. While candidates may be able to craft descriptions of their desires, make contacts, and "spread the word", the results are always uncertain. One of the ways in which this uncertainty is handled, is by an appeal to a "spiritual law" - "bread on the waters". I have come across several stories that illustrate this point, and one of them is worth including here.³⁶⁶

A man who had been the Chief Financial Officer of a large company was let go in a downsizing. After a number of weeks, he finally told his wife that he had been let go, and they negotiated an agreement whereby she would help him in his job search. So, every morning, at the breakfast table, she would ask him what he planned on doing today.

One day, as he was responding to his wife's question, his 8 year old daughter turned to him and said, "Oh, Daddy, you have a meeting with Mr X at 4:30 this Friday." Her father looked at her and said "What?".

She replied, "Well, Daddy, you said that we all had to help you with finding a job, so I asked my friend if her daddy could give you a job, since he is a president of a company, and she said she would ask him. And she told me to tell you that he said you could meet with him on Friday at 4:30."

When he showed up at Mr X's office on Friday, he was incredibly embarrassed and said "I really appreciate your agreeing to meet with me, but we both know that our daughters embarrassed us into this, so I'll leave if you want." Mr X told him that he had already booked off half an hour so they might as well have their meeting.

Well, the meeting lasted for over two hours, and it turned out that they had a lot of friends in common, even though they had never met. But there wasn't any job opportunity.

Two months later, the ex-CFO was contacted by an executive search firm who asked him if he was still looking for work. When he said yes, they asked for his resume. The week after, he was called in for an interview. The week after that, he was offered the job (another CFO position).

When he asked the search firm how they got his name, he was were told that the president of the company that had hired him had

³⁶⁶ This story was originally related to me by the manager of *KPMG* Career counselling in Ottawa in the summer of 1993. Since then, I have heard approximately twenty variants of it.

recommended him. This was something of a surprise since he had never met the president before the interview.

So, on his first day of work, when the president was showing him around the office, he asked him how he had known that he was available. The president told him that he had been playing golf a month before with an old friend and telling him about his problems in finding a new CFO, and that his friend had mentioned that he might be available. The friend was Mr X.

The moral behind this story that is hammered home every time the story is told is that you will never know exactly how you will get a job opportunity, only that you must a) continue the search, and b) act in a manner appropriate to your status and that of the people you are in contact with.

While many candidates do not keep their networks current, an increasing number do, especially in the high technology industries.³⁶⁷ This increase in networking, even when employed, is starting to have an effect on organizational cultures in a number of industries, and will probably have a major effect in the future (see Tyrrell, 2000 and Chapter 9).

8.5.1.2 Resumes

A resume is what nearly everyone you approach in your job search is going to ask you to send them before they take any action on your behalf. You can think of it as the driver's license of job hunting: You can't go anywhere without it. What it is, in short, is a one- or two-page summary of your work history, educational background, and work-related personal qualifications. Its fundamental purpose is to give prospective employers a convenient and reasonably efficient way to determine, at a glance, if you warrant a closer look. Messmer, 1995:59

Resumes are the formal, written, candidates' presentation of self in the job search.

The use of the plural in the previous sentence is a key to the way in which resumes

operate: they must be tailored and crafted for each opportunity in order to maximize the candidates' chance of getting an interview. The requirement to tailor resumes for each opportunity is one factor that drives the design of resume writing workshops and manuals.

A second driving factor appears in the links between resume design and PAR stories (see 8.4.5). As the public "face" of the candidate, resumes act as one of the main sources for questions during an interview. Since it is desirable for candidates to present their best face in interviews, crafting a resume that will shape an interview towards the presentation of a pre-rehearsed PAR story is quite logical.

This resume crafting is usually conducted by presenting action-oriented accomplishments, such as "reduced customer service costs by 27% by implementing a corporate internet web site". Not only are the accomplishments, rather than the duties, presented, but they allow the candidate to present a PAR story about that accomplishment. Using the previous example, the candidate could use that particular accomplishment to talk about customer service issues, e-commerce issues, and/or technology implementation issues depending on the specifics of the job and lead question. PAR stories should be transformable, at least in the sense that they should be usable for multiple presentations based around the different connecting factors (e.g. web-design, e-commerce, IT issues, customer service, etc.).

PAR stories are not the only link from resumes. Since the spread of Internet based recruiting in the mid-1990's (see 9.3.2), there has been an increasing use of key-

³⁶⁷ Unfortunately, there are no studies to back up this assertion and the evidence for network retention comes from anecdotal evidence solely.

word search processing. While key-word search of resumes has been used since the 1970's, it was always used as a sorting mechanism for received paper resumes. The introduction of electronic only resumes has, in some cases, eliminated the page length requirement and produced a key work focus rather than an accomplishment focus. This shift is mitigated by the fact that most of the web-accessible recruiting programs print out the resumes.³⁶⁸

8.5.1.3 Interviewing

Interviewing workshops and training concentrate on two items: developing PAR stories and answering specific, "difficult" questions such as "Why did you leave your last job?". In some programs, the training culminates in mock interviews, either one-on-one with a counselor or in a group setting. These simulations may include the development of an entirely fictitious company, thereby allowing the candidate to "research" the opportunity, although this appears to be rare (RDT 30/1/2000). At best, interviewing skills training will give the candidates an arsenal of pre-rehearsed PAR stories and answers to difficult questions.

Interviews are both "buying" and "selling" opportunities: the company is looking for a particular person who can fulfil their needs, while the candidate should also be looking for the same thing. Unfortunately, most of the training concentrates on the "seller" role, where the candidate "sells" themselves as the perfect candidate for the position. It appears to be difficult to get the candidates to adopt the "buyer" role, and get

³⁶⁸ In some industries, notably computer programming, there has been a trend to longer and longer resumes with a listing of all potentially useful material. This trend to CV size resumes (20+ pages) does not seem to have spread beyond a few areas of the high technology sector.

them asking questions about the company and the corporate culture (RDT 30/1/2000). This inability to shift into a "buyer" role may have repercussions both in the chances of being hired and also in the "fit" between the candidate and the company.

8.5.2 The A₁ List

The A₁ List is composed of two separate but flexibly related areas: financial counseling and entrepreneurship. I have already talked about one form of financial counseling (see 8.4.5), and the major forms of this area are similar. In general, they involve an analysis of the candidates' financial situation, including tax planning, retirement and pension information, and general financial counseling. They may also involve an analysis of the options possible to the candidate, given their financial situation, i.e. "can I retire?", "can I go back to school for two years?", etc. Since financial insecurity is a major source of stress amongst the unemployed (Leana and Feldman, 1994:276), some form of financial counseling is imperative.

There are several additional problems in considering financial counseling for managers, professional, and executives, over and above those of technicians and assembly line workers. In particular, the ability to search for a similar job requires a fairly large disposable income, given costs of long distance calls, maintaining computer accounts, air travel, and the maintenance of presentation of self items (e.g. personal grooming, clothing costs, the ability to buy lunch for a network contact,³⁶⁹ etc.).

³⁶⁹ The ability to buy lunch for a network contact is not as silly as it sounds. In most North American business cultures, if you ask a businessman to a lunch meeting then you pay. Not paying, suggesting a "Dutch treat" or lunch at MacDonalds, will clearly show your contact that you aren't part of their community and are "uncultured". "Networking", as one counselor commented, "takes money".

The seminars on entrepreneurship are also interesting, since an increasing number of Canadians have started their own businesses, especially after the 1982 season of downsizings. The move to self-employment has also been enhanced by the move towards "virtual corporations" and the rapid deployment of the Internet which allows small businesses to compete in the global market. Given this, it is not surprising that many candidates react to unemployment by thinking about starting their own businesses.

Entrepreneurship seminars tend to come in three styles: introductory, intermediate and advanced. Introductory seminars are a scan of the costs and benefits associated with running your own business in Canada without getting into any major details. The intermediate seminars concentrate on the details involved in setting up a business - market research, constructing business plans, time and project management, tax implications, etc. Calling the advanced training "seminars" is somewhat misleading since in all of the cases I know of, it is a series of one on one discussions with a counselor and/or specialists, involving the production and fine tuning of market research and business plans.

While entrepreneurship is a "core area" for outplacement programs, it is not part of the main emphasis - obtaining corporate re-employment. As a result, it both is and is not a part of the programs. In one recent case, out of 100 downsized employees in a high tech career center, 30 attended an introductory seminar, 18 went to the intermediate seminar, and seven or eight may start their own businesses. Clearly, while there is a lot of interest, the actual percentage of people starting their own business is still fairly small.

8.5.3 The B List

The B list is composed of a variable number of workshops, seminars, etc. dealing, in general, with business "etiquette". The most important B list topics are letter writing, computer literacy, and telephone techniques.³⁷⁰ Letter writing is frequently subsumed under resume preparation, and tends to concentrate on writing cover letters. In particular, there is an effort made to link the cover letter in with the resume, the advertisement, and any other research/networking information on the position. There is also a push to encourage candidates to write "Thank You" notes after interviews and/or networking contacts.³⁷¹

Computer literacy has only been on the B list since approximately 1996, and is a direct response to the deployment of corporate web sites and job posting sites. In general, the training concentrates on finding positions, researching particular companies, and making sure that the candidates have email accounts.³⁷² There is little or no mention of using List-servs for job searching, and the vast majority of the training concentrates on the WWW and email.

"Telephone techniques" is a catch-all phrase combining how to network over the telephone, how to get information over the telephone, and general concepts of telephone

³⁷⁰ Other B list topics include "aesthetics" (i.e. what to wear, etc.), how to read job advertisements, how to fill out employment application forms, and how to line up references.

³⁷¹ One story floating around the *KPMG* office about the importance of "Thank You" notes concerned a woman who applied for a communications position. She interviewed for the position, along with several hundred applicants, and didn't really feel that the interview went well. When she got back to the office, she decided she might as well send a Thank You note, and she ended up dropping it off on the way home. She got a call three days later, and was offered the position not because of her interview, but because she was the only person who applied who sent a Thank You note - for a communications position.

³⁷² Usually from the free email providers such as HotMail.

etiquette. In many instances, the training provides a series of scripts for candidates to follow until they develop their own style.

In general, the B list training material is designed to supplement and support the A list material by developing skills in the use of particular tools, and in general etiquette training. Which particular B list training is available will depend on the candidate's particular needs, and much of it is in the form of videos and/or outsourced seminars.

8.5.4 Summation

It is important to re-emphasize that all of the training involved in the outplacement process is inter-related (see Figure 8-IX). In particular, the training is used not only to develop particular skills and competencies, but also to help the candidate refine their goals and develop a search strategy. One point that cannot be stressed heavily enough is that outplacement training is designed to teach people how to find jobs and explore their desires; it is not designed to get people jobs.³⁷³

At the same time as the training is going on, the candidates are being (re-) enculturated in the ESA 2-3 meme complex (see Figure 7-V). The "loyalty to personal network" meme is reinforced in networking training, while the "loyalty to self" meme is reinforced through the constant redefinition and refinements to personal goals. The goal of all this training is to develop a coherent search strategy, a "Marketing Plan", dependant upon their skills, desires and potential opportunities. This marketing plan is, in effect, a plan for the dissemination and exchange of information. As such, it is conditioned by the

³⁷³

This confusion in purpose is sometimes expressed by candidates who may confuse outplacement counselors with headhunters and/or temp agents. In some instances, this confusion is understandable, since several outplacement firms are also involved in headhunting.

processes and the media of the exchange which, in turn, are dependant upon the ways in which the ESA 2-3 meme complex is operationalized.

8.6 Liminality: Phase III - The Journey "Home"

In the wonder tales discussed in section 7.3, the final phase of the story concerns the return of the protagonist, usually with a pursuit and escape/combat sequence. In the outplacement "wonder tale", the return sequence is the operationalization of the job search: the actual, rather than the training.

The operationalization of a job search potentially involves a large array of objects, media, and processes of exchange.³⁷⁴ These arrays are listed for presentations of self in Table 11, and for opportunity information in Table 12. Each of these general classes, presentations of self and information, is further broken down into specific sub-classes (column 1) and specific "objects" (column 3).

In Table 11, the object sub-classes start with the specific (technical) and go to the general (availability). In Table 12, the object sub-classes go from the general, "subject area (or industry) information", to the specific, "Job Opportunity". It should also be noted that the sub-classes in both tables also go from the least mutable objects in the temporal present, to the most mutable.

³⁷⁴ Sources for this table include published material (newspapers, popular job search books, and outplacement industry handouts), fieldnotes from job search seminars, and interviews with career counsellors.

Table 11: Objects, Media, and Processes of Exchange: Presentations of Self

Object sub-class	Value to...	Object	Medium	Exchange process
Personal skills	Employer	Resume, CV✓	Print	Formal
		"reputation" ^a	PC	Reciprocity
		Testing Interviews✓	Any PC	Formal Formal
Personal style	Employer	Cover letter✓	Print	Formal
		"reputation" ^a	PC	Reciprocity
		Interviews✓	PC	Formal
Personal interest	Searcher/ Employer	Networking✓	PC	Reciprocity
		Cover letter✓	Print	Formal
		"reputation" ^a	PC	Reciprocity
		Interviews✓	PC	Formal
availability	Searcher/ Employer	"Broadcast" ^b	Print	Formal
			Electronic	Formal
		Persistence ^c	Any	Formal
		Networking✓	PC	Reciprocity
		Receptive ^d	Print	Gathering
			PC	Reciprocity
		Network Transmission ^e	PC	Reciprocity

Notes:

✓ - indicates that the outplacement industry attempts to develop specific skills in this area.

a - "Reputation" includes the development of a particular reputation in a given social network as well as having people willing to "sponsor" the individual (e.g. references), and information from past co-workers and employers.

b - A "broadcast" approach involves sending out resumes in bulk, faxing everyone you can think of and, in general, having no specific search strategy.

c - A persistence approach (sometimes referred to as "harassment") involves the targeting of specific companies and repetitive contact with them.

d - A "receptive" approach usually involves reading newspaper advertisements and not actively searching for a job.

e - the information is sent or given by a member of the searcher's network to a potential employer.

Medium column: "PC" refers to personal contact; bold face indicates primary medium; *italic* indicates the requirement for special skills, knowledge or access. The term "print" refers not only to print media such as newspapers and job boards, but also to electronic forms that mimic them.

Process column:

"formal" - a system of information exchange where either or both the setting and rules of the system are explained and formalized.

"reciprocity" - a system of information exchange with reciprocal obligations and a strong "reputational" or "status" element.

"gathering" - a system of information exchange where the information is freely available with no obligations.

The first choice a job searcher must make is what strategy they will choose to

inform potential employers that they are available for work (Table 11, "Availability").

Broadly speaking, there are four strategies that may be followed: broadcast, persistence, networking, and receptive.³⁷⁵

Each of these strategies is characterized by the methodologies employed in contacting potential employers. The broadcast strategy is characterized by the indiscriminate contacting of all potential employers. The persistence strategy is characterized by contacting a pre-selected series of potential employers over a long period of time. The networking strategy is characterized by first identifying potential employers and then contacting them after specific opportunities are identified. The receptive strategy is characterized by waiting for opportunities to present themselves.

The final object, "network transmission", is not a strategy *per se*, but, rather, a way of characterizing the effect of informing the members of a searchers' network that s/he is looking for work. A potential employer may be informed of the searchers' availability in this way regardless of which strategy the searcher uses. However, the likelihood of a network transmission occurring depends on the scope and reach of the searchers network which is enhanced if a networking strategy is chosen.³⁷⁶

Each of the availability strategies strongly conditions the use of objects listed in Table 12. The broadcast strategy uses subject area information if it uses any information. The persistence strategy uses contact names, while the receptive strategy uses advertised job opportunities and, occasionally, networked information (both in the job opportunity category). Only the networking strategy potentially uses all of the objects in Table 12.

³⁷⁵ These strategies mimic what biologists call the r -K spectrum. In general, the spectrum refers to the tradeoff between quantity and quality in replication strategies. See Calvin (1991:136-137) for details.

³⁷⁶ By analogy, the signal strength of a network transmission is increased if the networking strategy is chosen.

Table 12: Objects, Media and Processes of Exchange: Opportunity Information

Object sub-class	Value to	Object	Medium	Exchange process
Subject area	Searcher	Network information✓ Research	PC Print✓ Electronic	Reciprocity Gathering Gathering
Contact names	Searcher	Research (no referral) ✓ Unassisted referral✓ Assisted referral✓	Print PC PC	Gathering Reciprocity Reciprocity
Potential Opportunity	Searcher	Network information✓ Research	PC Print✓ Electronic	Reciprocity Gathering Gathering
Opportunity specific	Searcher	Network information✓ Research Interview information✓	PC Print✓ Electronic PC	Reciprocity Gathering Gathering Formal
Job Opportunity	Searcher	Advertisements [10%] ^a ✓ Agency [10%] ^a "Hidden" [80%] ^a Network information ^d	Print Electronic Print PC PC✓ Print✓ Electronic PC	Gathering/formal ^b Gathering/formal ^b Gathering/formal ^b Reciprocity/(formal) ^c Reciprocity/(formal) ^c Gathering/(formal) ^c Gathering/(formal) ^c Reciprocity

Notes:

✓ - indicates that the outplacement industry attempts to develop specific skills in this area.

a - while actual figures vary with time and from place to place, this % is a good general guideline for job availability information.

b - the information is gathered while the application is formal.

c - the information comes via the specific media noted, while the application process may or may not be formalized.

d - may take any form (advertisement, agency, or hidden).

Medium column: "PC" refers to personal contact; bold face indicates primary medium. *Italic* indicates the requirement for special skills, knowledge or access. The term "print" refers not only to print media, such as newspapers and job boards, but also to electronic forms that mimic them.

Process column:

"formal" - a system of information exchange where either or both the setting and rules of the system are explained and formalized.

"reciprocity" - a system of information exchange with reciprocal obligations and a strong "reputational" or "status" element.

"information" - a system of information exchange where the information is freely available with no obligations.

I want to concentrate my discussion on the networking strategy, since it is the most effective. The basic logic behind the networking strategy is fairly straight forward.

First, most job opportunities (80%) are never advertised, they are part of the "hidden job market". Second, in order to access these job opportunities, the searcher must get into communication with people who already have access to these hidden jobs. Third, in order to communicate with these people, the searcher must appear to be a potential member of their community. Or, in other words, someone who they will a) want to help with information, and b) someone they will remember favourably.

The key tactic in the final point is to establish a *personal* relationship with a number of individuals. This relationship may be established either by the searcher's own initiative - an "unassisted referral" (Table 12) - or by making use of a third party, previously established, personal relationship - an "assisted referral". The tactics for establishing a personal relationship in the case of an unassisted referral are based on the presumed expertise and status of the person contacted. In the case of an assisted referral, the tactics draw on the presumed obligations of the person contacted to the third party who gave the referral.

The strategy is designed to produce four major effects. First, it is designed to gain access to job opportunities in the hidden job market. Second, it is designed to allow the searcher to optimize their self presentations of skills, style, and interests both in order to gain an interview (i.e. to increase their chances of getting through the preliminary selection process), and during the interview itself. Third, the strategy, if used properly, should establish a "reputation" for the searcher which will impact on both their chances of becoming a potential candidate for a position (e.g. network transmission, Table 11), and on their chances of being selected for a position (e.g. references, etc.). The fourth effect is to keep the searcher motivated by giving them a series of achievable goals.

Regardless of the strategy chosen, the aim is to identify potential opportunities and maximize the chance of an employment offer. To this end, candidates are encouraged to actively pursue multiple opportunities, and not rely on a single position. The ideal situation is to be sitting with several job offers which meet the candidates' minimum requirements, thereby allowing them to choose which offer will allow them the greatest opportunity to grow.

8.7 Negotiating re-aggregation

All job search strategies aim at the candidate being proffered one or more job offers, but the outplacement process does not stop at the job offer. In particular, most programs include components to help the candidate analyze and negotiate their offers. While the particulars may vary somewhat, in general there is a discussion on how to handle salary questions and the match between the offer and the candidates' career goals.

The most common injunction is for the candidate to take no immediate action: they should sidestep many of the questions until they have an opportunity to sit back and reflect on the offer. The reality varies with the state of the job market and the candidates requirements. When there are few candidates for a position, companies are unlikely to make minimal offers and tend to be willing to negotiate individual points. When there are few jobs and many candidates, companies will tend to reduce salary offers and not negotiate. In most cases, candidates have already created a profile of the type of job they

are looking for, including salary and benefits criteria.³⁷⁷ When an offer is made, it is compared against these pre-determined criteria.

In situations where a candidate has multiple offers, and the time to reflect upon them, there will be a process of comparison and evaluation which may include discussions with a counselor. The reverse situation, having a single offer, can be somewhat trickier. If the offer meets the pre-set criteria, or is only short in one or two small areas, then it may well be negotiated and/or accepted immediately.

If the offer does not meet the pre-set criteria, then there can be serious problems for the candidate. In many cases there is a conflict between the desire to accept any offer, and the realization that the job is far from ideal. Should the candidate refuse the offer, they will likely go through a serious "crisis of conscience" - "Oh, my God! What have I done!". While there is no statistical support, anecdotal evidence indicates that candidates who weather their crisis of conscience will end up with a job that is more suitable than their first offer. This anecdotal evidence may reflect a candidate's reaffirmation of purpose or it may reflect the selective memory of the counselors.

The acceptance of an offer does not, as might be assumed, mark the end of the outplacement process. It must be remembered that outplacement firms are hired by the downsizing company, not the individual candidates. As a result, there is an effort made by the outplacement firms to track the candidates and find out where they are in their job

³⁷⁷ Benefits and, in particular, vacation time arrangements are amongst the most negotiable areas. In many cases, offers list vacation time based on a schedule of employment duration and, if the candidate has had several years experience, they are easily able to negotiate a longer vacation time from the company.

search. This material is then used to report back to the corporate client and, in some instances, later used in sales literature.³⁷⁸

The final "official" contact that may take place between candidates and counselors is in follow-up contacts three to six months after the acceptance of an offer. These follow-up calls appear to be uncoordinated and dependant solely upon the discretion of the individual counselors, although sometimes the follow-up contact is from the candidate to the counselor, just to "let them know" what is happening.

The lack of post-placement contact appears to be increasing. According to several counselors, in the early to mid-1980's, several outplacement firms (e.g. Stevenson & Kellogg [KPMG]) used to hold "alumni" events which would encourage people who had been on their program to come into the offices and "mix" with new candidates. I have neither heard of nor seen any mention of extensive "alumni" support in the past four years, and it is apparent that such events have fallen victim to cost-cutting measures.

8.8 Summation and conclusions

The purpose of this chapter was to present a synoptic description and analysis of the various process-events that constitute outplacement. While there are many forms and variants of programs (see section 8.2.2), I concentrated on extended programs both because they offer the fullest scope (many of the more limited programs (e.g. a two-day seminar and resume help) are highly limited in their effect), and because they are the original form of the outplacement process.

³⁷⁸ It is unfortunate that the data collected is both highly limited and unintegrated at a national level. Indeed, records are not usually kept after the final reports have been made to the corporate client. Even where such records are kept, they are almost useless for any statistical analysis.

There are several conclusions that can be drawn from the preceding sections. First, outplacement programs follow a general program outline that fits both the model of the wonder tale of their constructive rhetoric (see Chapter 7) and of rites of passage (see section 1.1). That this general processual outline is not an artifact of the analysis is illustrated by Figures 8-II and 8-III, which support the analytic outline presented. What is clear is that while the processual outline is that of a rite of passage, the structure does not match the ones analyzed by van Gennep (1960) and Turner (1967). Indeed, the sheer "fuzzyness" of the process, e.g. no guaranteed exit point, argues that process itself is either not fully evolved, or that the structural states (states A and B; see section 1.1) are in flux.

Given the length of time that outplacement has been around (~25 years in Canada), and the vast numbers of people who have gone through it (unknown, but at least 100,000), and given the extensive competition between outplacement firms, it is unlikely that outplacement has not evolved. Indeed, changes in program flexibility would point towards a fairly evolved process and, given the evidence of other forms of structural shifting (e.g. Rifkin, 1994, Wilson, 1996), the more plausible conclusion is that the structural states that precondition outplacement as a rite of passage are in flux.

In and of itself, this is not surprising at all. What is surprising is that the processual outline is still evident even when the conditioning states are in flux. Clearly, the process of rites of passage is prior to their observable structuring and may be responsible for later forms of that structuring. This leads us to the second conclusion:

that outplacement programs are emergent systems that stem from simple roots to meet the specific needs of different candidates and become institutionalized.³⁷⁹

The final conclusion that can be drawn from the preceding chapter is that the outplacement process both supports and reinforces the ESA 2-3 meme complex (see Figure 8-V) and the emergent reciprocity systems of the early Silicon Age. While this is most readily apparent in the extensive use of networking as a job search strategy (see 8.6), it is also apparent in many other instances. The emergence of reciprocity systems, their coupling into the ESA 2-3 meme complex, and the structural and technological factors which support this emergence are the subject of the next chapter.

³⁷⁹ Indeed, the choice of which elements of a program to emphasize for an individual candidate highlights the complex and emergent character of the programs. This observation is reinforced when individual program components are viewed as specific process-events, and the training and search phases are seen as a process of becoming enculturated to specific flow experiences (see sections 5.3 and 5.4).

9 Structural shifts in the ESA 3 Period - job search, reciprocity and cyberspace

In sub-section 1.1.4.4 I argued that one of the greatest weaknesses of rites of passage theory lay in the relationship between the theory and social structures in transitional cultures. In the previous chapter, one of the main conclusions concerning the outplacement process as a rite of passage was that it was “fuzzy” due, to a large degree, to the mutability of the social structure (i.e. states A and B in rites of passage theory). Indeed, the second conclusion presented, that outplacement was clearly an emergent process with a high rate of mutability from a few core areas, underlines the fluidity of the social structure in which both the process and the industry are embedded. The third conclusion, that the outplacement process both supports and reinforces the ESA 2-3 meme complex and, hence, a form of emergent reciprocity system, requires further examination.

The emergence of a reciprocity system should come as no surprise to any social analyst. Western societies have always had operational reciprocity systems based around families, classes, organizations, etc.³⁹⁰ What has emerged during the Early Silicon Age is a shifting in both the form, style, and technology of these systems. Indeed, the very ability to tap into these new systems has undergone a radical transformation thanks to the rapid deployment of the Internet.

Indeed, while outplacement has supported a variant of reciprocity systems, the development of virtual communities on the Internet has supported other forms of reciprocity systems (Smith, 1994; Tyrrell, 1996). Given this example of convergent

evolution, it is well worth examining reciprocity systems in greater detail, at least in the area of intersection between job search, outplacement, and cyberspace. The purpose of this examination is to show how job search activities are being shifted with the advent of cyberspace.

9.1 Reciprocity systems as exchange networks

In his work, *Essai sur le Don*, Marcel Mauss (1990) argued for both the existence and necessity of reciprocity networks. Drawing from a variety of ethnographic and historical sources, Mauss (1990:78-79) argues that reciprocity ("prestation" or "gift-exchange") networks serve as the basis for a number of different social sub-systems: law, religion, morality, economics, etc. Mauss fails to make a convincing argument for their application in the "modern" world (cf Douglas, 1990:xv; Mauss, 1990: 65-83). This failure stems from two primary sources. First, he is unable to identify the key components of the then current reciprocity networks. Second, Mauss fails at a conceptual level to identify the commonalities between reciprocity systems and market exchange systems. This leads him to compare the two systems as if they are 1) mutually antagonistic, and 2) at a moral, rather than sociological, level.

What Mauss failed to realize was that reciprocity systems and market exchange systems are both forms of resource distribution systems ("exchange systems") that centre around both socio-cultural resources (e.g. roles, values, ideologies, obligations, etc.) and, more formally "economic" resources (land, "labour", specific material and skill based "commodities", etc.). Furthermore, these systems are not necessarily "mutually

³⁸⁰ Indeed, the forms of these systems are easily recognizable in concepts such as nepotism, the

antagonistic". And, although one will tend to be dominant in any given social system, the other may well still exist and operate in a restricted sphere.

If we examine exchange systems as a general class, we can readily discern five core components: the "objects" of exchange; media of exchange (in the sense used by McLuhan (McLuhan and Fiore, 1967)); the process of exchange; psycho-cultural reaction complexes; and status/structural obligations. In addition to these core components, we find differing degrees of formalization, forms of political, moral and religious rhetoric and ideology, and informal rules surrounding each component.

I would suggest that there are two key difference between the reciprocity systems examined by Mauss and current systems. First, in the systems analyzed by Mauss (e.g the Trobriands, the Kwakiutl, etc.) reciprocity is the dominant form of exchange. As such, the degree of systemic formalization is much greater than is the case in modern systems, the systems were more "totalizing" in scope and, overall, the exchange system was much smaller in size than current systems. Second, the emphasis on examining economic functions in the modern social sciences has rested on a formalist definition of economic processes which considers reciprocity to be either an "abnormal" form of or a precursor to "true" exchange, by which is meant market exchange (cf Polanyi, 1957:243-270; Hopkins, 1957:270-293).³⁸¹

In order for any exchange system to operate, there are a number of preconditions that must exist. First, there must be a class or classes of objects that are available for

"old boys network", certain secret societies such as the Masons, etc.

³⁸¹ While I will freely admit that the *dominant* form of exchange in modern Canada is that of market exchange, at least in the case of most instances of labour allocation, there are numerous indicators of reciprocity systems.

exchange and this class of objects must have a demand value. This does not imply that the object in question has any transcendent or immutable "value",³⁸² merely that it is an object which is desired by someone. Second, there must be at least one medium of exchange, or "communicative environment" (cf McLuhan and Fiore, 1967), through which exchange may take place. Third, there must be a process of exchange; in effect, a distribution system acts as an environment which structures the patterns of exchange.

9.2 Objects of Exchange in a job search

The process of job search is not, as is sometimes held, a matter of a free sale of labour power in an open market. First of all, "labour" is not an interchangeable commodity so that there is not a single labour market, but rather a constantly shifting number of specialized labour markets. Second, a "job" is not solely an "economic" relationship, in the formalist sense of the term. Rather, a "job" is a social relationship which includes a set of reciprocal obligations between the employer and the employee of which formally "economic" indicators such as labour power and wage payment are only parts.³⁸³

The existence of this social dimension has serious implications for the process of job searches. First, it is not enough for a person to have the minimum technical skills necessary for the job, they must also have the minimum social skills and attitudes

³⁸² An argument can be made that a certain class of objects does possess an immutable value. Specifically, this is the class of objects that fulfil basic, physiological requirements (i.e. primary needs, cf. sub-section x-ref). This does not, however, assume that any single object has such a value.

³⁸³ This can clearly be seen in the most commonly given reasons for voluntary turnovers which are a poor "fit" with the corporate culture or a divergence of interests (Murray Axmith, 1993:2). Furthermore, in many social systems, these supposed indicators do not even exist (cf Polanyi, 1957).

necessary. In short, there must be a minimum "fit" between the candidate and the organizational culture and ideology.³⁸⁴ Second, the recruitment of new employees will reflect these dual search criteria (skills and cultural fit) in accordance with politically and socially constructed limits (cf Kleinberg, 1994: 179-183).

In current job searches, there are two primary classes of exchange objects: information and presentations of self. Information, as a class of exchange objects, includes job opportunities, contact names and referrals, subject area information (both general and potential opportunities), and opportunity specific information (see Table 11). Presentations of self, as a class of exchange objects, includes individual skills, interests, "style", PAR stories, and availability. From the viewpoint of the job searcher, the first class of exchange objects attempts to answer the question "Where might I go?" (value to the searcher). The second class of exchange objects attempts to answer the question "Who am I?" (value to both the searcher and the potential employer; see Table 11 and Table 12).

9.3 Media of Exchange

The concept of a "medium of exchange" is frequently equated with a monetary system ("money").³⁸⁵ It is apparent in both the substantivist and formalist definitions, that regardless of its material form (paper, gold, silver, cowrie shells, electronic transfers,

³⁸⁴ It is the placement of this "minimum fit" that changes in response to the scarcity or abundance of people with the requisite minimum technical skills. For an interesting example of what happens when the organizational culture and the organizational ideology are in conflict, especially in the hiring of new employees, see Kleinberg (1994).

³⁸⁵ cf Polanyi (1957:264-266) for a discussion of the formalist and substantivist definitions of "money".

cuneiform accounts, etc.), "money" is a *communicative media* as well as any other function it may serve.

In present day Canada, we do not generally accept the use of money as a communicative means in securing a position, although there are exceptions. In general, the use of money as a way of securing a job is currently regarded as unethical and illegal ("bribery"). An example from previous Canadian society would be the purchasing of commissions in various regiments. One current example is the purchase of franchises or distribution rights to a specific commodity or service. Another example of purchasing a position is the creation of a small business or turning into a consultant (self-employment). It is also interesting to note, that even in those situations where a position is purchased from an organization (e.g. franchising), the *social* selection criteria for the organization are still in place, while the skills criteria may not be.³⁸⁶

When the job search concentrates on securing a position within a pre-existing organization there are three major, non-monetary, groupings of communicative media that are used:

- print media, including newspapers, magazines, books, posting boards and certain forms of electronic bulletin boards (e.g. the Electronic Labour Exchange³⁸⁷);

³⁸⁶ For the purposes of this analysis, I am leaving out the question of purchasing cultural capital (e.g. attending the "right" school, wearing the "right" clothes, etc.). There is a clear use of money to purchase these resources.

³⁸⁷ It should be noted that many publicly available electronic media mimic print media and, as a consequence, may be considered to be analytically the same.

- personal communications, exemplified in the term "networking", but also including (sub-)culturally specific interactional skills,³⁸⁸ and
- electronic media such as list-servs, interactive databases (e.g. Monster.ca), and email.³⁸⁹

Each of these media serves to enhance and make possible the process of exchange for specific types of objects, both for the candidates and for Human Resource professionals. In addition, each of these media have a moderating effect on the social relations which involve their use. As McLuhan (1964:23) noted:

...the medium is the message. This is merely to say that the personal and social consequences of any medium -- that is, of any extension of ourselves -- result from the new scale that is introduced into our affairs by each extension of ourselves, or by any new technology.

However, the introduction of a new medium does not, of necessity, eliminate the use of older media. In many cases, the new medium adds a layer to the act of exchange especially when it cannot replicate all of the functions of the older media.³⁹⁰ This is a clear example of the additive nature of technological extensions, especially in transitional societies.

In section 4.2 I drew on Lauglin's (1996) arguments concerning Cyborg extensions, and that argument has a particular relevance to the current discussion. One of

³⁸⁸ These interactional skills may also include the ability to dress in specific ways, play certain types of games (e.g. golf, squash, bridge, etc.) and even eat ones food in specific ways (i.e. cultural capital).

³⁸⁹ "Electronic media", as the term is used here, does not refer to the material manifestation of the information but rather to the social arrangement of the information. It should be noted that all of the electronic media listed here are *interactive* in form, and limited in access.

³⁹⁰ Several examples of this are the noted resistance to the development of a "cashless" society, and the demands in many cultures that contracts will not be signed unless there is a personal meeting between the principles.

the central "facts" of media extensions has been a bias extending a communication through space and/or time (cf. Innis, 1964). What has rarely been noted is that the bias of a media is also an extension of individual perception through space and/or time (see Levinson, 1997; esp. Ch. 1). In effect, socially deployed media act as if they were the extensions of individual members of that society.³⁹¹

The core media extending the ESA for most people is, undoubtedly, the deployment of the Internet and associated software. Following Laughlin's (1996) typology, we can state that the Internet is a fourth stage technology (see sub-section 4.2.2). It is designed to augment components of the central nervous system, specifically the acts of information gathering and processing, and to spread these acts across a global network.

While the outplacement industry developed before the Internet became widespread, certain technologies have come to play a major role in modern job searches. As such, they cannot help but have an impact on the outplacement industry. Indeed, as the Internet comes to play an increasing role in Canadian society, it will play an increasing role in all aspects of Canadian life, including job searches.

The development of the Internet, cyberspace, has produced a new social environment to which human resources departments have migrated. In the following sub-sections, I will examine both how cyberspace operates as an environment (9.3.1), and how the spread of cyberspace has come to effect the operations of Human Resource departments (9.3.2).

³⁹¹ Always assuming that individual members of a society either accept or acquiesce to these media.

9.3.1 The environment of Cyberspace

The defining characteristic of the ESA 3 period (1993-?) has been the deployment of a standardized HTML programming language that produced the World Wide Web (WWW). For many people, the deployment of the WWW is synonymous with the Internet, but this is a false equation. The WWW is a sub-set of the Internet, which has existed, in various forms, since the late 1960's. These non-WWW forms served as platforms for the development of "virtual" communities (i.e. electronically mediated communications fora) for many people well before the deployment of the WWW (e.g. the P.O.D.S. system [Tyrrell, 1992], Bulletin Board systems, Usenet, etc.).

What has changed as a result of the introduction of the WWW is the ease of access and information interchange, and this has had a profound effect on the membership of virtual communities and on the ease of joining them. It is to this idea of a virtual community that we now turn, since community "membership", however it may be defined, is a prerequisite for engaging in reciprocity systems. Furthermore, the deployment of the WWW has also had a profound effect on the ability to gather information.

In section 5.4, I argued that the traditional interpretations of what a community must be do not hold up, particularly in the face of the Internet and its impacts. What, then, are the characteristics necessary for "a common site in which and through which affective and material resources may be provided"? One characteristic is that of the medium of communication, both in its structuring and in its form. In other words, how do people within a community communicate? As Harold Innis (1964:33) noted, media have,

by their physical nature, a bias toward the dissemination of knowledge over either space or time. A high bias towards spatial dissemination would normally indicate a low bias towards temporal distribution and vice versa. The resulting communities have been broadly characterized along their communicative lines: oral cultures, literate cultures and digital culture (cf. Ong, 1982; De Kerckhove, 1995).

Furthermore, the concept of a territory, rather than a single site, comes to the fore with the advent of cyberspace (cf. section 5.4.1). While many virtual communities are defined, at least for research purposes, as a "community" - a corporate Intranet, a personal website, an IRC Chat channel, a list-serve - this is frequently not the case. The community operates over a number of different sites, the sum totality of which define the territory of that community. The individual sites are just that - sites. Each site, however, has its' own peculiar bias of communication dependant upon the technology. The linking of various sites into coherent, subjective "wholes" produces territories in which communities evolve. These communities may be of any type from that of a work team, to a virtual corporation, to a medical support group. Indeed, the integration of these communities into current organizational cultures has been of major concern, especially in the area of telework (cf. Davies, 1996).

In cyberspace, the bias of communication runs along the two axes: ¹⁾ a bias in time from asynchronous (e.g. email) to synchronous (e.g. chat rooms) communication, and 2) a difference in actors - human and computer (see Table 13; Ferguson, 1998; Tyrrell and Ferguson, 1998; Tyrrell; 1998). The perceptual "geography" of cyberspace created by these biases produces cybertronic arenas, types of "sites" ranging from completely non-interactive to fully interactive. These sites range from stable formations of asynchronous, totally non-

interactive sites (e.g. data storage sites such as the SEC), through mid-range "resource" sites (e.g. interactive database sites such as ZDNet), to highly interactive, interpersonal exchange based sites (e.g. list-serves, chat rooms, etc.)

I have coined the term "cybertronic" to refer to a) the various arenas of social interaction within and mediated through cyberspace and b) the form of the actor operating in the arena. At present, generally accessible cybertronic arenas of activity are limited to actions taking place within the Internet and various Intranets. These forms of action may be examined using a two by two matrix where the dimensions are the nature of the actors, human or electronic, and the temporal locus of action, either synchronous or asynchronous. Table 13 shows this matrix and includes examples of each type of arena of activity in each cell.

Table 13 : A Typology of Cybertronic Arenas

	Temporal Locus of Action	
Nature of actor	Synchronous	Asynchronous
Human/Human	Videoconferencing	List-serves/newsgroups*
	IRC chat rooms*	Email
	Virtual reality	
Human/Electronic	WWW pages	Autonomous agents**
	Online expert systems***	Narrowcast/stand-alone programs****
	Virtual reality	

* An integral component of many virtual communities (see Smith, 1994)

** Autonomous agents are a series of electronic "robots" designed to perform specific tasks. This includes autonomous expert systems, electronic viruses, "knowbots", etc. For more on autonomous agents, see the Agent Info Homepage (<http://www.cs.bham.ac.uk/~amw/agents/index.html>)

*** Examples of this are the search engines available (e.g. Infoseek, altavista, etc.), most tour and travel software, and large numbers of proprietary expert systems.

**** Examples include programs such as Business Vue and WantedJob 2000. They reside on a PC and contact online databases and other sources as required either by the user or at preprogrammed intervals.

One effect of the spread of cybertronic arenas has been a veritable explosion in the number and variety of newsgroups, list-serves, WWW pages and intra-nets. The

media produced by this electronic proliferation have a number of interesting features, four of which are of direct interest to us.

First, the vast majority of information is presented in either textual or iconographic forms. In web pages, these two forms are frequently intermixed using the HTML programming language which allows for the insertion of other pieces of text, images, specific actions (e.g. comments, send mail, etc.) and limited sound and video recordings. People who access web pages are capable of selecting, within limits, how they will experience that web page. In the case of list-serves and newsgroups, the presentation media is much more restricted and interaction is limited to the style of the response sent, or to the elimination of the message.

Although the form appears to be primarily textual media, this is misleading. Shank (1993) has suggested that we term the form of communication "multiloguing" since, while the formal medium is textual, plus various iconographic elements, (e.g. "emoticons"), the style of transmission is more similar to an oral, multi-person, dialogue.

Second, these media abstract the individual from geographic, material, and sensory contexts such that the sole criterion for an initial engagement is access to a node point.³⁹² In addition to this abstraction of sensory data, the range of possible contacts is defined by the total number of participants on the internet, rather than by the geographic, material and temporal factors which limit non-cyberspace communications. In part, this is

³⁹² All of the material and sensory "cues" which are brought into play during "normal" discussions disappear or are transformed (Webb 1996). The elimination of geographic proximity as a condition for interaction has not, however, lead to the elimination of all spatial cues. In the case of WWW pages in particular, spatial cueing is readily apparent in two main forms: the use of URL (Universal Resource Locator) addresses, and in the use of phrases such as "under construction", "go to" or "return to", "sites", "storage areas", etc.

due to the nature of electronic message replication: once a message is created, any number of copies of that message may be produced at negligible cost in time and resources.

Third, each of these media is a *limited* environment. In the case of newsgroups, the limiting factor is generally interest, although in some cases it may be political pressure. For example, the Communications Decency Act created a situation where a number of newsgroups were "illegal" in the USA, although not in other countries. Given the lack of geographical boundaries in cyberspace, the utility of such a national law is, to say the least, problematic (see Tyrrell 1997; Ferguson and Tyrrell 1997). List-serves may be as open as newsgroups, or they may be limited by any number of differing factors. Usually, these limits are established to act as screening criteria for individuals who wish to join, although sometimes potential members must have a specific professional, religious, or political affiliation.

Fourth, there is no way in which an individual can be forced to interact in cyberspace. This means that action is voluntary, and the means of controlling actions taken in cyberspace are limited. At present, and despite the best efforts of numerous national governments, cyberspace is a "frontier" where "peace" is kept through avoidance of conflict and through a balance of terror.³⁹³

These four features combine to produce a series of environments in which an individual may construct a "cybertronic self": an "image" or "persona" of the individual projected into and through cyberspace (Tyrrell 1996) , and it is this image that is

³⁹³ This "balance of terror" stems from the ability of numerous people to cause vast amounts of damage to the computer systems necessary for corporations and the state to operate, and is epitomized in the demonization of "hackers" and "crackers" in much of the popular press, and in government propaganda.

perceived as being the "actor" in many situations. In part, this is because of the technical ability of many people to conceal their "true" (i.e. day-to-day, "real") identities.³⁹⁴. Furthermore, it is quite possible to present different cybertronic selves to different groups of people and, since there is little immediate "danger" inherent in the creation and deployment of cybertronic selves, some of them may be quite *outré* (e.g. cross-gendered, multiple conflicting images on the same list, etc.). Unlike face to face interaction, the "interactional tonus" is controlled not so much by the event, but by the media in which the event takes place (cf Goffman, 1963, 1974). The "community" produced within such an environment appears to have a number of features which are quite distinct from other forms of "community" (Smith 1994).

The limitations of the cybertronic arenas have produced a number of environmental factors which are conducive to the development of reciprocity systems. First, since any individual may be a member of any number of list-serves and newsgroups and the image they present to the members of these groups may well vary (in some cases, quite drastically), it is impossible to know a) who they are in contact with, and b) if they are what their images claim they are. Given this, the status and reputation of an individual is important, as is their "loyalty" to their communicative network. Second, many of the resources available within the human/electronic component of cyberspace (i.e. WWW, ftp and gopher sites, etc.) are "free". What is not free, however, is the knowledge of just

³⁹⁴ In a number of cases, primarily in MUDs (Multi-User Dungeons), the arena is designed such that any individual can disguise themselves (see, for example, Smith, 1994). The cybertronic personae that appear in many synchronous arenas may be wildly divergent from what is discussed in the next section. While situations of gender swapping and body morphing are fairly rare on the web and in list-serves and most newsgroups, they appear to be fairly common in IRC chat rooms and MUDs.

where all of these resources are located in cyberspace. Third, access to many other resources available via list-serves and newsgroups, primarily information but also software, articles and "opportunities", is frequently dependant upon status within the group which, in turn, is dependant upon reciprocity (cf Rheingold, n.d., Smith, 1994; Tyrrell, 1995, Webb, 1996).³⁹⁵

All three situations noted above are apparent in most reciprocity systems: the use of a Tit for Tat strategy (balanced reciprocity) as a key to survival, loyalty vested in a communicative network, and the *ad hoc* and non-geographically determined nature of communicative networks. In the case of cyberspace, there are two additional situations that, at present, are operational. First, there is a concept of vengeance that is best seen both in the existence of a "balance of terror" between computer users and large organizations (illustrated by the mythical image of the "hacker": "negative reciprocity). Second, there is a concept of "hospitality" that can be seen in the existence of "free" resources such as software (both freeware and shareware), academic and journalistic papers, information, etc. While there is an increasing amount of commercial (i.e. market exchange) activity taking place in cyberspace, many organizations have found it necessary to "give away" information and resources.³⁹⁶

³⁹⁵ In some cases, general information and "opportunities" are available to people without status who are not engaged in the group reciprocity system. These people are usually referred to as "lurkers", since they do not contribute to the group's discussions. In this case, we are not dealing with a form of reciprocity *per se*, but rather with a form of "gleaning" or "gathering" (see Tyrrell, 1995).

³⁹⁶ For example, consider the case of MCI (<http://www.mci.com/>) which is heavily involved in the commercialization of the Internet. While large portions of their web pages are devoted to selling their products, there are also large amounts of resources there for "free". In a similar manner, small consulting groups are using their web pages to advertise their expertise. In the specific case of telework and telecommuting, one of the most extensive web pages is run by Gil Gordon and Associates (<http://www.gilgordon.com>). The resources available without charge through this web page are quite amazing.

This "gift" of information is not, by any means, altruistic. In addition to acting as an incentive for people to visit certain sites, the information itself may have a "rebound" value to the giver. In particular, the use of cyberspace for recruitment purposes, both by corporations looking to hire people and by agencies looking to place people, has expanded significantly since 1993. This expansion has been aided and abetted by the development of job search "settlements" in cyberspace.

9.3.2 Developing settlements for Human Resources

The deployment of new HTML programming standards, coupled with the availability of highly interactive programming scripts (e.g. cgi scripting, Java, and SHTML) and simplified programming interfaces (e.g. Hotdog, MS Frontpage, etc.), has not only increased the interactivity of Web sites and their ease of production, but also led to the development of Web pages that combine asynchronous and synchronous sites - i.e. multi-media settlements. This combination of asynchronous and synchronous media into a single settlement is currently forming the basis for several communities of jobseekers. Where the territory of a given cyberspace community used to be defined by a single site and that sites' links to other sites, we now find the development of full fledged, if specialised, settlements. Some of these settlements, such as the Monsterboard, might be termed a "ports of trade", since they are functionally equivalent to those studied by Polanyi (1977).

This situation has been considerably advanced since 1997 with the introduction and spread of email and Web accessible Human Resource Information Systems (HRIS).

Of particular interest are the companies that are now using these systems exclusively (e.g. Canadian Tire). It is quite plausible to believe that by 2010, the vast majority of employment opportunities, at least in North America, will only be available via electronic interfaces; either job listing boards or digital HRIS operations.

As with many corporate functions, Human Resources had increasingly come under pressure to cut costs. In part, this cost-cutting pressure was met by an increasing use of computers not only as record keeping devices, but also as report production devices and to handle compensation, training, skills inventories, and recruitment (cf. Glueck, 1978:17-18, 121-122, 167). The advent of relatively inexpensive mini-computers in the early to mid 1970's had spread the practice of computerizing many Human Resource Management (HRM) practices to a broad range of organizations who had previously been unable to own a mainframe.

The computerization of HR functions was not the only cost cutting measure available. A number of studies examining the effects of different sources of recruitment had clearly shown that informal sources of recruitment tended to produce candidates that had a lower turnover and a better "fit" than recruitment through more formal channels (see Saks, 1994 for a review). Certainly, informal recruitment sources, in other words personal networking by candidates, was not only less expensive than more formal processes but also dovetailed nicely with the emphasis on networking in the new job-search practices (e.g. Bolles, 1993; Morin, 1990).

The period from the early 1980's to the early 1990's was marked by increasingly desperate job-search tactics. Anecdotal evidence abounds amongst HR managers, temp recruiters and others about the increasingly innovative tactics developed by job searchers

in order to catch hiring managers attentions (see, for example, Jackson, 1991 [1978]). During the later half of the 1980's and into the early 1990's, informal networking techniques expanded into the newly emerging bulletin board systems (BBS's) that were spreading throughout North America. BBS's provided not only job opportunities but, more importantly, access to information about projects, companies and future opportunities.

At the same time, HR cost-cutting pressure was interacting with newer computer technologies, primarily OCR scanning software and web development, to produce an environment where HR became the driving force behind many corporate web sites (Doran, 1996a). These pressures reached their critical point in the 18 months between January of 1995 and July of 1996. From the HR side, the deployment and use of web based recruiting material offered significant benefits in terms of costs, time, reach, and "formalism".

The cost advantages for HR can be illustrated with just two examples. Silicon Images reported that in 1996 they saved \$70,000 *per day* in paper costs related to recruiting (Doran, 1996:2), while the cost of posting a job ad to Monsterboard is 5% of posting the same ad to a major newspaper.

Most of the advice on Internet recruiting suggests that employers use more than just the opportunity sites. One of the major consulting groups in Internet recruiting, Austin Knight (KnightNet, 1999), argues that

third-party recruitment Web sites, print media sites and newsgroups are great choices for active job seekers, but that the high-level engineer looking for software-fixes or the CFO checking financial information is not likely to visit these sites. To attract the passive job seeker, the best response may be received by placing jobs on your company's own home page or by utilizing Listservs. It is also important to

keep in mind that the Internet is a dynamic medium, and that utilizing links, rather than duplicating information, is often the most cost-efficient method of distributing information across a wide area.

This strategy has been used by a number of HR recruiters I have talked with, although they emphasise that it can only be used to fill high level positions given the time involved. Much of the shift towards Internet-based recruiting concerned not only the revisioning of HR and the ability to cut costs, but also the utility of recruiters to find appropriate candidates and keep abreast of current issues (cf. Doran, 1996, 1997a, 1997b, 1997c, 1997d). List-serves, the descendents of BBS's, have been used both by HR professionals and by job-searchers as ways to gather information, keep abreast of developments, and obtain job/candidate leads (Doran, 1997c, 1997d; Tyrrell, 1996b), and similar use is made of some dedicated chat rooms.

The ability to formalize the recruitment process mirrored the formalization of the Late Industrial Age, but placed the emphasis on skills and competencies rather than on specific credentials. In part, this stemmed from the recognition of the need to create "learning cultures" within the workplace in order to stay competitive. At the same time, there was a recognition that degree based certification was insufficient to guarantee the necessary skills, since the half-life of most high tech skills is measured in months rather than decades.³⁹⁷

The return to formalism was also necessitated by an increasing recognition that resume fraud was rampant in both the United States (Bachler, 1995) and Canada (Doran, personal communication). In a number of cases, the development of the Internet has been

³⁹⁷ This recognition, in turn, was behind the redefinition of competencies away from skills and the growing formalization of interpersonal and emotional competencies.

blamed for the spread of resume fraud (e.g. Menefee, 1998); a situation that struck at the heart of Web-based recruiting. Over the past several years, manufacturers of Human Resources Information Systems (HRIS) have produced a variety of products claiming to extract skills from resumes (e.g. Resume Assistant) or to provide a clear picture of competencies (e.g. SkillScape). In a few areas, the skills can actually be examined in a formal, web-based testing system (e.g. www.medhunters.com, www.skillscape.com, see Doran, 1998), but most of the systems are, at present, reminiscent of creating gaming characters with particular attributes and skill levels.

While it was quite feasible for people to talk about "formal" and "informal" methods of recruitment in the Late Industrial Age, such a distinction is much less relevant at the present time. Recruiters expect candidates to know more about their companies (cf. Hergenrather, 1998), a trend that was an essential component of the new job-search strategies. This "informal" knowledge gathering is now coupled in with web-based recruiting, for example the news articles on companies tied to job listings on the Globe and Mail's site (<http://www.globecareers.com/>).

Much of the shift towards Internet-based recruiting concerned not only the revisioning of HR and the ability to cut costs, but also the utility of recruiters to find appropriate candidates and keep abreast of current issues (cf. Doran, 1996, 1997a, 1997b, 1997c, 1997d). List-serves, the descendents of BBS's, have been used both by HR professionals and by job-searchers as ways to gather information, keep abreast of developments, and obtain job/candidate leads (Doran, 1997c, 1997d; Tyrrell, 1996), and similar use is made of some dedicated chat rooms.

This shift towards the Internet for job/candidate searching has reset the parameters of searches. In *When Work Disappears*, Wilson (1996) noted that certain economic and spatial considerations had changed the job/candidate search, at least as far as inner cities in the US was concerned. What was not covered in his analysis, since it wasn't that prominent during the time of his research, is the para-spatial effects of shifting job/candidate searches to the Internet.

Access to Cyberspace is not governed as much by geography as it is by a combination of skill, access to equipment, and knowledge of where to look and how to act. And, while this realization is behind current federal attempts to increase access, there are still certain issues that have not been addressed; in particular the requisite time and skill needed to establish a Net presence (see Tyrrell, 1996a, 1996b), and the requirement for multiple forms of job-search tools. I want to examine this last issue in some detail.

The development of email, OCR scanners, and web-based application systems has been a boon for HR departments, at least in as much as it automates the initial cuts on candidates through automation. For the job-searcher, on the other hand, it had added in another barrier. Rather than having one major resume that can be tailored for individual jobs, job-searchers are now required to have at least two, if not three or more, different base resumes on hand at all times.

This requirement is an artifact of the technology used to import resumes into HR databases. The minimum requirements are a print version of the resume and a text (.txt) version suitable for email submission, and for the "cut-and-paste" forms of a number of online applications (e.g. Consumers Gas, Canadian Tire, etc.). If the job-searcher wishes

to have any kind of an edge, they will also have to craft an electronic keyword resume, which may well differ drastically from their print version and must be tailored for each opportunity. In some cases, resumes are also being put on web-pages (e.g. <http://www.cybrinc.com/bob/>).

All of this resume tailoring, to say nothing about opportunity identification and research, relies on constant access to both computers and to the Internet. Furthermore, having "a" computer is not adequate for most job-search activities. It is necessary to have access to a computer and web browser that can support all of the latest "bells and whistles" that are coming to adorn various corporate and job-search sites and a connection that is fast enough to access these sites. At the time of writing, this means a minimum of a Pentium 100 with 32 MB of RAM and MS Explorer v4+ or Netscape v4+ and a connection rate of 14.4 kb/s.³⁹⁸ Even with this type of a system, many sites are not accessible.

This accessibility issue may well create problems for HR departments in the future, since otherwise promising candidates will be at a disadvantage in applying for jobs. Furthermore, the very skills necessary to conduct successful job searches also produce international networks ("communities"; see Tyrrell, forthcoming) that increase the likelihood of the candidate either leaving the organization voluntarily or being headhunted: a situation which is rampant in the high tech sector in Canada. One possible

³⁹⁸ This is the absolute minimum. Many sites require more RAM and a much faster connection rate (e.g. ADSL or cable modem). Many sites have fallen to the lure of the "newest and flashiest" in programming with the result that they are inaccessible to many people (e.g. Flash 4, Macromedia Shockwave, etc.). Many core agency settlements such as MonsterBoard, however, retain general accessibility.

solution may be the development of application kiosks for the general public, but that may not be economically feasible.

It is currently quite clear that the shift of recruitment activities to the Internet will continue. While the situation is still fluid, mainly because of the rapid development of the technology, there are some clear implications for both HR professionals and job-searchers. First, any search strategy that does not include a web-based component is too limited to produce acceptable opportunities/candidates. Second, there shift to Internet recruiting/job-searching is acting as a preliminary "cut" of candidates based on a constellation of computer literacy, time and access. Third, the pool of potential candidates has expanded to global proportions but, at the same time, the area of headhunting has expanded to the same proportions.

9.4 Process of Exchange

Processes of exchange are, at their core, the structuring of systems of distribution.³⁹⁹ In general, for a given operational environment, there are a limited number of ways of structuring the exchange of objects. Polanyi (1957:250-256) identified three major structural forms: reciprocity, redistribution, and market exchange.⁴⁰⁰ According to him (Polanyi 1957:250)

[r]eciprocity denotes movements between correlative points of symmetrical groupings; redistribution designates appropriational movements toward a centre and out of it again; [and market] exchange

³⁹⁹ This section draws extensively on the arguments of Polanyi (1957) and Dalton (1981:69-93).

⁴⁰⁰ A fourth form, that of the household or *oikos*, is sometimes used by Polanyi and other times not used. I have not included it here since the household is, in effect, a visible organization rather than a pattern of behaviour and, as such, draws on a different conceptualization of "institution" (cf section x-ref).

refers here to vice-versa movements taking place as between "hands" under a market system.

I have already argued (9.2) that the process of job search does not, in most cases, take place in an open market. Furthermore, with the exception of certain specific industries and certain government attempts (e.g. "workfare"), employment is not achieved through a system of redistribution. Reciprocity appears to operate, at a limited scale, in *certain* areas, but not in others.

In addition to Polanyi's categories, another distribution system is readily apparent when we examine specific objects of exchange. This system might best be described as "gathering". Following the form of Polanyi's definitions quoted above, we can define gathering as the movement of an object freely available within the operational environment to an individual. As a distribution system, gathering relies on an abundant environment where there is no resource shortage.⁴⁰¹ As a system, gathering behaviour is enhanced if resource use is not equated with resource depletion. Put simply, the costs to place an advertisement or information on the Internet remain the same regardless of how many people use/access that information (see 9.3.2).

If we consider the process of job search as a singular unit, it would seem as if Polanyi's categories are inapplicable. This apparent uselessness, however, breaks down when we consider the specific objects of exchange and media through which this exchange takes place. From the point of view of the job searcher, the categories of

⁴⁰¹ This distinguishes it from "scavenging", which would be the same system operating in a resource restricted environment.

redistribution and market exchange are still of limited applicability.⁴⁰² What is more relevant is the formalization of the selection process by potential employers.

In general, we can distinguish two levels of formalization depending on whether the selection setting or the setting and the rules for selection are available to the searcher. In practice, all of the selection "rules" are rarely known by the candidate,⁴⁰³ although some may be discovered as part of the process of gathering opportunity specific information. All such situations are, for the purposes of this current paper, termed as "formal".

While Polanyi's definitions are useful as ideal types, there are certain problems with his conceptualization of reciprocity. By defining reciprocity as "movements between correlative points of symmetrical groupings", Polanyi (1957:250) has assumed the existence of a homeostatic social structure composed of symmetrical groupings (e.g. clans, lineage groups, specific castes, etc.). The problem with this assumption is that not all reciprocity systems operate between symmetrical groups.

Sahlins (1972) has argued that the concept of a reciprocity system should be measured along a continuum from a complete sharing (generalized reciprocity), through a strict tit-for-tat form (balanced reciprocity), to an inverted tit-for-tat form (negative reciprocity; e.g. blood feuds, etc). The concept has been extended further by Williams (1995) to include the idea of "stepwise reciprocity"; the giving of a "gift" that requires

⁴⁰² Exceptions to this would include government sponsored redistribution programs such as workfare, and UIC placement programs, while market exchange would include franchising opportunities and self-employment.

⁴⁰³ And, sometimes, the rules of selection are not consciously known by the people conducting the selection.

the receiver to return it to someone who is not the giver, a “bread on the waters” form of gift giving.

I would argue that the reciprocity systems that are currently developing are a blending of both the balanced reciprocity and stepwise reciprocity forms. Indeed, there is even an appearance where gift giving can be induced by a third part acting for the “giver”. Let me give a recent example of this from RDT (23/2/2000)

I was asked by a friend to do some free work for an individual who was trying to find a job here. This individual had worked previously for several years in Abu Dhabi and Dubai. I helped him to improve his resume. At the same time, I have been working with a group of individuals who had been downsized from one of the local high tech companies. Surprisingly, one of these individuals was considering working in Dubai. So, I was able to arrange for the two of them to get together to discuss working in Dubai.

Clearly, stepwise reciprocity is operating in this case, and it was a coincidence that the gift could be repaid so quickly. This story illustrates one other important point concerning reciprocity systems: they may be used to enhance individual status. In this particular case, the fact that RDT could arrange a meeting for the candidate he was working with only served to increase his status as a counselor.⁴⁰⁴

The concept of status leads us into a discussion of the meme complexes that support, maintain, justify, and operationalize any system of exchange. In discussing reciprocity systems, Mauss noted a number of these memes ranging from the obligation to give and receive in specific social settings, to feelings of obligation on the part of a

⁴⁰⁴ A similar form of status gathering via a similar reciprocity system operates in academia where people who are able to steer colleagues and students (and especially colleagues' students) to useful books, articles, and ideas gain status as “collegial”. Unlike the academy, outplacement counselors actually reap monetary rewards from this exchange.

recipient, to feelings of an almost "spiritual" ownership over/kinship with an article that has been produced.⁴⁰⁵

In general, however, Mauss argued that the primary emotional reaction was a feeling of obligation to the giver which was (usually) accompanied by a fear of personal danger if the gift is not reciprocated. In many of the reciprocity systems Mauss examined, the fear of personal danger was expressed in either magico-religious terms or in regard to expected changes in social status, or both. And the key component of the "personal danger" was always an exclusion from some communal body, whether this exclusion be via death (e.g. the Furies), exile (e.g. for breaking laws of conduct), or loss of social status.

If this is the key meme complex at the heart of reciprocity systems, as Mauss argued, then we are left with a number of unanswered questions. First, how does one come to be a part of a given communal body? This is simple to answer in the societies which Mauss examined, however it becomes much more complex in modern societies where birth is much less of a determining factor, and where an individuals' life is less well charted. However, a quick answer to this question would be that an individual must a) "act as if" they are worthy to become part of a given community and b) find a way to

⁴⁰⁵ In fact, Mauss (1990:66) argues that

The economic prejudices of the people, the producers, arise from their firm determination to follow the thing they have produced, and from the strong feeling they have that their handiwork is resold without their having had any share in the profit.

In effect, he would argue that economically induced worker anomie comes from a poorly constructed severing of the bond felt between the producer and the product.

become introduced into this communal body (see also 5.4.3).⁴⁰⁶ This is the essence of the networking strategy outlined in sub-section 8.5.1.1.

A second question left unanswered by Mauss is how, at a general level, reciprocity can operate in situations of extreme uncertainty. Again, in the societies studied by Mauss, this was not much of a problem, however his inability to answer this question may be one of the reasons why his attempt to extrapolate to 20th century Europe failed. Mauss' attempt to "modernize" his analysis caused him to regard social welfare programs as examples of reciprocity systems (cf Mauss, 1990:65-83; Douglas, 1990:xv). If Mauss had concentrated instead on grass roots organizations such as city missions, the Salvation Army, the Travellers' Aid Society, etc.,⁴⁰⁷ or if he had concentrated on information flow he would have found better examples.

In situations of extreme uncertainty (i.e. transitional cultures), the responsibility for reciprocal action shifts in two ways. First, the responsibility for reciprocating may shift from a specific person or identified collective to a general population (i.e. stepwise reciprocity). In this case, the shift is marked by verbal signs such as "pass it on to the next person who needs help". In effect, this shift to a diffuse obligation means that the opportunity for repayment of the gift is left up to "fortune", "chance", "God" or

⁴⁰⁶ Both of these criteria are met in pre-modern societies through specific rites of passage surrounding a change into adulthood and, in some cases, entry into specific organizations (cf Van Gennep, 1960; Turner, 1969). For modern examples, see Trice (1993) and Tyrrell, forthcoming.

⁴⁰⁷ According to Polanyi (1957:250-253), reciprocity requires the existence of two or more symmetrically organized groupings of people who enter into an exchange relationship. All of these grass roots organizations created a *de jure* symmetrical relationship between the members of the organization proper (the employees) and their "clients".

"karma".⁴⁰⁸ The second way responsibility may be shifted is to extend the definition of "community" (i.e. reciprocating groups) to include *potential* members who "reciprocate" by reinforcing status distinctions *within* the members of the reciprocity system.

These two questions, entry into a communal body and the operation of reciprocity in situations of extreme uncertainty, are central to an examination of information exchange in a job search situation. In the first instance, the state of "unemployment" has, for most of this century, been defined as being external to the "communal group" specifically through the fault of the individual. While there have been many changes to the "at fault" meme of being unemployed (cf 7.7), a person who is unemployed is still viewed as being outside of the community. In particular, the specific community referred to here is the community they are automatically a member of by virtue of holding their position. This point has been mentioned repeatedly in various job search manuals, and was also dramatized in the NFB (1982) film *After the Axe*.

In general, a person's belief that their pre-firing friends and peers (communal group) will be able to find them a job is seen as a major impediment to their ability to start a job search. The reason for this belief acting as an impediment is that the individual still acts as if they were part of the communal group, but they are no longer seen as being part of that communal group. Their actions and personally assumed status are at variance with their communally defined status. The individual must either unlearn those behavioural patterns that define them to others as members of a specific community, or

⁴⁰⁸ In such instances, the symmetrical groupings are viewed as being created by some transcendent force. Examples of various ideologies surrounding this form of reciprocity would include the Islamic injunction to give alms and the Christian concept of tithing. This might be one of the ways in which a shift from reciprocity systems to redistribution systems is accomplished. For more on this shift, see Wachtel (1981).

they must change their status with that community. Both options are considered in most seminars and manuals about job search techniques.⁴⁰⁹

The question of reciprocity in a situation of extreme uncertainty, such as today's job market, is answered two ways. First, there is a recognition of communal status (see above) in the case of information referrals. Second, there is an appeal to chance modified by hard work - the invocation of a transcendent factor.

Many of the sources that Mauss examined argued that status maintenance and enhancement was a key component in reciprocity systems. And, there is certainly little doubt that the execution of obligations is an inherent component of status enhancement and maintenance. However, as I mentioned above, the fear of personal danger is also a key component in meeting obligations. These two combined, the desire to maintain or enhance status and the fear of personal danger, are the positive and negative conditioning elements, the boundaries, of the meme complex identified by Mauss. What Mauss missed, however, was the embedded nature of that status within specific organizations or "communities" which serve to structure the reciprocity (e.g. kinship networks, either real or fictive; collegial bodies, etc.).

There is one further positive conditioning element that is tied in with status, and that is a form of power. This form of power is not power in the sense of "control", but rather it is power in the sense of the ability to shape and influence a dynamic process. The

⁴⁰⁹ The first option is usually covered under sections entitled "Networking", "Interviewing", and "How To Find Opportunities". The second option is usually presented as "How to become an independent consultant".

story quoted in sub-section 8.5.1.1 shows this type of power in operation, especially in the role played by Mr X.

In the case illustrated by this story, the obligation to reciprocate is also diffuse in that the "hero" of the story cannot repay either his daughter or Mr X, but he can and must repay individuals who ask him for help.⁴¹⁰ If he does not fulfil this obligation, then he will lose status in the eyes of his daughter, Mr X, and his current boss, which could easily lead to his being let go again. In effect, he would be denying the obligations that he has assumed by entering into this reciprocity system and, at the same time, denying the status of those who helped him to enter.

The story also illustrates another point which has been mentioned by informants: the obligation to reciprocate is based on classes of objects. For example, the "object" of reciprocation that is most commonly mentioned in cases of referral is a "Thank You" letter. In effect, this letter is a formal recognition of both the status of the individuals and of the existence of an obligation. Another, non-job search, example of this is the process of mentoring in most institutions. There is little or no expectation that the person being mentored will repay the mentor exactly, but there is an expectation that they will "live up to" the example of their mentors by mentoring others.

The purpose of this section was to examine the use of reciprocity systems in modern job searches at a general level, and to lay out their various structuring properties (e.g. meme complexes, status obligations, etc.). From the description presented in this section, and from the material presented in Chapters 7 and 8, it is quite clear that this

⁴¹⁰ This does not mean that he must give them jobs, just that he must help to circulate information about them to those who might need them.

style of reciprocity system is an adaptation of previously existing forms (e.g. the “old boys network”). Furthermore, while the system itself can operate within limited groups (e.g. executives), it is limited by the communicative media.

In its early forms, the system relied heavily on word of mouth and print media. This placed an environmental boundary on the amount of information that could be gathered within a specific time period. By way of example, it is quite unlikely that any upper level executive would give out meetings to twenty or more people per week. In order for the system to become more flexible and available to more people, some way of expanding the communicative boundaries had to be found. This expansion came about with the rapid deployment of the internet and the explosion of corporate web sites and especially of Human Resources web sites.

In section 9.3.1, I presented an examination of the environmental properties of the Internet that allow it to become a significant supporting technology for reciprocity systems. This was followed in section 9.3.2 by an examination of how Human Resources function in many companies have taken advantage of the Internet to shift the way they operate and, as a result, has influenced both job search and gathering behaviour.

9.5 The re-invention of job search and community

The intersection of a new social contract centered on reciprocity (see 7.7), coupled with the rapid deployment of new electronic networks, has produced a situation that is unique in human history. Humans in the ESA 3 phase have access to more communities and, hence, more games (5.3), than ever before. Furthermore, the investments in time (e.g. travel, research, etc.) are significantly reduced, while there has been a concomitant rise in the variety of games that are accessible.

In this section, I want to highlight some of these games and communities with particular reference to those centering on job searching. Unlike the Trobriand Islanders studied by Malinowski, the action of acquiring a livelihood (a job in our present society) has separated out from kinship and local spatial community. And, unlike the organizations of the late Industrial Age, acquiring a livelihood has now separated from individual organizations and now takes place in multiple organizations on a contingent basis (i.e. term and contract employment, job shifting, consulting, etc.).

Every major job search book and organization embodies the idea that individuals, not organizations, are responsible for their future (e.g. Bolles, 1993; Bridges, 1994; Swartz, 1997). This idea is in direct opposition to the loyalty for security social contract of the late industrial age. As such, this has had a serious impact on how organizational cultures are conceived by employees, on employees' reactions to intra-organizational attempts to secure loyalty to the organization, and on job search and candidate search activities.

Job finding clubs, outplacement programs, and self-help groups for job seekers fall into the category of contingent communities. First, the contingency of being unemployed is well recognized and expected within our culture. Second, these clubs, groups and programs contain a small number of professional counselors, a somewhat larger number of "alumni" and, usually, a very large number of unemployed participants. Third, there are clearly recognised affective and material resources transmitted. As such, job-seeking groups are communities as discussed in section 5.4.2.

At this point in time, there are a number of meta-games available in order for a person to generate an income. While the most common is still employment by an

organization, there are other options such as self-employment (as a consultant or entrepreneur), contract or temporary work, and franchise opportunities.

Each metagame contains its own specific component game; the most common of which are opportunity identification, opportunity research, and specific job-search skills (e.g. networking, interviewing, and researching; see 8.5.1), all of which are available via the Web. Opportunity identification (finding out about the existence of a job) has been augmented by the recent shift of many corporations towards electronic Human Resources Management Systems. Put simply, the cost of advertising a job on the web is 1/10th the cost of using the "normal" methods (see 9.3.2).

Opportunity research may be described as discovering the context of the opportunity and the company. Until roughly 1996, most of this information was gleaned from personal networks, and from library research using annual reports, news articles, and publicly available private and government mandated reports (e.g. SEC filings, Standard and Poors ratings, etc. By the end of 1996, most of the Fortune 500 corporations had established a corporate presence in cyberspace with most of this information, as had many government agencies (e.g. the SEC).

The area of job search training has also shifted into online settings, ranging from informal job discussion sites, through articles on specific job search skills, to full job search manuals. While the majority of this information is static or, at best, asynchronous FAQ sheets, several sites are experimenting with synchronous IRC-based training. Training, at least in the form of information and advice, for research, networking and interviewing is readily available via the Internet (e.g. the Riley Guide; Agre, 1984)

The deployment of digital HRIS operations coupled into the Internet and the development of major job search settlements (see section 9.3.2) increases the importance of timely information for job-seekers. This, in turn, stimulates a "need" for access to specialised communities for technical skills (e.g. "How do I post my resume?"), for opportunity identification, and for increased participation in job-seeking communities where these resources are available.

All of these factors combine to produce a multiplicity of contingent communities that contain information about opportunities. Most of these contingent communities are outside of the control of any single organisation: they exist in the spaces between organisations and, as such, are part of the social environment of organisations. At the same time, they both enhance organisations and serve as a way of detaching individuals from organisations first by showing them other options and then by enhancing the newly emerging social contract.

I have discussed the role of reciprocity in job-search strategies both in the "real world" (sections 7.7 and 8.5.1.1; Tyrrell, 1995) and in Cyberspace (sections 9.3.2; Tyrrell, 1996b, forthcoming). I have argued that there were distinct parallels between the distribution systems of hunting and gathering cultures and those of modern job seekers. The problem for most organizational cultures is that almost everyone in the organization from the C.E.O. down to the mail clerk is either engaged in an ongoing job-search or is subject to headhunting. Organisations have themselves become contingent communities, as can be seen in the development of a two-tier employment system in the United States where most new jobs are outsourced to temporary agencies (cf. Rifkin, 1994: 190-194).

One central point that many of us have forgotten is that all individuals are members of multiple communities. Even as the relative importance of our work communities is dropping, the importance of electronic and other networking communities is increasing. This shift in relative importance may well be viewed as a "fragmentation" of our source of moral order, even as Durkheim (1984) saw it. But, if I am correct in diagnosing the new social contract as based on reciprocity, this is not the case.

Every reciprocity system that has existed has relied on moral action by its participants (cf. Malinowski, 1965; Mauss, 1990; Sahlins, 1972). In these systems, "moral action" is located in three separate areas: the individual (the "loyalty to self" meme), the network, and the community(ies) involved (both variant instantiations of the "loyalty to network" meme). We can see indications of this tri-partite system starting to come into place. Consider, by way of example, the development and, more importantly, the purchase of career planning seminars for currently employed people. This is a form of moral action by a community (an organization) towards an individual (an employee). A second example comes from the growing discussions on the ethics of business.

The deployment of the Internet has only speeded up the process of a shift in social contracts from redistributive forms where the organization was the major domain in individual life (i.e. the LIA 4 meme complex), towards a dual reciprocity/market exchange format (the ESA 2-3 meme complex). To paraphrase Durkheim (1984), we are moving from mechanical solidarity, through organic solidarity, to electronic solidarity where fragmented sets of communities replace aspects of both the communities Malinowski envisioned and Industrial Age organisations.

9.6 Summation

From the preceding sections, we can see that trends in both the organizational and technological environments have converged to strengthen a number of factors that are indicative of reciprocity systems. It is also important to see where information age reciprocity systems differ from the ones studied by "classical" anthropology, and this difference, in general, is centered around the existence of a market system of exchange *between groups and sectors of the economy*.⁴¹¹

It is also important to note that there is a growing distinction between knowledge and expertise. In many cases, knowledge, in the form of articles, computer programs, and general and specific opportunity information, is the "medium of exchange" in ESA reciprocity system. On the other hand, expertise, in the form of particular problem solving abilities ("skills" in the broadest sense of the word), is the growing medium of exchange in ESA market exchange system, even though the visible *form* of exchange is in some type of currency.

The development of a dual exchange system is not, in and of itself, new or surprising. In the LIA 4 period, we saw a similar dual exchange system combining market exchange and redistribution. The reciprocity systems that were in existence, e.g. the "old boys network", etc., were, on the whole, demonized. In the ESA 3 period, it is the redistributive forms of exchange that are coming to be demonized, and their place is

⁴¹¹ And, in the case of state organizations, the existence of a redistributive mode of integration. This might explain the general antipathy and anarcho-libertarian rhetoric of many high level computer users for governments in general. The government sponsored "demonization" of the image of the "hacker" might also be indicative that this antipathy is returned.

being taken by reciprocity based forms of exchange, and this transition from redistributive to reciprocity is only being enhanced by the development of the Internet.

This situation of convergent evolution of technology, job and candidate search, and organizational forms is still in the process of stabilizing, and it is not part of this dissertation to project where it will go in the future. What is important, for our current purposes, is that the convergent trends all point towards the use of reciprocity as a new isomorphic vector in future social relations and this, in turn, allows us to situate outplacement within a broader movement of social change.

What does this all mean in the larger scheme of the dissertation? The key point of this chapter has been the intersection of converging evolutionary trends towards reciprocity systems in both job search and cyberspace communities. Indeed, while there is a clear convergence, this is spelling potential disaster for the outplacement industry unless it moves quickly to adapt. The rapid shifting and creation of ongoing contingent communities is changing not only organizational cultures, but also the basis of the outplacement industry.

As I noted in Chapter 8, the outplacement industry is paid by the corporations who are letting people go. If contingent job search communities come to be the norm along with a general cultural knowledge of how to use them, then two of the structural bases of the outplacement industry, corporate "fear" of wrongful dismissal suits and the inability of people to conduct job searches well (see Chapter 7), will be gone.

Indeed, the ready availability of both job search information and people who know how to use it in contingent communities may actually serve to shift much of the knowledge of outplacement counselors out of the realm of professional knowledge

towards common knowledge (see 4.3). If this were to happen, then the professional basis of outplacement, operation within a structural zone of uncertainty (4.2.4) would disappear and the transition mediated by the outplacement industry would no longer be a rite of passage but, rather, an expected part of everyday life.

At the start of this dissertation (section 1.2, I argued that rites of passage theory must be grounded in a more embracing meta-theory. This chapter has illustrated why such a grounding is necessary, and how neo-evolutionary theory can provide such a grounding. Outplacement, as noted in Chapter 7, was constructed during a period of rapid change and instability and was designed to mediate that instability both for clients and for candidates. As the very sources that brought about that instability mutate, and as the knowledge and experience that is the basis for the industry become more available, the industry must change as indeed it is.

10 Conclusions

The purpose of this dissertation was to account for the emergence and development of one particularly puzzling industry: outplacement. Even before I started my Ph.D. program, the term "rite of passage" had been tossed about by various consultants and candidates, and it was readily apparent to me that servicing the unemployed had gained a "para-religious" quality, at least in many peoples' minds. Starting from the original insight that outplacement was some type of rite of passage and that the technologies they had developed were a form of "the Art and Science of changing consciousness in accordance with will", I have ended up with the analysis you have just read.

I started this dissertation by noting two puzzling aspects to the outplacement industry: why companies would pay for it, and its curious para-religious character. The solution to the first puzzle was contained in the story of how outplacement came to be constructed (Chapter 7): companies paid out of guilt, fear, risk containment, and because the courts and popular press told them to. The para-religious quality of the industry, while a more difficult question, derived both from the operating processes of the industry (Chapter 8) and from its placement in the zone of uncertainty (section 4.2.4 and 4.3.2).

But is outplacement a rite of passage? Classic rites of passage theory (see section 1.1) requires both a specific form (separation, liminality, re-aggregation) and a specific structure (mandatoryness of the rite of passage operating in a closed system). In the case of outplacement, the form was present but the structure was not. This situation arose from the use of homeostatic societies to develop classic rites of passage theory. But if the form (or process) was present, was the structure necessary? In section 1.1.4.4, I outlined

three general weaknesses with rites of passage theory and argued that these areas must be strengthened in order to update the theory and make it applicable in non-homeostatic societies. These weaknesses were:

1. Little connection between the theory and current neuro-physiological knowledge.
2. The relationship of rites of passage to social structures in situations of rapid structural change.
3. The meta-theory in which rites of passage theory is embedded. In particular, there is no clear formulation of the linkage between
 - subjective experience, symbolization, and "thought";
 - social structure; and
 - the functions played by rites of passage in this link (at least for non-homeostatic societies).

I believe that, over the course of this dissertation, I have provided sufficient arguments and evidence to surmount each of these weaknesses. Let us consider each weaknesses in order.

Turner (1982:10, 58) had already started to consider linking rites of passage theory to neuro-physiology before his death. Indeed, he had already noted the strong connections between his concept of *communitas* and the flow model of Csikzentmihalyi (see Turner, 1982:20-60; section 5.3.2), and started to engage in a dialogue with Laughlin and the biogenetic structuralists (Turner, 1986). Unfortunately for rites of passage theory, Turner's death halted further research in linking rites of passage theory with neuro-physiology outside of limited forms in biogenetic structuralism.

The great problem with creating a linkage between neurobiology and rites of passage theory lay in two areas. First, is it possible to ground "meaning" in biology without engaging in a *reductio ad absurdum* form of biological reductionism? Second, is it possible to have a biological basis for meaning if the "meaning" of any particular stimuli is subject to a process of social construction?

This was the problem I tackled in Chapters 2 and 4: "meaning" (or at least interpretive form) is grounded in evolved psychological mechanisms (section 2.2.2) that provide the biological basis for the emergence of memes (section 2.4). But, with the exception of a "cheater module" (sub-section 2.2.2.1), there are numerous forms of social relations held in evolved psychological mechanisms (sub-section 2.2.2.2) and there is competition between continuously evolving M-forms (section 4.1) and meme complexes (section 2.4.4) as to which particular relational model will be activated by any particular stimuli. In other words, while patterns of social relations may be biologically "determined", the process of selecting which pattern is evoked by any given stimuli is socially constructed and subject to change over time (see section 5.6 and Chapter 7).

In all probability, *Homo Sapiens Sapiens* does not have an evolved psychological mechanism that acts as the basis for rites of passage. What we do have, however, is a brain that is neurologically structured to react to perceptions of social contract cheating (see 2.2.2.1), perceive distinct forms of social relations (see 2.2.2.2), and the ability to modify both our neuronal structures (see 2.2) and interpretive patterns (2.4), and to communicate these perceptions and modifications (see 2.3). All of these structures serve as the neurological "template" upon which rites of passage are based.

The second and third weaknesses in rites of passage theory outlined above required a different tactic. One part of the third weakness, the "subjective experience, symbolization, "thought"" node, had already been partially formulated in Chapter 2 and extended to the social level in Chapter 4, but there were still problems converting the rather static models presented in these chapters into a processual model. Indeed, the central problem with such a conversion was definitional, relating to the linked concepts of "level" and "structure". It was with this problem in mind that I set about to reformulate Malinowski's theory of culture in Chapter 3 and combine it with the Korzibski's insights from general semantics (see section 3.3). The resulting model in which levels are reformulated as both exterior and interior environments allowed me to place the process of social construction within an evolving situation (see Chapter 5).

In section 1.2.2, I stated that I was using a minimalist form of neo-evolutionary theory as a general framework for this analysis. If we consider the case of classic rites of passage theory, operating in a homeostatic culture, in light of neo-evolutionary theory then we can define that culture as a stable niche (see sub-sections 1.2.2.4 and 1.2.2.5) which has reached a local minimum or maximum in the cultural environment. In fact, this concept of stable niches has tended to define the meta-theoretical basis of classic rites of passage theory (see section 1.1). Within this setting, the rite of passage has evolved to produce a structural connection between two stable points in the social structure and to act as a selection vector for achieving the second state, thereby producing a "mandatory" requirement for that rite of passage (e.g. a coercive institution; Etzioni, 1961, see Table 1 and section 1.1.2.2).

But social structures are not wholly stable, especially when the niches they define are subject to external selection pressures. As I noted in section 8.8, outplacement shares the same form as a rite of passage, without having many of the social structural properties that classic rites of passage theory demands (see sections 1.1, 8.2, and 8.8): the process still operates even when the two anchoring states are in flux. Indeed, the case of outplacement clearly illustrates two points.

First, in niches that have had a local extinction, there will be a rapid speciation of alternate forms designed to take advantage of the resources available in the niche. The second point is somewhat more complex: until selection pressures produce a dominant form (either a particular institution or a set of isomorphic vectors) then variant forms will continue to compete. Furthermore, no particular form can be "mandatory", in the sense used in classic rites of passage theory, until a dominant form has appeared and this cannot happen until the boundaries of the niche are stabilized, at least as far as jurisdictional claims are concerned. What this means is that the stability of the boundaries of all socially constructed niches are subject to flux from both individual and macro-social forces.

Following the first point, boundary instability, especially when coupled with a local extinction or a "new" environment, not only produces speciation of institutions, but also acts as a pumping mechanism, feeding back into the general social system (see subsection 1.2.2.5 and Chapter 9). Consider the case of outplacement. As an industry, it relies on a continuing supply of unemployed people whose companies are willing to pay for the service; this is the industry's niche. This niche originally appeared as a result of isomorphic vectors in the LIA 4 period (see section 6.6) that led to global restructuring,

the consequent downsizing of executives and the deployment of a body of case law and legislation surrounding corporate responsibility to ex-employees (see Chapter 7).

During the LIA 5/ESA 1 period (1968-1982), there was also an extinction of the LIA 4 meme complex/social contract relating to employment (see 7.2). In response to this local extinction, the outplacement industry offered its' own brand of employment meme complex (the ESA 2-3 meme complex; see 7.7). This "new" meme complex had two significant advantages. First, it was possible to operationalize into a series of techniques that could be taught to candidates (see sections 8.4, 8.5, and 8.6). Second, the dominant social relational model (see sub-section 2.2.2.2) behind the ESA 2-3 meme complex was on a convergent evolutionary path with both organizational development and technology (reciprocity; see Chapter 9).

The question for any individual institution, such as outplacement, is whether or not it is a) able to solidify its niche boundaries, b) able to assert dominance in the form of jurisdictional claims, and c) if it can maintain the states that support the niche. If the institution can succeed in all three of these areas, then it will solidify into a "classic" rite of passage. If it cannot succeed in these three areas, then it will disappear as a rite of passage.

The requirement to succeed in all three areas may well explain the enduring, cross-cultural existence of rites of passage, since so many of them rely on individual ontogenic development (e.g. birth, puberty, reproduction, and death). Other rites of passage, such as seasonal cycles which are grounded in the natural environment, may be superseded by more socially relevant "seasons" (e.g. the shopping seasonal cycle).

Both convergent evolution and diffusion may also produce a situation where the niche boundaries supporting a rite of passage are under selection pressure. For outplacement, the ESA 3 period has marked a time of intense competition within the industry as the willingness of corporate clients to pay for long programs decreases and there is a proliferation of small boutiques and computerized job search/placement programs. The spread of Human Resources into cyberspace has allowed access to certain core job search resources (see 9.3.2 and 9.5) which beyond the control of the outplacement industry. Indeed, the decision of many companies to pursue global alliances is a clear indicator that the local and national markets are dropping (see 7.8.5), as is the decision of one of the founding companies, *KPMG*, to leave the market in September of 1999.

But, while the future of outplacement as a rite of passage may be in doubt, there can be no doubt that, if only for a short period, it was one. In "classic" rite of passage theory, such a rapid rise and fall of an institution is impossible. I believe that the specific analysis and the general reformulation of rites of passage theory presented here has been not only useful in explaining outplacement, but also has much to offer to sociological theory. It is able to link individual consciousness, intermediate structures, and macro-level changes together in a single, coherent whole. At the same time, the model is capable of explaining rapid shifts in social patterns of behaviour, at least at the level of individual niches.

It has also provided a long needed extension to "classic" rites of passage theory that may prove of use in many areas of interest to Sociologists. In particular, I would suggest that it would prove useful in examining the rituals of groups that are adapting to

meet new environmental conditions (e.g. youth gangs, virtual organizations, etc.) and also in examining older institutions designed as rites of passage (e.g. social welfare programs, employment programs, etc.). One possible area of immediate applicability is in the design and development of rites of passage that can compete with emerging ones that are socially "unacceptable" (i.e. some of the criminal behaviour of street gangs).

While the model is both flexible and extensive, it does suffer from one major limitation that I hope to correct in future research projects: it cannot, at present, be converted into a quantitative model similar to those in population biology. The second area I wish to extend is in the "deaths" of rites of passages. In particular, while I noted that a rite of passage must maintain its niche boundaries, supporting states, and jurisdictional claims, I did not examine how gradual niche dissolution would operate (i.e. the transformation of professional knowledge claims into the area of general knowledge mentioned in section 9.5; see also section 4.3).

Despite these limitations, I believe that the model presented in this dissertation is useful both to Sociological theory and applied social research, as well as providing an explanation for the outplacement industry. It avoids the problems inherent in "classical" rites of passage theory while remaining flexible enough to handle both rapid social change and individual variation. At the same time, it provides an example of one way in which current knowledge from across the social sciences can be yoked together to examine particular problems. If the dissertation serves no other purpose than that, I will be satisfied.

Appendix A: Termination Script

1. The News

"John, I am afraid that I have bad news for you today. It is with regret that I must advise you that, as a result of the reorganization and changes in the department, your employment will cease effective today, May 10th, 1990."

2.0 The Support

[Quickly summarize the contents of the termination letter (avoid having the employee read the letter in your presence)]

"What I would like to do now is to review with you the details of your termination package. The company is prepared to offer you a separation package which includes statutory requirements, plus a severance for a total of, etc."

"The company has retained, at our own expense, the firm of Work transitions Canada to help you in your job search. While it is entirely up to you, I would encourage you to take full advantage of their services and programs to help you find other employment."

[Give the employee his/her envelope]

3.0 The Close

"I am really sorry I had to tell you this, John. I know you are going to have a lot of questions and that is quite understandable. I will be available to discuss them with you later today, tomorrow and through the next few weeks. However, because I have a number of people to speak with, let me take you and introduce you to _____, of the consulting firm."

[Ensure that the employee has a contact name in human resources for questions]

"You probably have a number of personal effects to take home from your office. If you would rather do this later, let me know and I will arrange a time for you to return. John, there is not much more that I can say, except that I have enjoyed working with you and I would like to take this opportunity to personally thank you for your commitment and loyalty. It goes without saying, if I can be of help, let me know."

[Escort the employee to the consultant, introduce them and shake the employee's hand as you leave.]

Appendix B: Glossary

Chartered institution: the phenotypic expression of an institutional genotype; the actualization of one or more potentials inherent in one or more institutions (see Chapter 5).

Cognized environment (E_c): The “mental map” a person or culture has of a particular component of reality. The concept is used in Laughlin’s (1996b) sense.

Communitas: a feeling of shared experience that transcends space and time and is based on the common experience of a ritual or intense event (5.4.2; Turner, 1969, 1982).

Early Industrial Age (EIA): circa 1762 to 1848; the initial period of the industrial age (see 6.4).

Early Silicon Age (ESA): circa 1968 to the present; the initial period of the silicon age marking the transition to an information economy (see 6.7 and Chapter 9).

ESA 2-3 social contract: a meme complex that defines an ideal type of employment contract/career contract in the ESA 2-3 period (1982-present; see 7.7).

Evolved psychological mechanisms: (aka mental modules) functionally adaptive systems of neural circuitry that arose in response to specific environmental stimuli (see Barkow et al., 1992; Hirschfeld and Gelman, 1994).

Flow: A concept that refers to the subjective “optimal experience” of engagement in a particular process-event (see Csikszentmihalyi, 1982).

Functional model: models concerned with the inter-relationships between the components of a system (i.e. organism, culture, etc.).

Game: a combination of a particular process-event with specific control structures and their specific ends; a particular type of institution (see 5.4.2).

G-wave: (Gerschenkronian wave) innovation and growth in one economy stimulates growth in other linked economies. A form of economic diffusionism (Chapter 6; Solomou, 1987).

Heritability: questions of how a characteristic is passed from a progenitor to a descendant. Two type of heritability are generally used: Lamarckian – the inheritance of acquired characteristics-, and Mendellian – inheritance via recombination.

Homeostatic culture: a culture that is relatively stable. Homeostasis does not imply that there is no change, only that change is relatively slow and operates within fairly limited boundaries.

Institution: the range of potential instantiations or actualizations of a knowledge system (see Chapter 5).

Interior environments: Three specific environments (see section 3.3): a) neuro-somatic (internal physiological and neurochemical “reality”), b) neuro-semantic or neuro-evaluative (ascription of meaning based on specific stimuli; see Korzbyski, 1958:xxxiv-v), c) neuro-linguistic (perceptual environment conditioned by language).

Late Industrial Age (LIA): circa 1914 to 1982; the final period of the industrial age. LIA 5 (1968-1982) is a transitional period leading into the Silicon Age (see 6.6 and Chapter 7).

LIA 4 social contract: a meme complex that defines an ideal type of employment contract/career contract in the LIA 4 period (1950-1967/8; see 7.2).

Liminality: A state of “betwixt and between”; the area of passage between a starting state and an ending state in a rite of passage.

Long term potentiation (LTP): an increase in the excitability of neurons in certain areas of the brain in response to specific stimuli (Churchland and Sejnowski, 1992: chapter 4).

Memes: information packets that contain, at a minimum, a “shell” and a set of “replicating instructions”. The “shell” links with proto-memes associated with evolved psychological mechanisms while, at the same time, serving to hijack areas of the neocortex to store its replication instructions. Certain basic types of memes have been identified, namely: shell, discrimination, strategy, emotive, and linking memes (see table 1 for details). Memes exhibit the property of mutualism. Memes are the basic unit of replication.

Memetic complexes: collections of memetic organisms that are linked together in a quasi-stable formulation. Memetic complexes are the basic unit of coherent phenotypic expression (i.e. they are paradigmatic).

Memetic organisms: quasi-stable groupings of memes which are held together by the combined effect of mutualism and environmental pressure. Memetic organisms are, in effect, “colony” creatures similar to coral in their organisation. Memetic organisms are the basic unit of phenotypic expression.

M-form: quasi-stable collections of memetic complexes which serve as the ground for particular technological and perceptual extensions (see 4.1).

Middle Industrial Age (MIA): circa 1849 to 1914; the middle period of the industrial age (see 6.5).

Neuronal plasticity: two abilities: a) the ability of neurons to reshape their patterns of connection within the brain, and b) the ability of individual synapses to change their “charge” weight (Churchland and Sejnowski, 1992: chapter 4).

Niche: a particular territory of sufficient resources to allow for species replication.

Ontogenic model: models concerned with changes at the level of phenotype.

Operational environment (E_o): The component of reality which an individual or culture is actually dealing with. The concept as used does not assume that it is possible for anyone to actually comprehend the totality of an operational environment, merely that there is one (see Laughlin, 1996b).

Orthoselective culture: a culture which is subject to an incremental increase in the effects of one or more selection pressures.

PAR story (Problem-Action-Response): a particular genre of storytelling used in interviews and in constructing resumes. The genre is inherently modular, allowing the

story to be used to illustrate any of a number of different points during the interview (see 8.4.5 and 8.5.1.2).

Phyletic model: models concerned with changes at the level of genotype.

Process-event: a non-Aristotilean concept that treats a process and the events associated with it as inseparable in a manner similar to the concept of space-time (see 5.3; Korzbyski, 1958:57; Peterson1998).

Proto-memes: “information packets” composed of state/process and/or agent/object information. They are incapable of replication except inasmuch as their pattern is stored as an LTP. When acting as inputs, proto-memes are the basic units of “function”. They appear to be the “primary language” or “machine code” of evolved psychological mechanisms (the content of various “cheat sheets”).

Relational models: a series of four hypothesized evolved psychological mechanisms defining specific forms of social relations (Fiske, 1991).

Rite of passage: a sequence of at least three main “ritual” components: a rite of separation, liminality, a rite of re-aggregation. The term was coined by Van Gennep (1960) and the theory was extended by Turner.

Rite of re-aggregation: a ritual used to bring a person out of liminality and into the second state of a rite of passage.

Rite of separation: a ritual used to separate a person from one state and put them into the liminal phase.

r-K spectrum: the range of strategies for a species to survive to recombination age: r strategies have little or no progenitor support and a high reproduction rate (e.g. fish, mosquitoes), while K strategies have intense progenitor support and a low reproduction rate (e.g. humans).

Transitional cultures: a culture that is moving towards a collapse in one or more of its social institutions as a result of the effects of one or more selection pressures. A “hyper-orthoselective” culture.

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