

EMPOWERMENT: A REFLECTION ON THE NORMATIVE IN SOCIOLOGY

by

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A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF

THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

(Department of Sociology)

We accept this thesis as conforming
to the required standard

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

April 2000

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Vancouver, Canada

Date April 20/2000

ABSTRACT

Empowerment is a "moral" event which provides the opportunity for sociology to reflect upon the normative dimension of critical sociological investigation. Previously, the normative was set within broad emancipatory (praxis) dialogues. Empowerment suggests these are vestiges of the critical rationalism carried by modernist discourses. With the appearance of empowerment, the normative has become localised in a plurality of empowerment claims which express the desire to reconstruct our relationship with our self, others, and a "good" society. As such, if sociology is to retain its critical normative dimension, it should reflexively restructure its understanding of, and methodological approach to, the normative. It should do so consistent with what empowered actors are expressing about the moral dimension of contemporary life unless, of course, it wishes to identify itself (alongside the empowering helping professions) as a colonising enterprise.

The sociological meaningfulness of empowerment is obscured by discourses of the helping professions. Three of these are examined - Social Work, Psychology, and Evaluation - and it is demonstrated how their respective programmatic rationales, informed as they are by the modernist

essentialist and scientific discourse, resist a reconsideration of empowerment as a "moral" event.

By "pegging" the empowerment claims of social actors to the broader discourses of self, via a conceptual mapping approach, there is shown to be not one (as the helping professions would have it) but several empowerments within the present conceptual landscape. Each is consistent with, and illustrative of, different selves claiming self-construction as an accomplishment within varying imaginings of others and a "good" society. Together, they suggest empowerments are existential "phenomena" which point to the (re)emergence of "moral" issues within the ontological domain of self construction.

This has implications for the normative within critical sociological analysis. These implications are framed within three "reflective considerations". They are meant to steer critical sociological analysis (and hopefully empowering helping professionals) toward a focus on and a reconsideration of its normative content, given that the moral dimension of contemporary life may be an event constituting a plurality of moral imaginings.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	ii
Table of Contents	iv
Acknowledgment	vi

PART ONE: OVERVIEW OF THE EMPOWERMENT PROBLEMATIC

Chapter I	Introduction	1
	Statement of Thesis	2
	Method and Procedure Considerations	20
	Contributions	30
	Thesis Organization	32
	Endnotes: Chapter I	36
Chapter II	Empowerment and the Helping Professions	38
	II-1 Introduction	38
	Acknowledging Reflexivity	40
	II-2 Empowerment at the Social Work Site	47
	II-3 Empowerment at the Psychology Site	70
	II-4 Empowerment at the Evaluation Community Site	85
	II-5 Summary and Conclusion	95
	Endnotes: Chapter II	102

PART TWO: MAPPING EMPOWERMENT'S CONCEPTUAL LANDSCAPE

Chapter III	Introduction: Empowerment as Totalities of Self	108
	Endnotes: Chapter III	115
Chapter IV	The Empowerment Selfs	116
	IV-1 The Modern (Sociological) Self	116
	The Modern Empowered Self	129
	The Modern Empowerer	142
	IV-2 The Late-Modern Empowered Self	172
	The Late Modern-Self	172
	The Empowered Self of Late-Modernity	174
	The Paradoxical Empowered Self of Late-Modernity	182
	The Empowerer of the Paradoxical Empowered Self of Late-Modernity	200
	The Archtypical Empowered Self of Risk Society	204

IV-3 The Postmodern Empowered "Self"	213
The Constructivist Empowered Self of Postmodernity	213
The Fragmented/Fractured "Empowered Self" of Postmodernity	218
The "Empowered Self" of "Technologies"	227
IV-4 Summary and Conclusion	232
Endnotes: Chapter IV	238

PART THREE: CONCLUSION-EMPOWERMENT AND SOCIOLOGY

Chapter V	Reflecting on the Normative	250
	Introduction	250
	Empowerment and the Normative Question	260
	Sociologists as "Managers" of the Normative	289
	The Significance of the Urge to Empower and Be Empowered	301
	Endnotes: Chapter V	311
References		315

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like first of all to acknowledge my committee for their enthusiastic participation in this project: Dr. David Schweiter who from the very beginning encouraged me to challenge existing boundaries of sociological knowledge; Dr. Robert S. Ratner whose sharp analytical surveillance of my ideas and warm assurances about my place in academics kept me moving forward; and, Dr. Elvi Whittaker whose compelling wisdom has had much to do with the particular presence of my self in this dissertation.

The dissertation owes much to those who continue to share with me the "stuff of life". They are: Professor John Young who sent "the angry young man" on his way through the analogues of social theory armed with the question of human freedom; Dr. Randy Lippert who generously gave of his rare intellectual sensitivities through which many of the ideas of this work have been filtered; Allyson Rowat who understood and encouraged my need to pursue the Ph.D program; Sara Jackson who protected the space to accomplish it; Helen Sturdy who helped me maintain a balanced perspective; and my children, Geri and Jack, who unbeknownst to them are the true authors of any meaningful content found within the pages of this dissertation.

PART ONE: OVERVIEW OF THE EMPOWERMENT PROBLEMATIC

I: Introduction

"Empowerment" is embedded in the language, consciousness and actions of the present. It is ubiquitous and contextually heterogeneous: used as it is by "presidents and poets alike" (Gutierrez, et al., 1995:20). For reasons that remain obscure, it has emerged as a "desirable social construct" and an ethical moral principle for instructing personal and social change (Baistow, 1994/95:34). Increasingly, it seems, we are expected to empower and be empowered.

The term "empowerment" is considered to have its origins in the Latin verb 'potere' which means "to be able" (Gibson, 1991:355; Pfohl, 1985:331). The contemporary idea(s) of empowerment are credited to the emergence of social change movements of the 1960's and 1970's (Reinelt, 1994:688); particularly, "the 'social action' ideology of the 1960s and the self-help perspectives of the 1970s (Gibson, 1991). Simon (1994:xiv-xv) attributes Barbara Solomon's book, **Black Empowerment** (1976), with having "formally introduced the term into the profession's discourse."

No one is sure what empowerment means or what makes it desirable and compelling. "Empowerment" may be, as one often quoted authority on empowerment states, "a little bit like obscenity; you have trouble defining it but you know it when you see it" (Rappaport, 1985:17). This is not, as a review of the empowerment literature reveals, an idiosyncratic observation. The obscurity of empowerment's meaning and its resistance to theoretical clarification are all widely acknowledged, particularly within the journals of the helping professions. Despite its problematic character, empowerment agenda continue to grow and spread.

Statement of Thesis

I argue that empowerment is two interrelated things. First, it is a politico-intellectual event characterised by competing strategies for ownership of the concept as contained within "empowerer" rationales which have expanded (qualitatively and quantitatively) the jurisdictional authority of, in particular, the helping profession's discursive claims to expertise. And, second, it is a moral-practical event comprised of an active ontological rethinking of our (as social actors) relationship with our self, others, and a notion of the good society. Until now, this sociological significance of empowerment has gone unnoticed,

due in part to the "discursive constraints" placed on it through its broad instrumental usage within professional discourses.

Understood as an event, empowerment is opened up as a sociological phenomenon. It becomes an appropriate subject of the broad meta-theoretical commentaries that argue their respective contentions of the human predicament in the broad conceptual periodisations of modernity, late modernity and postmodernity. One discovers that empowerment does indeed have terminological currency in these heady arguments. For example, we find in Giddens' (1991) effort to rethink the nature of modernity, empowerment emerging as a referent for a positive aspect of reflexivity of modernity wherein power is reappropriated by laypersons as expert knowledge is made routinely available to them. In Bauman's (1995) effort to cast postmodernity as an opportunity for critical sociologists to engage issues of ethics in a "novel way", we find the acknowledgment that Giddens' "empowerment" is "undoubtedly correct." However, Bauman is quick to move the concern (and hence empowerment) under the rubric of a moral problematic. A consequence of empowerment is, he argues, "the tacit or overt acceptance of the collective authority of expertise and of the conception of the world as a collection

of fragments"(Bauman, 1995:196). Ultimately, what is lost is,

the ability...[of "selves"]...to conceive of themselves as individuals, as totalities, 'greater than collections of fragments'... There is no part of the self left free of technological processing which could serve...to start the restoration of the self's integrity (Bauman, 1995:197).

Taylor (1991), in a more explicitly philosophical vein and tacitly as a "booster" of modernity understands empowerment as this very act of restructuring the self's moral integrity against fragmentation. His accomplished empowered self is nourished as such through its "common action" of the "promotion of a politics of democratic empowerment...(which) can bring a sense of empowerment and also strengthen identification with the political community" (1991:118).

Giddens, Bauman, and Taylor are but three of a body of significant thinkers who are implicated in the empowerment problematic that is developed later in this thesis. Clearly empowerment has not been ignored by those in the intellectual domain. But its potential to speak both more directly and meaningfully to a contemporary ontological predicament has been muted by the more profound assertions that characterize their meta-theoretical and philosophical debates - in this case, that human freedom remains paradoxical in our modern world.

I use the phrase "contemporary ontological predicament" to emphasize that empowerment speaks to the problem of the various ways that we have come to imagine our self being in the world in terms of how to act upon it in a meaningful moral way. It is a covering phrase for the various characterizations of "the problem" as, say: "the malaise of modernity" (Taylor, 1991); the postmodern condition as a "crises of narratives" (Lyotard, 1984); "the twilight or renaissance of morality" (Bauman, 1993); and so on. Its actual meaningful content is left, in this dissertation, to the empowerment claims encountered later on. They will tell us more of this "ontological condition" and whether or not this is an apt metaphor.

My assertion is that empowerment speaks through empowerment claims "in the world", in a more direct and telling way to the question of the contemporary human predicament. It can be argued, as it is here, as an event in itself and not just as an epiphenomenon of the theoretical/philosophical configurations we have come to know as modernity, late-modernity, and postmodernity. As such, my argument is a modest adjunct to these sweeping commentaries - a humble correction. It also asserts that they have undervalued the practical/theoretical efficacy of empowerment as it is expressed by social actors. Consequently, they have

not sufficiently grasped the meaningful ontological dimension of empowerment as a moral event: as a compelling "practical" referent for understanding how contemporary human actors imagine "different ways of thinking about who we are, how we should act, and how we should act upon ourselves" (Dean, 1996:210). Taken together, these different ways of thinking (imagining) form empowerment as a problematic expressing the generalised moral uncertainty of the present. Empowerment claims are "real" actors informing social/political/moral discourse as to a human predicament — these meta-theoretical commentaries have not listened closely enough.

I argue that empowerment is expressing something "in the world"; perhaps an ontological aspect of contemporary life that transcends the theoretical incommensurabilities of meta-theoretical commentaries. Some have called this a "crisis of self"; selfs which I argue are engaged, to varying degrees, in a reflexive reconsideration of what it means to live a moral life. It is not so much a crisis but a recasting of the moral problem of the Enlightenment in the landscape of a newly formed problematic that resembles what Bauman (1993) has referred to as "Postmodern Ethics." The Enlightenment, often referred to as the "Age of Reason", marked the birth of science as a state of mind confident and certain in its ability to render every aspect of the

universe (social and natural) explicable. Rationality became understood both as an essence of the universe (i.e., law-bound) and of the human mind. Hence, the human mind could now comprehend all aspects of the universe and submit them to human willing. In other words, the Enlightenment brought the primacy of reason into human affairs and in doing so secular rationality brought humanity out from under what Peter Berger (1969:107-108) has termed the "sacred canopy" of supernatural understanding. What emerged was the western philosophical man; the autonomous individual person with a right to choose his way of being in the world, morally, politically, and religiously (Solomon, 1989:15-16). Freed from the "otherworldly" determinations on his moral life, this now "free" individual was shouldered with the responsibility of choosing for himself. But choose what? Choose how"?

Modern Philosophy was born out of this "moral problem" and offered, more or less, various mediations of reason with morality; various systematic attempts to quell the general uncertainty and anxiety that accompanied the "moral problem" through its offerings of "general principles that...help us evaluate the validity of a moral rule and choose between different moralities" (1989:539-40). With empowerment, we will see how the problem of morality has become deracinated

(Bauman, 1993); moving, therefore, out from under the discursive authorities of both the modern philosophical project and that of modern "enlightened" critical social theory (e.g., Habermas, 1971; 1984; 1987; see also Bernstein, 1985). As such, empowerment is an opportunity to engage the question of moral action in a novel sociologically meaningful way.

However, the possibility of understanding empowerment in this way - as an inherently historical and ontological phenomena - is at odds with its broad currency within the discourses of the helping professions. Although well-meaning, these professionals appear to be preoccupied with rendering empowerment useful to their respective disciplinary rationales. Consequently, an understanding of empowerment is most often reduced to what is deemed as measurable and/or manageable. While the broad vision of meta-theoretical commentaries has not noticed the meaningful content of empowerment, the discourses of the helping professions have configured empowerment within its discursive structure and strategically leached it of this meaningful ontological content.

When subjected to the instrumentality of essentialist strategies that characterize the discourses of the helping profession, the broader (present) ontological and historical

importance of empowerment remains trapped. The authoritative force of such scientistic renderings, parleyed in the palatable "humanistic" language of empowerment, is powerfully seductive. This conflation of scientific (epistemic) reasoning with the "normative" of helping (a vestige of the Enlightenment's "critical rationalism") can (and does) easily lead one away from the understanding I forward in Part Two of this thesis of how empowerment practices, most often but not always, express the uncertainty that accompanies the knowledge that we are free to, and therefore must acknowledge, the burden of responsibility of choosing our way of being "morally" in the world. This uncertainty is something which we intuitively know as a present reality of daily contemporary life.

In intellectual life (epistemological) uncertainty has become manifest in the problem of "self-definition"; of what it means to be a responsible, critical, radical, intellectual while those conditions that shape political consciousness remain at best elusive (Karabel, 1996). This is particularly evident in social-political theory since the so-called "1989 Revolutions" - "the changes which swept through Europe during 1989 and the beginning of 1990" (Held, 1996:437) - wherein uncertainty would seem to be fortified by the inability to succinctly construe an "enemy" beyond some under-articulated

threat that "exists" on the other side of the present "good" we know as the hegemony of liberal democracy (see, Lemert, 1994; also Held, 1996). In general - in the state of "being in the world" - ontological uncertainty is perhaps symptomatic of a waning confidence in the possibility of being moral because of society (Taylor's "Malaise") and a growing "reflexive" awareness (Giddens' self of the late modern age) that society is only possible if we choose to be moral in some way (Bauman's postmodern ethics).

The professional discourses of the helping professions exhibit (ironically, I think) intolerance of this contemplation of ontological and moral uncertainty. This is not, of course, a question of their willing this, but is one of the discursive constraints carried within their disciplinary matrix. As we will see, it is expressive of (for the most part) the ongoing modernist impulse - the will of scientism - and therefore of the (constrained) interests in construing empowerment within the expected boundaries of epistemological certainty. In short, the professional discourses trade on the comfort which accompanies the certainty of knowing programmatic resolutions. As such, they form an obstacle in the way of presenting empowerment as an ontological unfolding of a meaningful "moral" juncture in human history in the terms described (as above). This thesis

sets out to de-stabilise the idea of empowerment as a contemporary instrument of helping; as a panacea within a network of social problems.

The problematic of empowerment, as I see it, has a substantial intellectual history for the reason that it is inseparable from the discourse of the self. As a concept captured in the history of the present (through empowerment claims), it is a practical referent for self¹ voicing their participation in the imagining of moral selfs, others and the good society. But empowerment also signifies a return to, or continuation of, the essential problem of the Enlightenment, that is, the problem of moral action. As such, empowerment ought to be considered as a "modern" constituent feature of the self understood as a "discursive figure" (Hall, 1995).² With this in mind, one can say that the moral problem of the Enlightenment remains. Having shifted the burden of responsibility for making a "moral" self onto the shoulders of the "average man" (as part of its "man-centering" regime), the self retains this responsibility amidst the uncertainty of choosing (as earlier discussed).

The self's history has been one of dependency for its moral sustenance on prevailing, and sometimes institutionalised, systems of thought. The self has historically experienced the nourishment of its moral

constitution on the following: the spirituality of an early enchanted word; the formalised systems of theology and philosophy; and, most recently (with the re-emergence of the idea of civil society) on the normative institutions of society (family, state and economy) within a relationship of trust and faith. This latter self is the modern sociological self that, in the midst of the erosion of these traditional institutions and thus traditional relationships of trust, is in the process of reflecting/acting on the need to look elsewhere for its moral nourishment. The problem remains one of where to look for the moral basis of meaningful social action. Empowerment practices are mostly, but not always, a heightened reflexive confrontation with this dilemma, a human striving for moral direction that can be captured (as they are in Part Two of this thesis) in the various imaginings of the self's relationship with its self, others, and the good society.

Claims to possess the wherewithal to empower and claims to have been empowered are often accompanied by the smugness of moral\ethical certitude. This is evident in my review of the "empowering" helping professions (that appears later in the study) whose modernist wrapping of empowerment would seem to bolster the confidence of such conviction. However, at the broader level of ontology - one evinced by the voices of

empowerment claimants - this certitude is eroded, as empowerment is opened-up (in Part Two of this thesis) as displays of the crises of self cast within the generalised "uncertainty about how to treat others" (Wolfe, 1988:5).

There is a need then to think empowerment both within its localised "history of the present" and within a "rethinking of modernity" (Seidler, 1994:157). This requires that we think empowerment as a discursive figure requiring an intellectual space which denies the traditional distinctions between social scientific inquiry and philosophical concerns. This space is one which is not agreeable to the modernist will, which characterises the "empowering" helping professions.

Central to the thinking in this intellectual space is the theme of uncertainty, particularly regarding what constitutes the morality and ethics of empowered selves and where to begin to look for such. Empowerment practices are (often, but not always) this thinking in action. They are thick expressions of the uncertainty accompanying the advent of "really" (reflexively) knowing that we must search for new ethical/moral grounds of interaction, of acting upon one's self and the "other". As such, empowerment claims are aspirations to unify in the "real" world of social action the social and the moral. What this means for critical

sociological thinking is that we need to (re) conceptualise a social reality of/for empowerment outside both conventional (i.e., scientific) and critical "enlightened" social theoretical practices (i.e., praxical). Pursuing this "space" is the central preoccupation of this thesis; and it is explicitly framed in the concluding (Part Three) of the dissertation.

Accordingly, the analysis moves from practice to theory. This must be distanced from the contemporary critical theory which, according to Morrow (1994:23), attempts to link theoretical "insights to appropriate forms of evidence and reflections on social practice." This critical theory appears to have the agenda of proving itself in the empirical world; of bringing theory to practice in a way that resembles an ordering of things, of the quest for certainty, of empiricism, a reifying tendency, etc. While this is understandable given critical theory's need to salvage critical rationalism (as distinct from instrumental rationality [see, in particular, Habermas 1984; 1987]), it is in no way an intention of this dissertation to do so. In other words, the project of critical theory is of no interest here. However, as this thesis claims the status of critical analysis and because empowerment has a rich normative content, it is necessary to broach the question of how

empowerment can be acknowledged as expressing valid normative claims - if at all - and thus approached analytically, without invoking the traditional normative arsenal of sociology. It is, as we will see, clear that the normative content of empowerment is, in the discourses of the helping professions, reduced to measurable properties (as consistent with the scientistic impulse) but what needs to be addressed is the question of how sociology ought to manage this content without becoming complicit in such colonisation. It is a question that speaks to the problem of retaining the "critical" in social theoretical analysis. It is a question that the conclusion of this thesis confronts through arguing that the "critical" of sociological analysis can begin to be clarified if we hold a distinction between "praxis" and "empowerment" in mind. As such, the concluding chapter of Part Three emphasises the thesis as a sociology of sociology.

In this dissertation I take the ambiguity surrounding empowerment's meaning (announced in the professional journals as problematic to instituting empowerment practices) as signifying that the experiential realm of empowerment practices (i.e., self) is in the process of articulating a novel, tentative and therefore uncertain negotiation of social reality. In other words, I take this ambiguity as

positive; as an indication that empowerment has thus far resisted colonisation by professional discourses. While the meaning of empowerment remains open, the uncertainty of empowerment practices remains unbridled by instrumental reasoning and essentialist determinations.

If one understands empowerment as an imaginative dynamic process - an action that consciously and reflexively implicates selfs as they search for, and attempts to (re) imagine and (re) construct "moral" selfs in an increasingly complex world - then it cannot be considered scientistically as some measurable accomplished end (as most practitioners and academics would wish it to be). It must be understood, approached, and defended as a concept and action speaking to, and participating in, a significant juncture in a dynamic human history.

Empowerment, then, represents a search for (not an accomplishment of) a moral basis for meaningful interaction. In an age where instrumental rationality still predominates as the prevailing standard to assess the "meaningful" content of human interaction, empowerment is surely vulnerable. Given this, empowerment, while it retains the general character of ambiguity (of meaning) stands as a form of practical/moral resistance to the colonising impulses of "modern" authoritative discourses. Because I defend this

ambiguity as meaningful, the dissertation is implicated as a critical participant in this resistance and therefore, heuristically, as an exemplar of the "critical".

The urge to empower is widespread. I take this urge as meaningful. It often, but not always, demonstrates a human striving to engage the "other" in an age often characterised by the narcissism of self, cynicism, pessimism, and moral uncertainty (see Taylor, 1991). It is an age where, if such social diagnosticians as Christopher Lasch (1979) are to be believed, the non-appearance of empowerment would perhaps make more sense. It is an age, then, where,

Interaction ceased to sediment lasting relations; inter-human networks and the institutions which once served to solidify them into structures turn brittle, fragile, lacking in all foundation except the intentions of the actors to continue. Human bonds are tentative, protean, and 'until further notice' (Bauman, 1993).

This thesis, then, aims to present ambiguity of meaning, uncertainty of how to act upon self and other, and the puzzling urge to empower as various expressions of the contemporary self imagining meaningful/moral relationships with its self, others, and society. As such, it is obliged to guide sociology's urge to "discover" meaningfulness away from its traditional practices of constructing "useful" categories for purposes of scientific operationalization,

essentialist solutions and so forth. In other words, I am making the claim that a critical sociological approach must aim to protect the uncertainty surrounding empowerment practices. It should not be implicated in the empowerment programmatic that have emerged within the helping professions. This essentially moral and practical responsibility of a critical sociology is what this thesis in its totality wishes to express. As such, it contributes to the idea of a critical social science because its aim is the production of "good knowledge" and not "scientific truth" (Cain, 1990).

The dissertation, then, answers the call found within the empowerment discourses of the helping professions to conceptually clarify an understanding of empowerment but not in expected essentialist ways. It responds to critical social science by advancing an idea of how the question of human possibilities and constraints can be adequately conceptualised while retaining ontology as a meaningful dimension of analytical focus. And, it responds to the idea of sociology embracing the production of "good" knowledge by centralising the question of what it means to be a moral actor in our contemporary world.

"Good" knowledge is produced by de-centring the idea that human ontology is discernible, sociologically, within

epistemic eurocentric constructions of rational motivations measured according to an idea of accomplishment and progress. Instead, it centres the idea of human ontology as a "practical" and imaginative quest for meaningful moral relationships amidst, what empowerment claims are telling us, is a "reality" of moral ambivalence. Another way to state this is that "good" knowledge takes account of whether and how humans choose to represent their selves in the world without knowledge getting hung up (epistemologically) on "truth claims" that purport to state the way things are in the world (Bhaskar, 1991). With the emergence of empowerment, this has become acknowledged in the human willing toward imagined moral unions with selfs and others to produce a good society. In short, "good" knowledge celebrates human striving; not necessarily human accomplishment. Empowerment as we will see is this, saying that "what matters is our loyalty to other human beings clinging together against the dark, not our hope of getting things right" (Rorty, as quoted in Bhaskar, 1991:105). And if this allies me with the "anti-foundational pragmatism" (which I understand as Richard Rorty's position) then so be it. It is empowerment that has taken me there.

Method and Procedure Considerations

Empowerment has emerged as a salient concept in the 1990's speaking to the self's self-experiencing of ontological uncertainty. It can reveal much about what some have termed "a crisis of self" but which I prefer to convey as a significant moral event which expresses the contemporary search for a moral basis of interaction. First, however, empowerment needs to be loosened-up from the site it occupies in the professional discourses of the helping professions. It needs, in other words, to be located and then explored within the discursive configurations of the helping professions to reveal the particular discursive constraints that have produced the relationship of meaning between "empowerment", "helping" (often, "emancipation"), and interventionalist programmatic.

The particular ways in which these discourses of the helping professions claim ownership of empowerment and their disciplinary interests in doing so, form the first argument of this thesis. The focus is on three helping profession sites which were found to overwhelmingly represent "empowerment" usage: Social Work, Psychology (particularly Community Psychology), and the Evaluation "Community".

The three sites were identified through a systematic inventory of the helping professions' journals, books which

appeared to have a paradigmatic status, newsletters, conference papers and web-site publications. The task was daunting given the prolific appearance of "empowerment" within the boundaries of the helping professions.

I proceed to analyse the claims as to what empowerment is claimed to be and tie these to a network of assumptions that are instrumental in the particular use of the concept. What I am particularly interested in exploring is the relationship of the discourses of the helping professions to what might be considered as the discourses that power their "enlightened" empowerment programmatic. These often resemble those normative instrumentalities of "praxis" theoreticians found within (as I later argue) modernist sociological discourse. This latter point is important as it may highlight a potential and forming complicity of sociology in this particular production of (modernist) empowerment programmatic which (as we see in Part Two) colonise the empowering imaginings voiced by empowerment claims "in the world".

Consistent with this procedure (as above) is the construing of "discourse" in the broadest terms of "whatever signifies or has meaning" (Macdonnel, as quoted in Mills 1991:4) qualified, however, by the assertion that discourse is not a "homogeneous term that subsumes all distinctions"

(Mills, 1991:9). Rather, discourses are understood to "...differ with the kinds of institutions and social practices in which they take shape, and with the positions of those who speak and those whom they address" (Macdonnel, as quoted in Mills, 1991:9). Discourse is therefore heterogeneous and because of this it is the relationship of a discourse to other discourses that forms the central analytical focus. This relationality of discourses is, I would argue, a methodological imperative of a sociology concerned with conceptual mapping (my concern) in a way similar to that which is characteristic of the relational logic of institutional analysis within a structuralist, most often realist, "world view" (e.g., Giddens, 1984).

As I move through the discourses of the helping professions, I comment critically on the key ideas which configure the discursive structure(s) they know as "empowerment". These configurations, we find, resemble a modernist (mostly epistemological) "world view" inclusive of its normative centre in critical rationalism. I show how the term empowerment is drawn into a relationship with (articulated to), and is quickly subsumed by, what Endelman (1974) refers to as the "political language of the helping professions." This language, he notes, is often "the language of 'reinforcement' and 'help'...(which)...evokes in

our minds a world in which the weak and the wayward need to be controlled for their own good." With empowerment, however, we have this language, but it is most often couched within the language of "authority" and "repression" which evokes "...a different reality in which the rights of the powerless need to be protected against abuse by the powerful." Ostensibly, the latter is emancipatory and we are drawn into seeing the empowering helping professions as progressive, humanistic and even moral. From the critical point of view advanced here, the language of "empowering" is distinct from that of reinforcement and helping only by virtue of the unique way in which it symbolically "catalyses a subjective world in which uncertainties are clarified and appropriate courses of action become clear" (Endelman, 1974: 45-48). In short, this seductive empowerment language colonises the subjectivities of both empowerment professionals and the "empowerees"; both of which form the objects of empowerment programmatic.

The discussion is offered as a prelude to the main conceptual undertaking of locating empowerment within a broader problematic informed by a critical sociological analysis. In moving from the discussion of empowerment and the helping professions to its critical sociological problematisation, we move empowerment away from modernist

essentialist concerns and toward the construction of a broader moral/practical landscape.

The main undertaking of the thesis configures empowerment within three totalities of empowerment selfs: the modern, the late-modern and the postmodern. These selfs are derived from "listening" to the empowerment claims "in the world" and, when located in a conceptual problematic, form the "problematic" core of the empowerment phenomena. Empowerment is an event which, as I demonstrate, can be conceptually articulated to form a "problem space" (Rose, 1996a:169) inclusive of a number of empowered selfs which carry with them past, present and forming totalities.

"Totality" is used here to refer to "something which 'sticks beyond' the field on which attention is momentarily focused...totality is, as a rule, what 'has not been taken into account'" "Human self" is appropriately deemed a totality (Bauman, 1993:194-195). Hence, claims of empowered selfs issued from the world of social actors, speak to, and indeed challenge, the self that has always been a central discursive figure of philosophical discourse but which now has become a preoccupation of sociological discourse (see in particular: Giddens, 1990, 1991; Bauman, 1995; Wolfe, 1989; Hall, 1996; Seidler, 1994; Jenkins, 1996; Lemert 1994; and, Rose, 1996a). As such, the conceptual landscape that forms

in Part Two of this thesis can be seen as an outcome of the act of mediating the discursive configurations of intellectuals with the "empowered" discursive voices of social actors to form an alternative "moral" discourse.

Within the problem-space that forms, empowered selves are seen to co-exist while expressing vastly different and most often incommensurate imaginings of where to look for the moral basis of social action, how to conceive of our self, and how to bond the self to the "other" in such a way as to further a vision of the "good" society. The empowerment selves which I map out within discursive configurations and which will be seen to occupy a landscape of ontological uncertainty are: 1. The Empowered Modern Self; 2. The Paradoxical Empowered Self of Late Modernity; 3. The Empowered Self of Risk Society; 4. The Constructivist Empowered Self; 5. The Fragmented/Fractured "Empowered Self" of Postmodernity; 6. The "Empowered Self" of Technologies.

The problem space I form derives from taking a conceptual mapping approach. "Conceptual mapping" begins to assemble the meaningful dimension of social reality by "taking a look at words in their sites in order to understand how we think and why we seem obliged to think in certain ways" (Hacking, 1990).³ Staying consistent with the idea of discourse, "mapping" is not concerned with discovery, with,

say, assessing the truth of textual utterances or with deducing the authorial intention of utterances (Mills, 1991). Rather, the conceptual map of empowerment accomplished in this study is a creative act concerned with displaying the "network of possibilities and constraints that we have built into our present conceptions..." (Hacking, 1990:360) of our selves as morally striving selves.

One can, then, expect the conceptual landscape of empowerment to present an uneasy coexistence of the totalities of self, a battleground wherein "truths" are managed and maintained and "power relations are carried by them" (Burr, 1995:166). A conceptual map is therefore not without the capability of presenting the requisite sociological interest in conveying social life within a "reality" of relations of power. On the contrary, the prevailing empowerment "totalities" constitute "ways" in which social actors have demonstrated an interest in apprehending meaningful moral directives as ways of informing their acting upon their selves and others. A conceptual mapping brings into view how these "ways" can be traced to "truths" held to constitute empowerment as a way of thinking our relationship with our self, others, and the "good" society. Each "way" has a conceptual history of sustaining

some patterns of thinking while excluding others (Burr, 1995:5).

A conceptual map trades on a view of "reality" not dissimilar to that described by Foucault (1981:67):

We must not imagine that the world turns toward us a legible face which we would only have to decipher. The world is not the accomplice of our knowledge; there is no pre-discursive providence which disposes the world in our favour.

It also acknowledges (self-reflectively) Foucault's (1972; 1981) strong reminder that language functions as a medium of power in the construction and reproduction and management of reality (as "truth"). In what I express in my critical review of the empowering helping professions, we see the workings of practitioners who replicate the rationality of scientific discourse as a "mechanism" which is aligned with the silencing of the "truths" of other discourses - for Foucault (1962; 1973), those of patients and inmates; for this thesis, those of empowerment claimants as "moral" actors.

A conceptual mapping approach must therefore acknowledge (reflectively) that it, too, "speaks from somewhere" - is a discourse of the intellectual - as a "will to power" (Foucault, 1981). Consequently, as author, it is unavoidable that I should know the "anxiety of beginning";

know that I am, as Foucault (1981) puts it, "looking after the appearances of discourse." However, in using a conceptual mapping approach I am not acknowledging in any strong way the validity of sociological scientific discourse which has at its epistemological centre the idea of the duality of the world upon which empiricism turns and upon which the correspondence theory of "truth" relies. Stated another way, a conceptual mapping approach keeps at arm's length the idea that we are theorising the world as a prelude to constructing programmatic interventions which, as Foucault's genealogies of sexuality (1979), madness (1962), and punishment (1973) have convincingly told us, is our very history of reproducing the "indignity of speaking for others" (1972) and one that "injures, dominates, and enslaves" (1981) (and is the forming present history of the empowering helping professions). For Foucault, theory is practice; so too for conceptual mapping.

Giddens' (1984; 1990; 1991) social theorising, Said's (1979; 1993) discursive analysis, and Guha's and Spivak's (1985) post-colonialist feminist deconstruction would, for example, all agree with Foucault's critique of the theory-practice relationship. But; they would do so without necessarily courting the relativism (and possible nihilism) that Foucault's view can evoke, and without necessarily

eradicating a creative agential human subject from the "map" of "social reality". They would all acknowledge the hidden "other", the "subject" of Foucault's silenced discourse - the oppressed underclass etc. - but would proceed to articulate "them" (as I do with "the empowered self" as knowledgeable and creative subjects). For Foucault, the subject has disappeared (been de-centered) and therefore, in his view, we ought not fret about such things.⁴

The conceptual mapping approach does fret about such things as it proceeds to bring together localised ontologies of our conceptions (imaginings) of our self's relationship to our self, others and a "good" society into a single problem-space. The problem-space that forms is, as we will see, characterised by ontological uncertainty. Both sources of data that I draw on in this section would attest to this; both the academic social theoretical discourses and that of the empowerment claimants.

"The present" is one of heterogeneous and localized ontologies because the various empowerment selves are surely this (see Rose, 1995a). Empowerment "voices" are urging to be included within a history of the present; perhaps as an alternative discursive configuration or, as Foucault (1981) might say, as alternative avenues to the "truth". As such, my task is to bring the voices of empowerment claims into

contact with the broad social theoretical discourses of self. In what might be considered as a mediating act, I take the analytical tack of infusing the conceptual problem-space with expressed empowerment claims issuing forth from a variety of sites within the current cultural, political, and social space. This "data" is meant to evince the empowerment totalities that I argue as constituting the problem-space which is meant, finally, to act as an alternative discourse of empowerment to that of the helping professions. The data is understood as unrestricted by any antecedent methodological exigency that might otherwise favour one totality over another - they are discourses. It has been gathered from a plethora of sources - media, internet, posters, pamphlets, political speeches etc., collected over the last three years. Empowerment is indeed everywhere.

Contributions

The thesis is a sociology of sociology and makes contributions to sociology in the areas of critical methodology and critical theory. It also makes a practical contribution to all who have an interest in empowerment practices, especially the helping professions.

As to its contribution to critical sociological methodology, it offers a demonstration of how to broach the

social world of human practice (in this case the phenomena of empowerment) in such a way as to present sociological analysis as an "inventive way(s) of evaluating, enhancing and generalising the possibilities for practices of freedom" (Barry, et al., 1996:16). In this regard it demonstrates the need for "reflexivity" - a need to be ever mindful of sociology's substantial history of "colonising foray(s)" (Davies, 1991:5) into the world of human practice. As such, the dissertation further clarifies and pushes forward the reclamation and reconceptualisation of moral questions as central to critical sociological investigation. Some claim this position as moral philosophy infused with the concreteness of human experience, or if you like, "doing moral philosophy as science" (Bhaskar, 1991; see also Harding, 1986; Wolfe, 1989; Bauman, 1991, 1993).

As to the thesis' contribution to social theory, it is, to the best of my knowledge, the first concerted effort to present empowerment sociologically as a phenomenon that is more complex and meaningful than the existing literature conveys. As such, it provides the groundwork for theorising in a post-Foucauldean direction. By constructing a problem space of empowerment as a place of ontological uncertainty wherein "empowered" selves coexist uneasily, I provide a compelling reason for empowerment practitioners to pause and

reconsider their relationship with the homogeneous potential empowerment subject which their disciplinary interests construct.

In sum the thesis is meant as a modest heuristic offering to empowerment practitioners and social theoreticians who take seriously the question of human freedom.⁵ It is meant to restate the pragmatic purpose of social theoretical analysis as one of rendering moral considerations practical and practical considerations moral. It is meant to serve empowerment practitioners as a focal point for self-examination of the responsibilities and implications that stem from their claiming empowerment as a strategic practice. In this sense, the dissertation is analytical and conceptual with an ambition to be compelling, so as to flow into the domain of human practice.

Thesis Organisation

As the Table of Contents indicates, the dissertation is divided into three parts whose rationales can be simply stated as follows. Part One, "Overview of the Empowerment Problematic", presents the current "authoritative" and professional programmatic thinking on empowerment. It analyses the particular discursive configurations that surround empowerment with disciplinary interests and points

to existing and possible points of contact with existing variants of sociological discourse. It demonstrates the restrictions placed on empowerment by modernist discourse. Part Two, "Mapping Empowerment's Conceptual Landscape", responds to Part One by re-locating empowerment within a critical conceptual landscape. It is a creative effort to present an alternative discourse as a meaningful way to look at empowerment, that is, as totalities of self. It emphasises the inclusion of empowerment voices in a conceptual problematic. Part Three, "Conclusion: Empowerment and Sociology", focuses on the implications of thinking in the ways outlined in Part One and Part Two, particularly as they relate to the understanding of what it means to do critical sociological analysis.

The dissertation proceeds, in Chapter II, to survey the professional discourses of empowerment in the specific empowerment domains of Social Work, Psychology, and Evaluation. I comment on how the concept is being managed within these discourses and the extent to which its meaning has been colonised to express the larger interests of the discourses. The purpose is to demonstrate how empowerment is contained within discourses that carry forward mostly modernist "interests": how, in other words, empowerment is

framed within a discourse that carries forward "critical rationalism" in its idea of "helping".

Part Two opens with Chapter III and proceeds to link the ideas and practices of empowerment to the notion of self as a discursive figure. The discursive figure we know as the sociological "modern self" is culled from the broader discourse of self. It thereafter serves to provide an initial analytical configuration from which the conceptual mapping ensues. Here we see how the claims of empowerment evince the empowerment totalities, as I proceed to "peg" these voices to the discursive configurations of sociological self (s).

Part Three brings us back to the "normative" question of empowerment. In doing so, I move the dissertation from the conceptual/ analytical, that is the focus of Part Two, back to the moral and practical. My concern here, as will become apparent, is to offer a pointed argument on how to re-direct a critical analysis away from the possibility of colonising the normative content of empowerment (as has been done in the helping professions). As this thesis claims an affinity with the critical tradition of sociology and has already placed the "moral" as a central consideration, it is obliged to locate itself relative to the inherent normative interest of the tradition. However, these interests, I

argue, can not be aligned with empowerment unless they are first disassociated from the idea of praxis. This conceptual distortion is at the centre of the "empowering" helping professions and remains, as I argue, active within the "emancipatory" dialogues of sociology. Sociologists mean praxis when they claim empowerment, thereby stripping empowerment of any uniqueness as a normative/moral event. It is this "modernist" distortion that I confront in the final chapter prior to offering some reflective considerations on what might be considered as the methodological "urges" of a critical "empowered" sociology.

ENDNOTES: CHAPTER I

1. Throughout this dissertation I use the term "selves" rather than what would be the expected grammatically correct term "selves". Arguably "selves" constructs the imagining of a commonality among and between the various "selves" that inhabit the contemporary ontological landscape. What I find troubling with this is that "selves" presents a plurality of "selves" while emphasizing a homogeneity or essential likeness among and between "selves". This understanding lends itself to de-emphasising, if not silencing, the very imaginings of uniqueness and differences that we later hear empowered selves as voicing. It is a colonising concept. Another way to state this is that "selves" contains a thick collectivist construction of "selves" that feeds into the idea of society as a composite of sameness of "selves". Clearly, as evinced by the voices of empowered "selves" (in Part two) not all selves share in this collective imagining; not all "selves" are in society insofar as knowing their "selves" as being involved in the production and reproduction of society's normative institutions. In Part Two of the dissertation, we come to know "selves" whose empowerment claims tell of divergent if not incommensurate imaginings of unions with self, others and the idea of a good society. Moreover, considering that postmodern "selves" abandon "self" by embracing "identity" it is essential that a space be opened up and managed (as is accorded by the use of self) which allows us to talk of and to sort such differences of "selves" without necessarily evoking the idea of society.

2. The self is a "discursive figure" because it is found at the center of conceptual undertakings that have attempted to make sense of such things as what it means to be a "human subject" and the extent to which modern life is shaped by the self and vice-versa. It is discursive because talk of self is, in essence, a report or commentary - an essential ordering - on the state of the imagining of such things. And this discursive figure has a history. We have known, for example, the self as a discursive figure acquiring; its location at the center of knowledge (Descartes); its sovereignty as individual (Locke); its sociality in civil society (Smith). We have also the self's decentering in its de-stabilizing or de-rationalisation (Freud), its subordination to the structure of language (Lacan); and its relocation/re-structuring as a technique of disciplinary power (Foucault) [Hall, 1996: 601-611]. I later use the term

"discursive configuration" to mean the precise way in which the discursive figure of self is located within a body of knowledge; i.e., how it is pegged to other working concepts of a particular discourse to oblige us to, as Hacking (1990) states it, think in certain ways.

3. "Concepts are words in their sites. Sites include sentences uttered or transcribed, always in a larger site of neighborhood, institution, authority, language" (Hacking, 1990:359).

4. This should not be misconstrued as Foucault's view debunking any notion of resistance. Rather, it is to emphasize that Foucault de-centers human agency and in doing so, eradicates its attendant teleological propositions (e.g., perfectability, emancipation) that surround the idea of "man-centered" social histories and replaces it with the idea of history being contingent sites of power that works through discourses. Resistance may take the form of alternative discourses. A pointed statement by Foucault speaks nicely to this; he states: "Women, prisoners, conscripted soldiers, hospital patients and homosexuals have now begun a specific struggle against the particularized power, the constraints and controls, that are exerted over...the overall picture presented by the struggle is certainly not that of...theoretical totalization under the guise of 'truth'. The generality of the struggle specifically derives from the system of power itself, from all the forms in which power is exercised and applied" (Foucault, 1972:16).

5. For example, those thinkers who allow their theoretical imaginations to be limited by the authoritative rules of scientific inquiry (neutrality and objectivity), or shaped by a "post-marxist nihilism" (Morrow, 1994:xvii) and the subsequent abandonment of the idea of human possibilities to a world of cynicism and disillusionment.

II: Empowerment and the Helping Professions

II-1. Introduction

In this section I discuss empowerment as it appears in the context of the helping professions. I limit the discussion to sites wherein empowerment has gained an apparent terminological currency, an accompanying idea of an empowerment practice, and a demonstrated will toward empowerment guided programmatics.¹ These are places where empowerment utterances are found to be recurring and which are capable of being located in what McCarthy (1993:3) would identify as "strategic" currents of thought originating in a group's "existence and collective action." Here one discovers empowerment as a rationality locked within modernist discursive configurations that appear to wilfully act, as Foucault might say, upon the interests of others, i.e., will to power (see Hindess, 1996:148-151).²

The strategic use of empowerment in such a way exhibits, as we will see, "contingent and local kinds of rationalities" (Foucault, as quoted in Hindess, 1996:148) that work to surround empowerment with the protective veneer of the discipline's conceptual apparatus (see also Smith, 1990; 1989). Within these enclosures, empowerment is guarded

by the assumption of the discipline's authority and the appearance of benevolence that empowerment brings with it (captured as it is in the talk of "help" and "resistance"). Who would doubt the humanness of a discipline that brings a concern for empowerment to the front and centre of its professional concern?³ Illusions of benevolence seem to be a genus of power (see Said, 1993).

Empowerment talk is proving to be an opportunity for the helping professions to expand qualitatively and quantitatively their domains of expertise and thus their jurisdictional authority over social reality. This expansion includes claiming new phenomena not traditionally considered within the respective disciplinary matrix of the discourses but also includes shifts within the discourses into construing their new terrain (and at times, (re)construing old terrain) as inherently normative. The domain of the empowering helping professions, is a place where we will see interests, morality, and a will to power converge.

While this chapter demonstrates my research labours, it also constitutes a critical analytical undertaking. As I proceed, some key empowerment players are identified as having produced and/or orchestrated authoritarian and exemplar "texts". Their "textual strategies" (Mills, 1991) for ownership of the concept are displayed and the larger

professional interests of their respective disciplines are revealed. The question of how these strategies fit with their particular administration of empowerment's normative content, to the ends of their disciplinary interests, is pursued.

Restated, the objective of this section is to critically comment on the current state of empowerment's colonisation within the discourses of the helping professions. More specifically, it is to comment on the degree to which Social Work, Psychology, and Evaluation invite, accommodate, or resist the modernist (scientistic) urge to classify and manage the concept. In doing so, I am inviting sociology to take note of how easily our discipline, because of its own claim to expertise, could and has become complicit in the colonisation of empowerment (as discussed in the conclusion of this chapter).⁴

Acknowledging Reflexivity

I began my review of the empowerment literature with the expectation of finding the helping professions' empowerment practices to be predicated on a cogent theoretical framework located somewhere within their tradition of expert knowledge. This was reinforced by the discovery that the term empowerment is present in the

programmatics of local schools of Social Work. For example, the mission statement of The University of Victoria's School of Social Work reads:

The school of social work is committed to empowering based on equity, community change and adult education principles. Curriculum stresses an analysis of power differences related to gender age race, ethnicity, religion class abilities and sexual orientation. (Further curriculum is being developed which will focus on structural feminist and First Nations analysis).

Similarly, The University College of the Fraser Valley's School of Social Work offers its students courses that will produce social workers "skilled in working towards *empowering* individuals, families and small groups so that personal, familial and community functioning is enhanced" (Emphasis mine). And, recently Langara College began offering a course entitled "Empowering Children". It seemed reasonable, then, to expect the professional journals to be replete with discussion of the "how to's" of empowerment practices and the informing theories of these practices.

I later discovered that my expectation was not to be fulfilled--empowerment practices are for the most part without informing theoretical foundations. Moreover, I (so also, Baistow, 1994) found little effort to remedy this, through any concerted and meaningful analysis.⁵

Instead, one discovers a virtual consensus on empowerment having the status of a "buzz word". Gray and Doan, (1990:33) see it as "fast becoming the 'buzz-word' of the health care system." Lord and Farlow (1990:2) argue it to be a "buzz-word...in the health promotion and social change field (with)...no common understanding." Lord and Hutchison (1993) locate empowerment as a "buzz-word" of those involved in mental health issues, and Strawn (1994:159) notes the frequency with which this "buzz-word" is heard in "human service and educational projects." The frequency with which empowerment is recognised as a "buzz-word" in social work, health care, education, mental illness, rehabilitation, nursing and psychology journals is really quite startling!

What these authors are saying is that their respective discourses are pervaded with the language of empowerment - it is a "buzz-word" - yet it lacks any common language or understanding both within and between the discourses (Lord and Farlow, 1990; Nessel, 1988). Gray and Doan (1990) argue that despite this "contextual variety...empowerment has been used with some consistency of meaning, i.e., any process which enables people to 'own' their own lives". Segal (1993:706) attributes the difficulty of defining empowerment to the fact that "it takes various forms in various contexts."

In the early stages of my research, I understood this state of disarray as the problematic character of empowerment and considered it a viable point of entry into the phenomenon. Sociology, I thought, could handily march into this enigmatic domain of empowerment on the authority of its claim to be a social science. Armed with its well-developed "strategy for handling data..." it could take the mystery out of empowerment by bringing to it predictability, practicality, and succinct "modes of conceptualisation for describing and explaining it" (Glaser and Strauss, 1967:3). It had done it successfully with another tricky concept; alienation, it could certainly handle empowerment.⁶

Empowerment practices are entrenched in the programmatics of helping professions, and "contemporary life is characterised by proliferating 'expert systems' in which we must place our trust" (Aldridge, 1996:191). Upon considering this - and deciding that empowerment was not going to go away - it seemed to me that a sociological analysis (as above) would not only be making a valuable contribution but also a practical one. If Baistow (1994:7) is correct and "those who do the empowering are increasingly likely to be health and welfare professionals: social workers, health visitors, nurses, community clinical psychologists, psychotherapists, etc., and managers in a

variety of organisational settings" then, why not face the inevitability of empowerment in our lives and contribute to theoretically clarifying it. Such contributions are encouraged. The National Cancer Institute of Canada (1994) recently stated that one of its objectives "is to stimulate an increase in the numbers and quality of grant applications for research in the field of empowerment."

So given that empowerment practices are entrenched and expanding within and around the helping professions, it would have been a contribution to the helping professions to sculpt out a theoretical foundation for empowerment practices. But it would hardly have been a contribution to the development of a critical sociological approach.

Instead, the dissertation would have furthered mainstream sociology's (particularly, the American positivist tradition) legacy of providing the "... 'managerial services' in a kind of reliable, practically useful knowledge that could be deployed in designing realistic projects and making them effective" (Bauman, 1992:89). It would have, in other words, served the practitioners of empowerment by contributing to the scientifically informed knowledges and conceptual apparatus for developing empowerment practices in the helping professions. As such, sociology would enter the professional discourse of the helping professions with a

"display of expertise" in research providing "the conceptual currency social workers need to effect an ideological purchase on their clients lived realities" (De Montigny, 1995:75-76). Sociology, I decided, does not have to be complicit in such constructions of an institutional reality, as we shall see.

The next important discovery during my research was the grumbles within the empowerment discourses of the helping professions. There are expressions of discontent concerning the relationship of the social sciences and humanities to the practices of the helping professions. And, more importantly, there are emerging creative efforts to eclipse the traditional middlemen - the academic disciplines which occupy and mediate the theoretical space between social historical reality and the human practice(s) of the helping professions - by generating theory from within the helping professions' experiential engagement with the world. For example, there is a vocal body of knowledge organised around the question of "should social policy research take postmodernist theory into account" (Fitpatrick, 1996:303) and if so what is this theory to look like and what will it mean for front line practitioners.⁷

While progressive practitioners are seeking a meaningful program of client empowerment, they are also

reflecting upon the need to empower their professions. In other words, it is one of the complexities of empowerment that while it is seeking expression within the programmatic context of the empowerer - empoweree relationship, it is at the same time seeking to express challenges and changes to the past and prevailing relationships of the helping professions to the broader institutionalised structures - inclusive of social scientific discourse.

Sociology could therefore enter the problematic domain of empowerment's discourses, but it would do so imperialistically as a social science. It could provide a theoretical structure for empowerment practices, but it would do so in a totalizing way; as evinced by recent sociological theoretical/normative ventures into empowerment (e.g., Anderson, 1996; VanderPlatt, 1995). In short it would become a dominant player in the construction of empowerment's meaning and ultimately a participant in modernist empowerment programmatic. Sociology, I concluded, must therefore look elsewhere for its analytical footing in the "problem-space" (Rose, 1996a:169) if it is to express its ability to produce "good knowledge" rather than pursue "truth" claims about empowerment as a prelude to interventionalist programmatic.

II-2. Empowerment at the Social Work Site.

Barbara Simon (1994), an American academic social worker and proponent of the empowerment tradition in social work, has written a book entitled: **The Empowerment Tradition in American Social Work: A History.** In it, she indicts social science as having "reinforced the existing paternalism within social work." It has, she argues, capitalised on the fact that "many in the profession mistrusted their own ability to create a science and art of social work" (Simon, 1994:122-123). It is the scientism of American social sciences that Simon would wish to free empowerment practitioners and practices from. As such, Simon is directly criticising the helping professions that claim empowerment as a scientific concept. She is at the same time indirectly serving notice on traditional empirical American sociological theory, with its "absurd claim to speak the Truth, to be an epistemologically privileged discourse" (Seidman, 1991:131), that it is no longer welcome in the empowerment discourse of social work. In effect, she wishes to undo the historical relationship between sociology and social work to prevent sociological theory from encompassing empowerment social work. Simon's work demonstrates an ambition to steer empowerment practices away from the authority of social science. It signifies the tensions that exist within the

empowering helping professions and between social work and the social sciences.

However, her construction of empowerment as a "sturdy cord for binding the past to the present" (Ann Weick cover of Simon's book) leaves empowering social work open to a reunification under the no less paternalistic and imperialistic methodological flag of historicism. From scientism to historicism only requires a shift in focus from the natural to the social while maintaining the same attitude. This attitude, as captured by Habermas (1971:4), is one of "'sciences' belief in itself...the conviction that we can no longer understand science as one form of possible knowledge, but must rather identify knowledge with science." In short, historicism is scientism driven by an "evolutionary epistemology" (Lloyd, 1993:191).

Simon (1994:xiv, emphasis added) claims to have traced the "century-long evolution of social work practice that has been devoted to client empowerment." If so, the best that empowerment can be is a terminological novelty in the march of some teleological design. This design of empowerment is revealed by Simon as one of an historical evolutionary fusion of ideas. Empowerment, we are told, is a tradition that developed from collecting notions from an historical "storehouse of ideas" (1994:35).

Empowering possibilities begin, she argues, with the Protestant Revolution. Max Weber's work is utilised to establish two foundations of the concept: the shift of responsibility for "one's lot" from God to the "shoulders ofindividuals" and the "dethronement" of religious experts as intermediaries in the search for truth. This emerging "process of democratization" of responsibility is then fused with Quakerism which adds to empowerment the "practice of seeking community consensus" (Simon, 1994:34-35). Hence, empowerment has acquired both its ethic of individual responsibility and its ethic of democratic decision-making.

Next, Simon implicates merchant and industrial capitalism as contributing to the background of empowerment in two ways. First, the historical demographic changes that accompanied the great transition from feudalism to capitalism created the experience of "powerlessness, rootlessness, and marginality" and also the conditions by which failure in the marketplace "signalled failure as a human being" (Simon, 1994:36-37). In effect, capitalism created the empowerment subject. Second, because capitalism demanded "initiative" and created the conditions by which one could conceptualise oneself as having "shared economic and social interests" it provided "desirable dimensions of the behaviour of members of empowerment movements of the nineteenth and twentieth

centuries" (1994:36). Simon is suggesting, then, that capitalism created both the potential empoweree as subject and the conditions that demand the existence of the empowerer and empowering social work.

Next, Simon draws Jeffersonian Democracy into the empowerment fold to emphasise that ordinary citizens have a "capacity for wise self-governance" and that "bottom-up" democracy" has "remained an essential plank in the floor of the empowerment tradition" (1994:38). Here the liberalism of empowering social work is emerging and given further acuity when we recall Simon's earlier Weberian authorised notion of responsibility for one's lot. It is debatable whether Simon's drawing on Quakerism can move this inherently political view to the fold of communitarianism. What is clear is that Simon has (unwittingly) departed from Weber's thinking on the capacity and thinking of the average "man". She turns to Transcendentalism to formalize the optimism inherent in her view of human potentiality. Ralph Waldo Emerson, is quoted as providing a "veritable hymn to human potentiality: "Build, therefore your own world" (Emerson, as quoted in Simon, 1994:39). Owenite and Fourierist Utopianism are stirred into the empowerment mix to, I think, add empirical force (i.e., the communities) to Simon's faith in

the essential goodness of human beings; a requisite premise of her empowerment notion.

The penultimate ingredient of Simon's empowerment construct is anarchism. She argues that empowerment philosophy (and the activities of social workers since the 1890s) has been indirectly but significantly enriched by anarchism. She is referring to non-violent anarchist principles of community such as decentralised voluntary associations grouped within federations sans hierarchical control (1994:42). Simon's idea of anarchism holds an affinity with the "associations" of Durkheim's structural functionalism and "communitarian ideals" which I later discuss as the basis of morality for some modern empowered selfs. It is difficult for this writer to envision her idea of anarchism as anything beyond a restatement of fundamental liberal tenets; in this case, civil society as the domain for enacting democratic principles as the source of the "good society".

Citizenship forms the final "building block in the foundation of empowerment". It is, argues Simon, social citizenship that forms the intellectual and political foundations for empowerment in the year 2000. She states:

...full participation by citizens in the social contract hinges, for architects of social citizenship and...for empowerment-based social workers upon the interrelated trinity of civil liberties, political rights, and socioeconomic entitlements (1994:45).

Simon's empowerment reminds one of Hegel's Geist. What is said in the following quote from Hegel's "Reason in History" (1953:95) is true for Simon's account of empowerment in history:

...the present stage of Spirit contains all previous stages within itself. These, to be sure, have unfolded themselves successively and separately, but Spirit is what it has in itself always been. The differentiation of its stages is but the development of what it is in itself.

Simon's compelling venture away from the auspices of the scientism (and paternalism) of American sociology, has led her to reconstruct empowerment within the, dare I say, naively optimistic boundaries of idealism (in both its epistemological and normative sense) and tidy "moral" strictures of a communitarian functionalism. She states:

If...the majority of American people can be persuaded that inclusive social policies and generosity of spirit serve the country's short- and long-term interests, strengthen its identity and reinforce its heritage as a "strong democracy," then a...strong scenario is imaginable (Simon, 1994:193).

Within the discourse her work is touted as: "enriching the profession's historical record" (Humphrey, 1996); as "amplify(ing) the 'noble tradition' in social work" (Weick, 1996) as "help(ing) social workers carry the empowerment tradition into the twenty first century" (Abramavitz, 1996) sans its "paternalistic past" (Hartman, 1996). Clearly, the accolade is for her contribution to social work qua social work. Nowhere is it acknowledged for adding clarity to the phenomena of empowerment that social work is laying claim to.

Nonetheless, Simon's work demonstrates an effort to take empowerment beyond its putative reductionist and scientistic boundaries and into the domain of social theory. Unfortunately, by historicising empowerment - by giving it a shared lineage with social work from the past to the present and into (with the help of social work) a future - Simon has bound the concept to the interests of her discipline. In doing so, she has denied the real drama of empowerment by denying it both novelty and contingency. In other words, her historical idealisations of the concept deny the possibility of understanding empowerment as a historical moment of ontological uncertainty. For her, empowerment accumulates its "moral content" from a stockpile of intellectual history to be thereafter administered by well-meaning empowerment practitioners. For me as sociologist, who has "listened"

(see Smith, 1989) to the voices of selfs claiming empowerment (as argued in Part two of this thesis), it is the very doubts and uncertainties about the moral content of history that is a "defining" characteristic of empowerment. There is, as I will aptly demonstrate, no promise of empowering; no certainty, and certainly no programmatic resolution to the moral crises of self that empowerment expresses as a condition of our time. There are, as we will see, a number of empowered selfs.

Judith Lee, another notable and leading figure within the empowering social work initiative (Robbins, et al., 1998) has authored a book, **The Empowerment Approach to Social Work Practice** (1994) which claims to offer:

a direct practice approach to social work practice under-girded by knowledge that can empower practitioners, students, and other helping professions who work with people who are poor, living with oppression, and seeking liberation openly or in secret places of the heart (Lee, 1994:xi, emphasis added).

Clearly, the book intends to empower those who wish to empower. It is, as Sue Henry (1995:154) (professor at the University of Denver's Graduate School of Social Work) states: "the sort of book we did not know we lacked until we had it." It is a book that "advances the empowerment approach to direct social work practice" (Lee, 1994:8).

This particular empowerment practice "framework" is informed by five perspectives which constitute the main discussion of the book and which are united by what Lee refers to as "fifocal vision". Lee (1994:9) explains it as follows:

If the reader can imagine a pair of glasses with five lenses ground in (not trifocals but 'fifocals'), that is the view of the world and practice that illuminates this approach. Since there is a good deal of overlap in these perspectives, it will not take long to get use to these new lenses.

The first is the "historical perspective". It is reasoned that if social workers can document a group's history of oppression then this will enable them to "tune into the experience of oppression and to raise consciousness with our clients" (1994:39). Candidates for "tuning-into" and for consciousness raising include "especially women, African-Americans and all people of colour who continue to make up a disproportionate number of poor people" (1994:39). It is also considered necessary to document the history of related social policy. As stated by Lee (1994:39): "Practice informed by history and policy understanding must be part of an empowerment approach that stands side by side with poor people in the struggle for justice."

The historical perspective is Lee's device for constructing the appropriate subject of empowerment practices. It allows us to know the most deserving candidate for empowerment as someone who is probably poor, of colour, and a woman. It also serves to locate the potential empowerer as someone who can possess enlightened knowledge of the empoweree's experience of oppression. As such the perspective is also making an epistemological claim, a claim of privilege. Given that we (the potential empowerer) know these things, why should we think we can facilitate change?

The "ecological perspective" is Lee's answer. It is that part of the fifocal vision which is argued to contain a voluntaristic conception of the human being. It is Lee's unwitting ontological claim. It provides the conceptual apparatus wherein one can "think" the possibility to invoke changes that a historical documentation has uncovered as needed. In other words, the ecological perspective is the philosophical rationale that supports the idea that it is possible for human beings to change their situation of oppression. As such it opposes a deterministic point of view and is the linchpin which renders a programmatic practice of empowering as possible and intervention as justifiable.

A number of what Lee refers to as ecological concepts are put forward to bolster this rationale. Each attempts to

present the idea of human nature as "potentialities" or "capacities" which may either be "released or stunted by the qualities of our environment" (1994:79). Consequently, empowerment practices can be seen as needed interventions, in the form of facilitations, between potentiality and those things which block it. For example, "competence" is presented as an "innate capacity" and as being essential throughout the "life course" (1994:82). But "prejudice and discrimination" can negatively affect competence, block it. The poor "coloured" women, the identified subject of the historically enlightened social worker, as potential empoweree is now captured as a tangible hands-on potential. To empower is now a matter of releasing the blocked "innate capacity" for "competence" by promoting competence. At this juncture, we have the fully constructed empowerment client. "Self-esteem", "relatedness", "self-direction", "coping", "adaptation", "life-stressors" and so on are other ecological concepts which can serve the process of turning potential empowerment subjects into empowerment clients.

The third, fourth and fifth perspectives of the fifocal vision are, respectively, the critical, ethclass and feminist perspective. Lee discusses these within the context of one chapter for the reason that they all:

examine issues of power and oppression...(and) questioning the realities of oppressive situations, as seen through these lenses will assist us in cultivating a critical perspective on power and oppression (1994:99).

The term "ethclass" is borrowed from Gorden (1978) who coined it to mean: "the social participation and identity of persons who are confined in their own class and ethnic group due to oppression." Lee refers to the following description by an "older West Indian-American woman" as an "apt metaphor" for ethclass: "oppression was being locked into the smallest box of the large, almost infinite maze of opportunities with no way out." Its relevance to empowerment practices is as a "sensitivity" of practice that focuses on the interplay of ethnic and social class influences (1994:99-100).

Lee moves quickly through the feminist perspectives contribution to this "fifocal vision" (a scant 3 pages) leaving one with no clear idea of what this vision is. With the exception of a reference to bell hook's reference to Dorothy Smith, (and oddly, an opening reference to C. Wright Mills) her "analysis" consists of "feminist" arguments drawn from dialogues internal to social work discourse. The use of feminist theory is here woefully inadequate, due, I think to the resistance to drawing from other disciplines lest Lee be

charged with continuing the paternalistic relationship of social work with other sources of authority.

The final perspective is termed "critical" and it focuses on power and oppression. The anticipated discussion of power is summarily turned into a discussion of "powerlessness". Lee turns to the authority of Barbara Solomon (1976) (credited with introducing the term to social work) who defines powerlessness as: "the inability to manage emotions skills, knowledge and/or material resources in a way that effective performance of valued social roles will lead to personal gratification" (Lee, 1994:110).

The sources of powerlessness are given as "power blocks" which are either direct or indirect. "Indirect power blocks" are those things which prevent one from acquiring personal resources; "direct power blocks" are those thing which prevent you from using the personal resources. Empowerment strategies are therefore aimed at the "reduction of effects from indirect power blocks and the reduction of operations of direct power blocks" (1994:111). As such, a distinction is drawn between personal and political empowerment.

In her summation, Lee reveals the essential "critical" of empowering social work. It is a "critical" that extends the spirit of Saul Alinsky while setting itself within the

conceptual parameters of Paulo Freire's work', particularly,

The Pedagogy of the Oppressed (1973). She states:

This commitment to democracy is the essence of personal and political empowerment. Longres notes that it does little good for a worker to declare that a client is a "victim of social injustice" when only a major revolution could change that per se. Critical Theory can only be of use by trying to develop strategies in the here and now which link individual and social change. This is the thrust of this empowerment approach to social work (1994:119).

Both Lee's and Simon's "empowerment" is given over to the normative impulse of modernity, a "critical rationalism" that demands "enlightened" theory be brought to the world of practice. Both construe empowerment as a terminological novelty - a dressed up "praxis". The reasons for this have much to do with not noticing the essential differences of praxis and empowerment (see the conclusion of this thesis for a discussion of this) because neither has listened to the empowerment claims of "subjects" (of self) who exist "without" the social world problematised by social work. This in turn has much to do with the conceptual apparatus discursively configured, necessarily, to represent their disciplinary interests.

Both Lee's and Simon's views on empowerment stem from the experience of social work in the context of American Society. They both believe that by laying claim to

empowerment they have freed social work from its traditional paternalistic relationship with informing theoretical authorities such as sociology - Simon by claiming that empowerment has always been at the heart of progressive social work and Lee by claiming empowerment as the "beginning of a new way to practice social work" (1994:xiii). Their beliefs may not be warranted.

American sociological theory (as opposed to European social theory), as Siedman (1991) characterises it, remains tied to the modernist claim to speak the truth from a position of "epistemological privilege". Lee's and Simon's empowering social workers "know" such privilege and epistemological certainty.⁸ Modernist sociological theory has a normative heart which worships the "idol of emancipation". Lee and Simon take this as an assumptive premise of empowerment practice - as a (unreflexive) truism expressive of the social will. And, when it comes to arbitrating the truth of liberation (of empowerment) the appeal is, for Lee and Simon, to the discourse of American Civil Society. American sociological theory is centred on the analysis of values and continues its defence of this American Liberal democracy as the measure of human emancipation and progress (see, for example Alexander & Smith, 1993). Both Lee and Simon carry this evaluative

criteria to the domain of empowerment practices. They have not extricated their selves from dependency on this authoritative discourse; they have merely been (unwittingly) carried along by it.

In the United Kingdom, empowerment's story is being written somewhat differently. I shall now explore empowerment within the context of British academic social work to look for ways that demonstrate, perhaps, a more critical confrontation with the concept.

Audrey Mullender and David Ward, in their book entitled: **Self-Directed Groupwork: Users Take Action For Empowerment** (1991), embark upon a critical reflexive analysis of the relationship of empowerment to social work. Empowerment they liken to the 1970's term, "community". Both terms they see as possessing a certain magnetism and, like "community", empowerment is used to justify ideologically divergent positions and acts as " 'social aerosol' covering up the disturbing smell of conflict and conceptual division" (Mullender and Ward, 1991:1).

From their standpoint as social workers, Mullender and Ward offer a reflexive criticism when they observe that empowerment "allows us all...(to)...rewrite our practice without fundamentally changing the way it is experienced by service users." The book attempts to rectify this by working

empowerment into a social work that takes a stand against oppression and power. It is this, they argue, which "draws empowerment away from the meaninglessness which otherwise afflicts and devalues the term." The context they seek for empowerment is anti-racist and anti-sexist collective group action as an "empowering vehicle for change". They wish to save it from what they see as its descent into domestication in the "service of the status quo" (1991:2-12).

While their position appears to resemble Lee's and Simon's assumption of empowerment practices being inherently normative, it is more candid in this regard. For reasons earlier mentioned, neither Simon nor Lee seem willing to set the disempowered within a critique of American culture, particularly its system of values and norms. In fact, Simon's empowerment can be seen, as I have argued, as a celebration of the hegemony of American culture - as an evolutionary history of ideas with liberalism at the normative centre.⁹ Mullender and Ward (1991:23) undertake to provide a "complete and value-based methodology for empowerment practice." As value-neutrality is considered impossible by them, then it would appear to be the logical epistemological position.

To begin with, they suggest that empowerment workers must clarify to service users where they stand rather than,

as is usually the case, expressing an "anti-authoritarian zeal" (Mullender and Ward, 1991:23). From there, the group workers must seek and reach a value consensus. The (odd) example they give to demonstrate the importance of this, concerns a group working with parents who physically abused their children. Two of the workers viewed "structural inequality as the root cause" while a third (who left the group) blamed "personal inadequacy". How this ties to value (dis)sensus is not clearly discerned.

The essence of this approach is assembled into "A Statement of Values: Principles for Empowerment Practice". The approach emphasises the self-examination of a practitioner's values relative to those that are replicated by the tradition of social work. Not dissimilar to Simon's and Lee's position, but certainly more explicitly articulated, Mullender and Ward (1991:30) see the process whereby the self-concept of the social worker can come to be constructed in-line with:

Social workers' traditional image of themselves as tolerant professionals improving the quality of life for clients by according them dignity and self-worth.

There are now, they argue, compelling reasons to understand social work as carrying forward dominant racist and sexist meanings, thereby colluding with the "complex patterns of

subordination" (1991:30). They suggest that the impact of what one does, not what they claim as their values, must be the measure of a truly empowering approach. However, they offer five principles that "we" as empowerment social workers need to abide by. These five are:

1. all people have skills, understanding and ability;
2. People have rights, including the right to be heard and the right to control their own lives;
3. Practices should not reflect the understanding that people's problems can be understood solely as a result of personal inadequacies;
4. Practice can be effectively built on the knowledge that people acting collectively can be powerful; and,
5. Challenge oppression (Mullender and Ward, 1991:30-31).

Once again, we see empowerment dressed up in a language familiar to modernist discourse - the language of "principles", "rights" and "oppression". Its novelty here is its packaging in the moral, rational-legal authority implied by setting out "principled practices" of empowerment. Empowerment as found here appears to retreat from the possibility of generating the kind of critical conceptual currency that one might expect from its alignment with critically laden concepts as "oppression", "power" and so forth. As such, it appears as a terminological novelty devoid of the very substance the book proposes to offer empowerment.

Within British academic social work one discovers empowerment pegged to discussions concerning what it means to be a social worker in today's world. This question is fleshed out into the broader theoretical reaches of how "today's world" is constituted. With this, we see empowerment's intellectual context shifting the construction of a client/subject as potential empoweree to a critical reflexive concern for constructing the potential empowerer as empowerment subject. Simply stated, the focus is on "intellectual self-examination" (Aldridge, 1997) relative to contested theoretical claims concerning the character of contemporary social reality. British academic social work has evoked the modernity - postmodernity debate in attempting to (re) situate itself as an empowered profession.

There are lines of dissent drawn between those academic social workers who view social work as a "postmodern activity" (see for instance, Parton, 1994; Howe, 1994), thus shedding doubts (and casting a pessimism) on its professional identity, and those who understand the changes in social work as due to a "particular phase of late capitalism and high modernity" (Smith and White, 1997). Protagonists of the former position draw upon the work of Foucault, Lyotard, and Bauman while those of the latter position turn to Giddens, Lash and Jameson. Mediation of this dissent (and along with

it empowerment) forms a third position. These "mediating intellectuals" observe that such polemics form an arena of "robust discussion of ideas" and thus the possibility of generating good theory from within the discourse of social work leading to the empowerment of social work itself. As Aldridge (1996:190) states:

Recent history is littered with episodes where new practice paradigms have been adopted wholesale and uncritically. Too often, social workers have been transformed into unarmed consumers of intellectual marketing (Parton, 1985; Howe, 1991) precisely because there is so little discussion of ideas. Good 'theory' is not mere mystification, a meal ticket to be dumped as soon as qualification is attained. It is a central occupational dynamic, as practitioners analyse what is of wider relevance from their daily experience, exchange and refine it.

So, "postmodern conditions provide a new opportunity for social work to empower itself" (Aldridge, 1996:179) because it demands that social workers reflexively consider their relationship with their world. However, the grand narratives of theory generated "without" the helping professions must be replaced by the "localised 'discourse' generated from within the professional boundaries of the helping professions, as the source of knowledge and power" since "they cannot account for or respond to the enormous diversity of the postmodern experience" (Smith and White, 1997:278).

While my discussion of empowerment in social work is certainly not exhaustive, it is representative of the state of things on both sides of the Atlantic. American empowering social work demonstrates a confidence of certainty in its claims to know: the experience of the disempowered; the "obstacles" to empowerment (and thus those things which produce the empoweree subject); and, the normative content toward which empowerment ought to be directed. Empowerment represents little more than an extension of the modernist project wrapped up in the contemporary rhetoric of benevolence and political correctness.

However, one also finds in American empowerment social work discourses, an awareness of, and now a resistance to, what has been a traditional paternalistic relationship between American empirico-analytic sociological theory (as a carrier of scientism) and traditional social work practices. Empowering social work practices now regard this relationship as "antithetical to the empowering impulse" (Simon, 1994:xiv). One might suggest that American empowering social work has unwittingly contributed to a meaningful sociological engagement with empowerment by shutting the door on sociology's complicity in its project.

British Social Work, has developed within the context of a sociology that is influenced by social theory. Some

variants of social work would appear to replicate the idea of empowering social work as expressed in the United States. Other positions clearly acknowledge the rich European tradition of social theory with its emphasis on social philosophical questions, its methodological imperative of being historically embedded, and (because of these two things) the uncertainty accompanying a changing world. Hence, academic social workers do not utterly reject a framing of their practices within social theoretical dialogues - clearly they are increasingly embedding their selves in them - but they are claiming the competency to theorise for themselves the problematic of empowerment.

What seems generic to empowerment at the social work site is the preoccupation with disciplinary self-interest. In the US, this self-interest is manifest in the question of how empowerment empowers the discipline as a whole. This is a recurring theme. I would argue it is the lack of contact with critical social theory and the continuing consumption of American sociological theory that places "self-interest" within the manageable strictures of a non-disclosure of the relationship of social work with the state, the economy and politics. Uncertainty is avoided.

Ironically, it is probably because of UK social work's contact with the broader reaches of critical social theory

that it can reflexively consider the crises concerning being a social worker in the modern-postmodern world. Here, we have explicit and volatile debates concerning how social workers ought to understand their relationship vis-à-vis the theorised relationship with the state, economy and politics. The precise nature of this relationship, while it is too complex an issue to discuss here, remains the theoretical antecedent to how these social workers are going to understand and take "empowerment action" in their self-interest as professionals within a profession. Uncertainty is unavoidable.¹⁰

II-3. Empowerment at the Psychology Site ¹¹

Julian Rappaport, a professor of psychology at the University of Illinois, would appear to be the most cited authority when it comes to defining/giving meaning to "psychological empowerment." He is widely acknowledged as "a leader in the conceptualization, research and practical application of empowerment and related ideas" (Perkins & Zimmerman, 1995:577). Rappaport (1985:18) states:

Psychological empowerment logically includes beliefs about one's competence and efficacy as well as one's involvement in activities for exerting control in the social and political environment. The construct assumes a proactive approach to life, a psychological sense of efficacy and control, socio-political activity, and organizational involvement.

His early paper, "In praise of paradox: A social policy of empowerment over prevention" (1981), is seen by many to occupy an important place in their selected lineage of the development of the concept of empowerment per se. They see the concept emerging from the impassioned critical/social work by Solomon (1976). It then finds its socio-political expression in a collection of essays edited by Berger and Neuhaus (1977, 1996). With Rappaport's work empowerment finally enters the domain of psychology. Another way to state this lineage is that empowerment was born of an impassioned black woman's critique of a racist society; nurtured in the domain of "progressive political" debate to finally arrive at the scientific domain of psychology. It is a story of "progress". Zimmerman¹² has appeared on the scene to stake a claim to a place in the empowerment lineage. He has had much to do with its current entrenchment, that is, empowerment's colonization by the discourse of psychology.

It is fair to say that Zimmerman has carried the "empowerment torch" more thoroughly into the domain of psychology and has managed to funnel discussions, both internal to psychology and from without its disciplinary matrix, to a location known as Community Psychology. In doing so, he has furthered Rappaport's desire to adopt

empowerment as "a guiding principle for community psychology" as first announced by Rappaport in a 1981 journal article in the *American Journal of Community Psychology*.

With Zimmerman we have a thoroughgoing exhibition of the most confident (unreflexive) use of the concept of empowerment. An excerpt from his article, "Toward a theory of Learned Hopefulness: A Structural Model Analysis of Participation and Empowerment" speaks well to this:

Learned hopefulness suggests that *empowering* experiences-ones that provide opportunities to learn skills and develop a sense of control-can help individuals limit the debilitating effects of problems in living. Voluntary organizations are identified as natural settings that enable individuals to develop a sense of *psychological empowerment*. *Empowerment* was measured by cognitive, personality, and motivational measures of perceived control (Zimmerman, 1990:71, emphasis added).

Zimmerman (1990:71) is led to measure empowerment "by cognitive, personality, and motivational measures of perceived control." By 1995, "psychological empowerment" is designated within the discourse of psychology as "(PE)" which now marks it off from the broader "societal-wide" empowerment now known as "(EM)" (Perkins: 1995).

Today, empowerment's currency as a measurable "psychological construct" (Zimmerman, 1995) is firmly situated in psychology's practical programmatic areas of

interest. It has provided a new opportunity for reaffirmation, and thus reclamation (and reconstitution), of its traditional empirical domains such as "mental health services" (e.g., Chamberlin, 1997; Corrigan, 1997).

Empowerment has also afforded psychology a fresh strategy for repositioning its more deterministic traditional theoretical arsenal. For example, behaviorism has been discovered to have a latent function as a "therapy... (that)...empowers persons with severe mental illness... (because it)...actually...provide(s) a safe place for persons to consider their life decisions" (Corrigan, 1997)! Clearly, empowerment has afforded the more "scientific" paradigms of psychology an opportunity to assert itself as a player in contemporary normative discourse.

Psychology is leading the helping professions in the expansion of the disciplinary terrain relevant to its idea of empowerment. Ironically, by reducing any idea of empowerment to a measurable psychological construct it thus expands its disciplinary parameters. It is forging ahead to claim ownership of such non-traditional "therapeutic" sites as: the empowerment of "ethnically and racially diverse clients through prejudice reduction" (Sandhu, 1995); the empowerment of "members of power based community organizations" (Speer,

1996); and, the "person/environment dynamics of employee empowerment" (Foster-Fishman, 1997; also Gagne, 1997).¹³

Community Psychology has established itself as a prominent voice in entrenching empowerment in the discourse of psychology. It has done much to normalize (i.e., rendering scientific) the normative content of empowerment as part of the measurement regime. Empowerment, as one contributor to this discourse points out, is "in the forefront of community psychology today" (Riger, 1993:280).¹⁴ This variant of psychological discourse requires a closer inspection.

A special issue of the *American Journal of Community Psychology* is devoted to reviewing the "meanings... significance...and problems associated with the proliferation of interest in empowerment" (Perkins and Zimmerman, 1995:569). It is useful for the purpose of expressing the expansion of this discipline's interests - its "strategic practice" (McCarthy, 1996:31)¹⁵ - to identify the contributors to this edition, the respective disciplines they speak for, and their interest in bringing their research and conceptual problematics into the fold of community psychology, thus extending its jurisdictional authority.

The aforementioned Zimmerman and Perkins (1995) represent the fields of Health Behavior and Health Education,

and introduce this special edition. They identify this issue as representing "multiple disciplines", all speaking to the,

need to be more precise about the construct and research it as thoroughly as other psychological constructs or it will forever remain a warm and fuzzy, one-size-fits-all, concept with no clear or consistent meaning. This special issue is an attempt to help further specify the *usefulness, applicability, and definition of the construct* (1995: 572, emphasis added).

Clearly, a like-mindedness amongst these multi-disciplines concerning empowerment's problematic character and need for scientific management, is presumed.

Zimmerman's opening article, "Psychological Empowerment: Issues and Illustrations", emphasizes a focus on psychological empowerment designated as "PE" (1995:582). He wishes us to accept what he has earlier argued as the distinction between psychological and individual empowerment (see, Zimmerman, 1990b). The latter he suggests "may be interpreted more narrowly as a construct that includes only what goes on in the mind" (Zimmerman, 1995:ff.3). Psychology, we are reminded, refers to the study of both mind and behaviour" and is therefore "rooted firmly in a social action framework that includes community change, capacity building, and collectivity" (1995:582). This linking of human behavior with social action (as weak and under-theorised as it is) provides a rationale for inviting

disciplines with expertise in a "social action framework" to participate; to contribute, I suppose, to a better understanding of the human mind and behavior. Contributions were gathered from: Women's Studies; Business Administration; Environment and Behavior; Psychology; Social and Community Development; Political Science; Human Development; and Health Behavior and Education. Oddly, Sociology is not included; is not one of the invitees here.¹⁶ Clearly, we (the sociologists) are not necessarily "likeminded" when it comes to approaching the "problematic" character of empowerment.

Maton and Salem (1995:632), representing psychology, present psychological empowerment as, more or less, a dependent variable defined as: "the active participatory process of gaining resources or competencies needed to increase control over one's life and accomplish important goals." Their study attempts to locate the "organizational characteristics" within three community settings (religious, mutual help, and education) that "make them empowering for their members" (1995:632). They conclude with a list of organizational features common to the three settings. Presumably they believe their selves to be social scientists uncovering those ever-elusive regularities. Acknowledging the need for further research to assess the generalizability

of their findings, their goal is clearly that of establishing universal empowering features of organizations.

A multi-authored study entitled, "Empowerment praxis in community coalitions", combines the perspectives drawn from Brown University's Center for Alcohol and Addiction Studies with that of the Psychology Department at the University of Rhode Island. The appearance of "praxis" here is both interesting and disturbing. It is defined as "the practice of translating ideas and theories about empowerment into action and results" (McMillan, et al., 1996:700). Psychological empowerment, on the other hand, is "best conceived as a higher order construct that subsumes other constructs nested within it" (1996:701). A major thrust of this study is to argue what ought to "guide our choice of the nested constructs that serve as the foundation for psychological empowerment" (1996:701). What I think their fuzzy metaphors are attempting to express is the question of whether empowerment can be operationalised. They offer "five variables linking the past with the future and the individual with the group" (1996:720).

This particular study exemplifies the extremes of an unreflexive/uncritical approach amidst the broad interests in empowerment. It is this, because of its pretension to be critical. "Praxis" is dropped into the study, void of any

commentary on its substantial conceptual history. As such, the problematic nature of its (most often neo-marxist) normative content is ignored as it is nestled alongside what the authors construe as the "higher order" psychological construct of empowerment. The pairing is, presumably, meant to harness the progressive flavour of "praxis" in order to enhance the "moral" weight of this particular kind of psychology. What it accomplishes by this pairing is to reaffirm its status within a modernist colonising project bereft of any meaningful normative content (praxis, as I later argue in Part Three, raises a conceptual framing of normative questions in line with the modernist project; empowerment issues a challenge to this). However, all this does not really seem to matter to the psychologists of empowerment because the problem is now a simple measurement issue. The problem as they see it is: what "nested constructs" can be operationalised to affirm one's psychological empowerment? This thinking is not new. It repeats the logic of management that befell the concept of alienation in the 1960's (see Schweitzer, 1996; 1982). Sociology was a main player then. It is important that we not be now.

The multi-authored study which follows comes from the Department of Political Science at Virginia Tech (Rich, et

al., 1995). It is aimed at exploring "the relationship among forms of empowerment, citizen participation, and local environmental hazards" (1995:657). The analysis utilizes a case study of a sludge spreading facility at the Merion Blue Grass Sod Farm in the town of Wawayanda in Orange County, NY. It concludes with the practical recommendation of a partnership approach to community decision-making.

The study's "concluding observations" are concerned with the development of the concept empowerment; a concern which denotes a typical reified/fetishised relationship of this study's proponents to their scientifically informed relationship with social reality. There is not much that is political here beyond the latent "political" interest of securing a firmer grasp on the concept vis-a-vis merging the ostensible concern for political association with that "guaranteed" by the acuity of a demonstrated scientifically construed conceptual reality.

Fawcet et al., (1995) of the Department of Human Development at the University of Kansas, takes up Rich's (1995) recommendation for a partnership approach to community decision-making by arguing how "influence over conditions... can help improve collaborative partnerships for community health and development" (Fawcet et al., 1995:677). This study gives birth to yet another variant of empowerment termed

"collaborative empowerment". It is defined as "an interactive and cascading process in which grant makers and support organizations work together to enhance capacity of local community leadership" (1995:694). However, we are once again directed to the "other" (recurring) empowerments of community psychology: "empowerment refers to the process of gaining influence over events and outcomes of importance" and "community empowerment is defined broadly: the process of gaining influence over conditions that matter to people who share neighborhoods, workplaces, experiences, or concerns" (1995:679). Presumably, then, collaborative empowerment is a sub-formation of community empowerment. It might have something to do with the opening statement of this paper: "Thousands of citizen associations address identified local concerns...in a rekindling of democratic practices recognized by de Tocqueville" (1995:678). As such, are we to understand these practitioners of community psychology research as engaged in a form of "praxis"? Is this what they mean by their presumably self-referential acknowledgment as "practitioners of action science" (1995:679)? Is psychology as an action science a partner of liberalism; a technology articulated to a "science of politics" and affirmed by the certainty of positivism designed to measure "self-governance"? The mention of Tocqueville clearly suggests

that this is so. Liberal governance requires what Tocqueville referred to as "enlightened self interest":

When men are no longer united among themselves by firm and lasting ties, it is impossible to obtain the co-operation of any great number of them unless you can persuade every man that his private interest obliges him voluntarily to unite his exertions of all the others (as quoted in, Cruickshank, 1996:242).

The article that follows promises to address some of these questions (as above).

Curiously entitled, "Speaking truth to power: empowerment ideology as social intervention and policy", Perkins (1995) sets out to argue how the ambiguity of empowerment's meaning is a dangerous thing. He states:

...keeping the exact application of an ideology ambiguous can enhance its power, which may explain some of empowerment's enduring strength and appeal. But ambiguity, ultimately inhibits the development of theory, scientific understanding, and sound program planning and policy making (Perkins, 1995:766).

Psychologists who cast empowerment within a scientific framework of certainty are, according to Perkins, engaged in a direct and "heroic" confrontation with this danger. He goes on to argue how 'the need is acute for empowerment researchers to 'speak the truth to power' by sharing their knowledge with community leaders, clients, staff, and administrators in all kinds of organizations" (1995:783). He

ends the paper with ten recommendations that will enable policy makers/administrators to make more effective use of empowerment theory and research.

From the point of view of a sociological interest, this is perhaps one of the more interesting articles. It is made so by use of such concepts as: ideology, dialectical method and power. Unfortunately, these concepts are not articulated as working concepts of analysis; they appear without being relationally set within an analysis. Arguably, when viewed from "without" the disciplinary matrix of psychology, this article serves to articulate the limiting boundaries of Community Psychology's conceptual apparatus; e.g., the article points to directions in need of the kind of analysis that it unwittingly demonstrates as incapable of pursuing. It is never made clear what such sociologically laden phrases as "keeping an ideology ambiguous" and "speaking truth to power",¹⁷ mean. These obscurities speak to this reader as tropes; ones that hardly veil the disciplinary urge to colonize empowerment as indicated by such stated desires (which exist alongside the above phrases) for "exactness" of its "application" and a "scientific understanding". What is unambiguous is the will to science - thus the will to power - that this article underscores. What may very well be the case is that Community Psychology is attempting to form as

the "new" psychology of "communitarian liberalism" that I earlier indicted Simon as supporting in her empowered social work programatics. It may be so that empowerment can be conceptualized as, say, ideas in the service of power. But this possibility can not be meaningfully addressed from a point of view which hangs onto speaking "truth" qua scientific truth and ultimately may serve as a technology which measures the link between liberal governance and its demand for a particular form of governed subjectivities (see, Rose, 1996b; Barry, et al., 1996).

I end this review of community psychology with a comment on the protagonist of psychological empowerment. It is appropriate that this special journal that I have selected to exemplify the developed notion of empowerment in psychology end with a paper by Julian Rappaport (1995). It is entitled: "Empowerment meets narrative: Listening to stories and creating settings".

The stated objectives of the article are to summarize the special issue and to "extend empowerment theory with the suggestion that both research and practice would benefit from a narrative approach that links process to practice and attends to the voices of the people of interest." A narrative approach, Rappaport (1995:805) argues, is a resource that enables the researcher to,

see that who controls that resource, that is who gives stories social value, is at the heart of a tension between freedom and social control, oppression and liberation, and empowerment versus disenfranchisement...some stories empower people and other stories disempower people.

What Rappaport demonstrates with this article [he admits to being a "relative newcomer to this way of thinking" (1995:802)] is just how conceptually and methodologically restricted and unreflexive is this psychological paradigm's approach to empowerment. I had earlier suggested that empowerment has allowed psychology to expand its disciplinary jurisdiction while at the same time expanding its disciplinary concern, ostensibly as inherently normative. Rappaport acknowledges these things. He views community psychology as having successfully established empowerment as the "phenomena of interest in our field" (1995:796). The narrative viewpoint he suggests, is "useful as a means to advance the field..." (1995:801). I have also stated that, in so many words, community psychology has implicitly demonstrated that the empowerment phenomena cannot be adequately addressed from within the disciplinary matrix of community psychology - the empowerment phenomena is beyond the reach of its present conceptual apparatus. Rappaport knows this too. He states:

the narrative viewpoint...opens up possibilities for new methodologies and cross disciplinary insights. Much of the work has been done, and is being done in anthropology, sociology, linguistics and literature, cultural studies, discourse analysis, cognitive psychology, and social cognition (1995:801).

And, I think Rappaport is correct to observe that his discipline must "privilege the voices of the people we study". However, the act of "listening" (inclusive of a reflexive awareness of one's own disciplinary interests, [see, Smith, 1989]) would seem at the very least uncomfortable within a discourse that privileges scientific discourse with its aim to ever-increasingly expand its colonization of social reality through the production and management (operationalisation) of concepts. It is wise, therefore, that Community Psychology seek inter-disciplinary contact to further pursue the phenomena of empowerment. This might include a further association with critical sociology, something that Rappaport (to the best of my knowledge) has not yet facilitated.

II-4 Empowerment at the "Evaluation Community" Site¹⁸

"Welcome to the American Evaluation Association" reads the web-site:

We are an international professional association of evaluators devoted to the application and exploration of program evaluation, personnel evaluation, technology, and many other forms of evaluation. Evaluation involves assessing the strengths and weaknesses of programs, policies, personnel, products, and organizations to improve their effectiveness. The American Evaluation association's mission is to: Improve evaluation practices and methods; increase evaluation use; *promote evaluation as a profession*; and, support the contribution of evaluation to the generation of theory and knowledge about effective human action (American Evaluation Association, emphasis added).

Evaluation as a profession is a relatively recent formation that grew out of, in particular, the development of educational assessment tools in the 1970's (Stufflebeam, 1994). David Fetterman proposed the development of empowerment evaluation in 1994 (Fetterman, 1994).

A recent multi-authored publication entitled: "Empowerment evaluation: Knowledge and tools for self-assessment & accountability" (1996) offers a comprehensive statement of the AEA's interest with empowerment as an evaluative phenomena. It is, in no uncertain terms, a needed demonstration of a consensus as to the guiding assumptions of the discipline; a display of a paradigm in the making (Kuhn, 1970). In fact, proponents of this discipline see their emerging "paradigm" in Kuhnian terms.

David Fetterman (1996:3), the leading editor of the book, regards "empowerment evaluation as an innovative approach to evaluation." Empowerment evaluation is defined as: "the use of empowerment concepts and techniques to foster self determination". It served as the "theme of the 1993 American Evaluation Association annual meeting as well as the basis for Fetterman's presidential address". And, it is regarded as a "new addition to the intellectual landscape--both as a contribution in its own right and as a tool in helping us refine and redefine evaluation use" (Fetterman, 1996:viii).

Empowerment evaluation locates itself within the boundaries of "emancipatory research" while drawing from, and raising "the stakes of participatory action research...and collaborative evaluation" (Patton, 1997:147). VanderPlatt (1995), a sociologist (whose work we revisit in Part Three) cites its lineage as Friere's liberation pedagogy, feminist inquiry (e.g., Harding, 1987), critical theory, and Habermas' communicative action. Conspicuously absent from its journal, *Evaluation Practice*, are any pointed discussions of this lineage and just how these rather heady theoretical and methodological dialogues are connected to the empowerment evaluative practices' programmatic.

Arguably, such discussions are not needed. The growth of the discipline, like empowerment disciplines in general, depends on empowerment's normative appeal embedded as it is in the rhetoric of the program's culture. It is manifest here, as elsewhere, in the language of political correctness that I have earlier noted as being pervasive in empowerment talk (Patton, 1997).

I am suggesting that while the participants in this growing discipline speak the rhetoric of empowering in such terms as: the "disempowered"; of "capacity building" (Mayer, 1996); the "ethical responsibility" to empowerees to ask "how can we be of service?" (Dugan, 1996:283); the "...measuring...(of)...the progress toward fairness, for all..." (Mithaug, 1996:247), their present preoccupation would appear to be that of improving their techniques for the measurement of human striving. This may be necessary to fortify their status as a professional community - they do (as we shortly see) "reflexively" locate their discipline in a Kuhnian terms as a young paradigm. I am not suggesting that this discipline is disingenuous, only that its goals and aims provide it with, as yet, no reason to set itself reflexively within a broader critical theoretical framework. One need only to return to their mission statement (as above) to give weight to my assertion here.

I do not mean to moralise the issue, but to merely point to a central epistemological fallacy that, as a modernist discourse, is in their interest to further; specifically, the notion that social reality can be rendered amenable to the aim of measurement as a prelude to its control. It is ironic that this discipline does not recognise the paradox it creates when it raises the question of human freedom. "Liberation", according to Fetterman (1996), is a facet of empowerment, yet empowerment's meaningful content can only be discerned within the limitations of what can be constructed as measurable.¹⁹

The Evaluation Community shares with psychology the aim to measure and evaluate empowerment, but this is not readily apparent in the discourses of the discipline. This obfuscation has much to do with its (incessant) claim to be a progressive "community". It is an idea which serves a strategic purpose, as in the following way.

Empowerment evaluation attempts to set itself off from "traditional" objectivist evaluative methods along with earlier incarnations, internal to the "community", of evaluation that claim a value-neutral status. As such, the strategy is to present the whole discipline of evaluation as lineal. In doing so, the idea of evaluation is seen as progressing and any problems of method/theory are managed -

are normalised - by confining them to an understanding of their being internal paradigmatic struggles. Consequently, there is no conceptual space that would otherwise move the "problems" to the larger normative question of the evaluation community's relationship with the broader social theoretical world of social action. We are left with the assumption that it is progressive because it is now grappling with the empowerment phenomena. Empowerment is managed in such a way with the public displays (in the journals) of internal bickering about which empowerment evaluation camp is more progressive than the other becomes reduced to the question of the "maturity" of this or that particular "scientific" discipline. Some might see this "normalisation" of scientific "progress" as an obfuscation of internal moral/ideological struggles.

For example, Stufflebeam (1994), a traditionalist evaluator, urges the community of evaluators to "move ahead" by adopting more of an "objectivist approach to evaluation ...based on the theory that the moral good is objective and independent of personal or *merely* human feelings" (1994:326, emphasis added). An objectivist stance on evaluation, he suggests, is consistent with America's democratic society. An example he provides is that of measuring public services against the "foundation principles of the Constitution"

(1994:327). Presumably, then the "objective" of morals lies in such things as "the Fourth Amendment in assessing police actions in obtaining evidence in criminal court cases" (1994:327).

Morality, for Stufflebeam, is simply institutionalised U.S. values codified in the U.S.'s political texts. As such morality wears the assumption of an enduring assumed value consensus which appears to be immune to historical change. This position is different from a "value-neutral evaluation stance" which he conceives as the evaluative process of producing data but not suggestions of where and how it ought to be used. While he acknowledges the appeal of this position in that it assures that the evaluator will "do no harm" (Stufflebeam, 1994:327), the position he sees as inadequate because:

Leaving value determinations only to decision makers and other users of the evaluation findings places too much faith in the abilities, consistency and integrity of those with authority and influence by giving them full reign to ignore evaluation findings or to bias their interpretations based on personal interests rather than sound program area principles (1994:328).

Besides, as Stufflebeam adds in a footnote, 'such a position is not in accord with various articles of the Program Evaluation Standards, as derived from the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation (1994:328,

17 ff). Stufflebeam attributes these problems to the fact that the field has not fully "matured". In doing so, he tacitly redirects dissension within the discipline away from the political/ideological differences of the camps and toward a conceptualization of differences as the "normal" product of scientific growth.

Whereas Fetterman could have responded to Stufflebeam's "objectivist" position in a pointed critique of its thinly veiled ideological agenda, or critiqued its logical flaws (tautological, etc.), he chooses instead to cast Stufflebeam's position in less offensive Kuhnian terms. He states:

Charges that empowerment evaluation is pseudo evaluation and threatens 'legitimate' evaluation are thus a familiar refrain. We have heard them before; they are part of an intolerant tradition from our past. Kuhn's (1962) insight is quite relevant here. He explained that it is not unusual to observe lifelong resistance (to a new paradigm) particularly from those whose productive careers have committed them to an older tradition of normal science (p.151) (1995:180).

By keeping disagreement framed as a problem of the growth of a science, the whole field of evaluation reaps the benefit of its differences being articulated within the conceptual boundaries of a philosophy of science. In other words, the professional status of evaluators is not damaged by what might be otherwise conceived of as a state of

disarray stemming from ideological battles. Evaluation remains, as Stufflebaum (1994) observes, a "sometimes lucrative business".

Fetterman (1995) responds directly to Stufflebeam's "objectivist" premise that programs can be measured against absolute standards of morality. He calls this (in soft terms) an "idealist view of reality" (1995:189). He states:

...(A)nyone who has recently had to roll up their sleeves and get their hands dirty in empowerment evaluation or policy arenas is aware that evaluation, like any other dimension of life, is political, social, cultural and economic...it rarely produces a single truth or conclusion. (1995:189).

Obviously, Stufflebeam is removed from this "work" experience and therefore does not see that evaluative standards are relative to context. He does see (presumably from his "ivory tower") that Fetterman's position slides into a relativism (1994) which, presumably, we are to understand as a "bad thing".

Fetterman (1995) attempts to handle this counter-critique by arguing that "moral good" can serve as the standard for evaluating empowerment if we first of all understand "moral good" as having "culturally diverse interpretations" (1995:189). Then if we understand that morality is "precisely about human feelings and

emotions" (1995:189), we can "use evaluation to foster self-determination within a context of social justice" (1995:191).

There is no reason to think that empowerment evaluation cannot be used anywhere and at anytime. I can find nothing to suggest the contrary within the dialogues of this budding discipline. Sechrest (1997:423) would agree and adds that empowerment evaluation "could be employed on behalf of almost any group, even those that might ordinarily be regarded as privileged." To clarify this point she offers the following vignette as an apt context for empowerment evaluation:

...one of my acquaintances was once approached by a business executive who wanted help because he said he felt "powerless" in having to deal with all the people he was having to fire in the downsizing of his company. He wanted, in effect, to be empowered to fire them without remorse despite any of their demands for decency or pleas for mercy (Sechrest, 1997:422).

Once again we find a response from Fetterman (1997) who acknowledges Sechrest's example as "extreme" but admits that empowerment evaluation is no more and no less open to abuse than traditional approaches.

My response here is that no matter what the precise nature of the programmatic is, evaluating human willing and human doing - classifying and measuring empowerment - is

necessarily modernist and thus imposes some form of restraint on human knowing and doing. As aptly noted by Endelman (1984:49):

Categorization is necessary to science and, indeed, to all perception. It is also a political tool...We ordinarily assume that a classification scheme is either scientific or political in character, but any category can serve either or both functions depending on the interests of those who employ it rather than upon anything inherent in the term...Any categorization scheme that consigns people to niches according to their actual or potential accomplishments or behavior is bound to be political no matter what its scientific function is.

Of course, Fetterman and others of his ilk do not see this, blinded as they are by the limiting interests of the disciplinary domain they inhabit which would seem to negate the reflexivity that might otherwise inform them of this. My critique here, is not an indictment of human weakness, but of the workings of power through language which can be readily seen in the evaluation community as a modernist discourse that organises, governs, and controls social reality (see Smith, 1989; Connolly, 1984).

II-5. Summary and Conclusion

Empowerment, as we have seen, is broadly problematised in the helping professions as an object of social scientific manipulation. The scientific impulse of modernity, to

classify and thus manage the concept, is duly stated here. Typically, the problem of empowerment is framed in the absence of conceptual clarity due to the distorting influence of "ordinary language" or the relativising influence of personal experience (Gibson, 1991:354). The problem of empowerment is often seen merely as a measurement issue.²⁰

Scientism exists throughout the sites examined in this study of the empowering helping professions. Empowerment practices (as ontological phenomena) are "filtered" through an "epistemic screen...in an effort at rendering that world amenable to the methods of science" (Schweitzer, 1996; see also, Friederichs, 1970). The scientific impulse of modernity toward certainty is often disguised by the normative/moral language of empowerment: the impulse being fuelled by paradigmatic commitments to creating the analytical tools to render empowerment manageable and measurable.

The helping professions are replete with efforts to develop techniques to capture human ontology in empirical measurement - now empowerment, but once alienation - and these efforts form the intellectual sustenance for expanding the professions. It would appear that modernity is alive and well in the "critical rationalism" that informs the programmatics of these professions. Rationality wrapped in

the procedural logic of science can enlighten us as to the "normative" of the human condition, so claim these "means-ends technicians" of empowerment as articulated within the protective veneer of empowerment's normative rhetoric.

In the 1960's alienation underwent a stripping of its normative content through a process of establishing "neutralized psychological categories and empirical measures" (Schweitzer, 1996:23). One can reasonably argue that in the 1990's, intellectual history is repeating itself, this time with empowerment as the focus for scientific zeal. This is particularly true of psychological empowerment discourses, though it is evident elsewhere in the helping professions. Within the domain of the "evaluation community", this zeal is managed in such a way that it could mislead one into thinking that it has learned from the alienation experience and is now advancing the moral-practical considerations that were denied alienation by the then strength of the empirico-analytic social scientific practitioners (Schweitzer, 1996). But this is not the case. It is more an illusion stemming from an (unwitting) conflation of the moral-practical with the instrumental-rational wrapped within the veneer of seductive (normative) empowerment talk. This forms a central strategy - as a vestige of Enlightenment thinking - for ownership of the concept across the helping professions.

The kind of critical sociological approach to empowerment advanced in this thesis (as demonstrated in Part Two and pointedly summarised in Part Three of this thesis) resists complicity with any of the strategies for managing the concept of empowerment as outlined in this chapter. We have seen that empowerment is framed by the discourses of the helping professions in various displays of the modernist will to colonise social reality. They collude around the assumption that knowledge of social life is enlightened when empowerment is captured in the boundaries of certainty that scientism, historicism, and corollary "liberating" programmatic provide. These latter two seductions to certainty are most evident in social work's management of empowerment. This is the heart of the "well-meaningness" that pervades these empowerment discourses. From this point of view my critique could very well be (mis)perceived as an attack on the helping professionals when it is in fact a critique of the (mostly modernist) rationalities that govern the disciplines' strategic approaches to empowerment. If my tone is at times polemical, this is because the critique is meant to shed doubt on the idea of empowerment as an instrument and to disturb what I see as a complacency in accepting the authority of methodological and theoretical traditions in constructing and administering empowerment as a

normative programmatic. This complacency acts as "a constraint on "truth" and a prohibition on what otherwise might be revealed as a "discourse of struggle" (Foucault, 1981) – the conceptual map of empowered selves which follow in Part Two.

Sociology too, has traditionally been content with these assumptions. It is at the heart of what we know as our claim to certainty, as enacted through positivism and historicism. As such, one should now understand how this project is an internal critique of sociology; particularly its empirico-analytic sociological variant, but inclusive of traditional critical positions which claim the normative as a programmatic strategy essential to their domain of critique (as discussed in Part Three of this thesis).

At the outset of this chapter I commented that sociology must look elsewhere, beyond the interests of the discourses of the helping professions for its analytical footing into the phenomena of empowerment. I also asked the reader to take note of the points of entry that appear in the discourses of the helping professions through which sociology could enter the problematic of empowerment. In a word I requested a reflexivity, an acknowledgement that there are many points at which sociology could execute its impulse to be impositional (Lather, 1988; see also, Schweitzer, 1996).

"Empowerment" has appeared in a world that is increasingly given over to ambiguity and uncertainty. Given this, to offer the empowering helping professions sociology's expertise in providing, say, an "alternative and more secure foundation" (Lather, 1988:576) is to falsify the "complexity that is reality". It would be deceptive, untruthful, and immoral for sociology to mobilise the seductive fantasy of certainty as its way into the phenomena of empowerment. To do so is to not only disrespect the needs and desires of empowerment practitioners, but also to discredit sociology's developed creative, imaginative and moral capacity to listen to, and comment on, the social actor as he/she/they produce and reproduce their terms of understanding empowerment in the intersections between freedom and constraint.

The problem of this section restated is that certain understandings of sociology's theoretical purposes and capabilities have been implicated in the discourses of the helping professions, implicated both by those within the discourses and by a sociology which would wish to enter the problem space of empowerment, critically. However, all of this does not mean that sociology ought to sever its relationship with the helping professions, it just means it might consider forming it anew with those concerned with empowerment as demonstrating social actors meaningfully

negotiating their social world. As such, it might acknowledge that the social work empowering helping professions are resisting the paternalistic authority of certainty formed within the modernist project. This being the case, sociology ought to speak from within the contemporary world in a voice that is urging the possibility of producing good knowledge while normalising the reflexivity of (epistemological) self doubts.

A critical sociological analysis can begin this dialogue with the empowerment discourses of the helping professions in these words: "Look, what you are convinced...(as)...the truth is not necessarily so, because here is another possibility of looking at the thing" (Bauman, 1991:214). I have attempted in the foregoing to provide doubts as to "truths" that float within the discursive configurations of empowerment. In what follows as empowerment's conceptual landscape, I offer another way of looking at empowerment - sociologically, critically, but with no interest in willing either scientific nor normative "truths" upon the world.

ENDNOTES: CHAPTER II

1. The task of organising empowerment into some structured locations has proved daunting. This was further compounded by the methodological sensitivity needed to guard against constructing the phenomena sociologically with a view to its management (i.e. operationalisation and so forth). While "empowerment" offers an excuse to rework some of the assumptions of a critical sociological analysis, this (hopefully) is more of an unintended consequence of the more important aim of providing a conceptual landscape of empowerment that is not intrusive to its ontological appearances in the world as voiced by empowerment claims. Let them speak as a history of the present. Perkins (1995) accomplishes a useful organization of empowerment based on different programmatic social interventions. Accordingly, he provides us with the following categories and examples which fall into each: 1. Grass Roots Settings inclusive of local community development, environmental action, crime prevention organizations, and self-help and women's consciousness raising; 2. Competence-building primary prevention programs as exemplified by the Head Start program; 3. Organizational management reforms e.g., participatory work place democracy; 4. Institutional reforms in health care and, national and foreign policies, e.g., community service, welfare reform, economic development, civil/political rights, and neo-conservative uses of empowerment. What appears to be Perkins' rationale for organizing empowerment into these categories is that they "rely heavily on empowerment ideology...(and)...the present journal issue aside, the available literature on these interventions, especially at higher levels of policy making, rarely define empowerment or its relative dimensions clearly, or use it consistently or measure it as an outcome" (1995:767). In a word, these are the categories of empowerment "without" the scientistic grasp of community psychology. Perkins' ideology-science dichotomy is woefully simplistic and distorts the empowerment phenomena. His aim is to tame (colonise) the concept; mine is to comment on it as it exists in its unbridled state.

2. Empowerment strategies often demonstrate "not only a capacity but also a right to act, with both capacity and right being seen to rest on the consent of those over whom the power is exercised" (Hindess, 1996:1).

3. Who doubts the benevolence of America's (imperialist and colonising) intentions of "making the world safe for democracy"? (Said, 1993)

4. Apart from the task of protecting empowerment from colonisation, the methodological approach is meant to suggest how empowerment ought to be approached by a sociology with a critical intent. It is meant to demonstrate how empowerment discourses force a reconsideration of sociology's normative interests.

5. Baistow (1994:34-35) observes the following: "...a reading of the recent, burgeoning literature on empowerment in health and welfare has led me to believe that in spite of its perceived salience to these fields there is a noticeable lack of analysis of the meanings and practices that are associated with empowerment...my suggestion is that this use is largely linguistic and rhetorical, relying on taken-for-granted meanings that need more careful scrutiny". She notes that the paradox of empowerment is that it has both a regulatory and liberating potential and thus, for her, the real question is how to bring out its critical potential within programmatic so that it can "give voice to the vital personal and collective dissatisfactions that are salient features of many peoples lives" (Baistow, 1995:45). I found this reading to be one of the more critical and useful approaches to empowerment; should one be interested in its "instrumental" potential. While Baistow (1994) demonstrates a reflexive critique of the fields of health and welfare, her interests remain, of course, in rendering empowerment manageable and therefore useful to the programmatic interests of these fields.

6. Schweitzer's (1996) work with the concept of alienation demonstrates this ability of the empirico-analytic logic of sociology to strip the meaningful content from otherwise rich ontological phenomena. Such scientistic rationales played out in efforts to operationalise (otherwise ontological) concepts have already emerged in the empowerment dialogues (see, for example, Wallerstein, 1992).

7. In social work, "front-line workers and researchers unite to connect the lived world to the structure of an institutional apparatus" (De Montigny, 1995:77). This systemic unity of the conceptual apparatus produced by academic social workers within the practices of the front-

line worker makes the occurrences of empowering practices without developed theoretical foundations a telling phenomenon of the theory-practice relationship.

8. Linda Mills (1996) appears to argue against this, and thus contradict my conclusion here, when she makes the claim that "postmodern social work theory and practice must reject the notion of clinical certainty". However, her alternative is to adopt a position of "measured clinical uncertainty". It is interesting how she is essentially furthering a modernist view by centering epistemology and, in essence, is saying that we can know with certainty (as implied by "measuring") uncertainty!

9. A position which finds support in the broader arguments of Berger and Neuhaus (1996), **To Empower People: From State to Civil Society.**

10. The uncertainty of British social workers is epistemological, which is not the same as the idea of ontological uncertainty forwarded in this thesis. The former casts empowerment into an epistemological problematic which, because it emphasizes the question of knowledgeability, leaves open the space for epistemic authority to march in with a resolution or amelioration. Ontological uncertainty, while it may include the problem of knowing (with empowerment, the "moral" of action), prioritizes the resolution of uncertainty as in the world. As such, it may or may not be accomplished. The "crisis of self" by definition holds the possibility of failure. This distinction must be retained if human actors are to take responsibility for outcomes, rather than empowerment professionals taking on (paternalistically) this responsibility. The interests of British social workers is self-interested. Their experience of uncertainty is, understandably, ontological self-interest, and their resolution moves to the realm of authoritative knowledge. Would that they could shift this reflexive understanding to a larger condition of a human condition of uncertainty. Giddens' (1984; 1991), concept of ontological security/insecurity captures somewhat what I am saying here. The empowerment social worker's "duree" of social life in the context of their professional concerns is being disrupted by the very contingency of the social world that is being "disrupted" by the perceptions of crises afforded by their contact with critical theory which has separated their

"institutional selves" (professional roles) from the traditional conception of the social as their object of professional interest. Giddens (1984:62-63) uses the dramatic context of Bettelheim's account of the Gestapo dissolving the prisoners' "futural sense" through the administration of senseless tasks. They ultimately were stripped of a "...predictable framework of social life".

11. A search of the Humanities and Social Science file responding to the term "empowerment" produced 341 items. Perkins and Zimmerman (1995) note that, a search of empowerment via "PsycLit" produced 96 articles between 1974-1986 and 686 journal articles and 283 book chapters between 1987-1993. A like search of the "Sociofile" (1974-1994) produced 861 articles and a search of the "ERIC" (1982-1994) produced 2,261 articles; and a search of the Psycinfo abstracts produced 533 items responding to the term "empowerment". The index definition reads: "Promotion or attainment of autonomy and freedom of choice for individuals or groups". Related terms are cited as: advocacy, assertiveness, civil rights, helplessness, independence (personality), involvement, power, and self-determination.

12. Zimmerman's (1990) work has attained an authoritative position within the domain of "psychological empowerment". He is acknowledged by Rappaport (1985) as (his) "graduate student", undertaking the research project of defining empowerment.

13. Focusing on, for example, the interaction between the "micro- ...of the role of emotions in stimulating and/or preventing change...and macrolevel processes...(such as)... the Right's rhetoric to incite action" (Nord, 1996).

14. The other way to see this is that "empowerment" has afforded the opportunity for the discipline of community psychology to expand its jurisdiction of knowledge particularly by laying claim to the normative. As consistent with Berger and Luckmann's (1966) work, "empowerment" becomes the central construct for signifying that the existing terminological system of community psychology is competent at constructing a normative reality beyond its traditional concern of individual behavior.

15. This is another way of stating the ideological purposes of this discipline. Strategic practices are

"concerned with power...(and)...claim a special, a superior place and function in relation to others' ideas and practices, such as the claim to be theoretical, rational, or spiritual and, on that basis, justified in acting as a final judge and arbiter over others" (McCarthy, 1996:31).

16. Perkins and Zimmerman (1995) indicate that they received 30 "article idea proposals". The articles were selected with the stated aim of fairly representing the "breadth" of the empowerment literature relevant to community psychology. It is interesting that no sociology papers appear; perhaps none were forwarded. Then again, how could they find a place therein without critiquing the wholly inadequate notion of social action that Zimmerman drops into the empowerment mix.

17. The phrase "speaking truth to power" is; as I understand it, attributed to Edward Said who repeatedly emphasised (during the Reith Lectures for the BBC in 1993) that "the task of the intellectual is "to speak the truth to power" (Karabel, 1996:205). Perkins does not reference this phrase to Said. The article is void of any reference to thinkers/theorists of ideology etc. leaving one to wonder if Perkins believes he is discovering these concepts anew.

18. This term appears in Fetterman et al. (1996). The term "Empowerment evaluation" is credited to Fetterman (see Sechrest, 1997:422) who presides over the American Evaluation Association within which the term has been "institutionalised" and is said to be "consistent with the spirit of the standards developed by the Joint Committee on Standards for Education Evaluation" (Fetterman, 1996:3). In a footnote, Fetterman (1996:ff, 2) states: "Empowerment evaluation meets or exceeds the spirit of the standards of the terms utility, feasibility, propriety, and accuracy."

19. Albeit, this is arguably not inconsistent with utilising Habermas' universal pragmatics within the context of sorting rationalities and thus bringing a thick notion of emancipation into the fold of this paradigm (see for example, VanderPlatt, 1995). I take a closer look at this in the conclusion of the dissertation.

20. This scientific zeal has spread beyond the parameters of the helping professions discussed in this thesis. For example Gibson (1991:354) captures the scientific attitude

in her "objective concept analysis" to determine whether the concept of empowerment has "some utility for nursing practice". She laments that the "science of nursing is challenged in that so many of its concepts are words in ordinary language which lack the elements of a system... necessary for a scientific discipline." Presumably, empowerment affords a new promise of changing all this; of infusing nursing practices with the "authority" of science. Empowerment is, she concludes, "a useful and significant concept for nursing practice." However, it should be noted that Anderson (1996:697) offers an internal critique of what she sees as the "unreflexive" use of empowerment which "might deflect our attention from the structures that perpetuate social inequality." She later states that "we must listen to the voices of the marginalized" (1994:704). Unfortunately (at least from the point of view of my argument) her position is clearly within the grasps of a modernist informed idea of the normative which discounts "empowered selves" that imagine their (normative) relationship with the world "without" these conceptual/normative discursive (programmatically) boundaries.

In the related field of Health Promotion, Wallerstein (1992; see also Lord and Farlow, 1990) devotes a section of her paper to the measurement issues surrounding empowerment. She states that "one major question becomes whether empowerment is measured as an individual outcome or community phenomena" (Wallerstein, 1992:202). Responding to her own question she replies:

Clearly, since the process of empowerment is a synergistic interaction between different levels of analysis, it can never be an individual outcome or personality variable measured in isolation from the social process (1992:202).

In a pledge of allegiance to psychology (and Zimmerman and Rappaport who appear in her paper) she adds: "the construct, psychological empowerment, best embodies the interrelatedness between individual variables and their social context such as one's self-efficacy about being involved in one's community" (Wallerstein, 1992:202).

PART TWO: MAPPING EMPOWERMENT'S CONCEPTUAL LANDSCAPE

III: INTRODUCTION: EMPOWERMENT PRACTICES AS TOTALITIES OF SELF

The self has a substantial discursive history; empowered self(s) are, as I argue here, an integral moment in this history. I will shortly discursively configure the empowered selves as such. The highlights of the self's history is tremendously complex and much debated; it has, after all, been at the centre of philosophy's epistemological (e.g., Descartes) and moral (e.g., Rousseau) preoccupation. Recently an "alternative" broad discursive terrain of self has emerged to confront Kant's critical philosophical centring of the self. Kant asked, "What are we in our actuality?" "What are we today" - that is, "the field of the historical reflection on ourselves" (Kant, as quoted in Foucault et al., 1988). Those involved in the recent "project on the self" ask, "how a human being turns him- or herself into a subject"; how, in other words, "techniques of self" can be wrapped into a genealogy (and thus "without" philosophy) to show how the self constitutes itself as a subject (Foucault, 1988). There is much talk, then, of self

in the discursive terrain of philosophy and Foucauldian genealogy. In this introduction, I proceed to provide those highlights of the self's history which inform a framework for the sociologically interested conceptual mapping of the empowered selves which follow.

The Enlightenment saw reason take on a normative dimension to produce the legacy of critical rationalism. It urged western "man" to "... seek knowledge, and then, when we have it, to solve our problems. And since science is the most successful way of knowledge-seeking and problem solving, rationality is simply scientific method writ large" (Kekes, 1985:390). Rational inquiry, then, offered a new promise of discovering the secrets of the social universe and our "best hope" for developing "a more humane, a more just, a happier, a saner and more cooperative world" (Maxwell, 1984:2). If we could know the mechanisms of social order and know the nature of humankind, we could know the bonds of social action as enlightened and measure (ourselves) the social actor as "moral" (or not). Rational scientific inquiry could provide the certainty of knowing what it means to be a moral actor thus relinquishing religion and metaphysics of any authority over this domain. By "man" taking "responsibility for using his critical rationality" he could "triumph over superstition, custom and despotism" (Dreyfus and Rabinow,

1986:110-111). The self we know as the "enlightenment subject" (the individual male) emerged, then, as a triumph over the relentless presence of the "eye of God" in our reflective consideration of our identity (Hall, 1996).¹

The Enlightenment initiated philosophical talk about the self; talk which attempted to link inquisitive reason and society through a philosophically construed "critical ontology of ourselves". The "self" was re-situated within an emerging "structure of beliefs" (i.e., the culture of modernity) about the possibility of positively revising "nature, tradition, society, and self" (Cascardi, 1992:24). As Hall (1996:603) states: "Much of the history of western philosophy consists of reflections on, and refinements of, this conception of the subject, its powers and capacities." In other words, western philosophy held the self as knowing subject at the center of its discursive terrain.

The "enlightened" self was not yet fully secured in the world (not sociologically founded); rather modern man had only begun to, as Foucault states it: "invent himself" (Rabinow and Dreyfus, 1986:112).² It was soon to embrace - be embraced by - the "truths" yielded by the developing (scientifically) informed disciplines of modernity. The modern self emerged, in other words, alongside its objectification by the emerging scientific discourses

(Foucault, 1988). Now the "truth games" of economics, biology, psychiatry, medicine and penology (and later sociology) could, with "positive" certainty, inform it as to how to know and act upon its self. "Modernity does not 'liberate man in his own being', it compels him to face the task of producing himself" (Foucault, 1988:18-19). And as Rom Harre adroitly notes: "to be a self is to be in the possession of a certain kind of theory".

Modernity, then, produced the very knowledge (the institutions and expertise) that de-centered the enlightenment subject (the Cartesian and sociological self). Since the Enlightenment, Western "man" has dutifully, and with competence, responded to the enlightenment challenge in producing selfs. We have become accomplished at inventing "selfs" because we have become accomplished at constructing the "truth games" through which the modern self is assured of a "modern identity".³

Today's selfs, as empowerment claims will be seen to demonstrate, exhibit varying degrees of dissatisfaction with, and now resistance to, the burden of producing self as a modern self. These empowered selfs doubt, distrust, resist or outright reject the requisite nourishment of the modern self. They always exhibit (with varying degrees) uncertainty about where the nourishment for self-creation lies.

Uncertainty prevails because they know intuitively (pre-ontologically) a self without moral nourishment is devoid of humanness. Yet the heightened reflexivity which allows them to know this (which marks them off from the modern self) propels them to look elsewhere for the "moral" stuff of self creation.

The self has become a preoccupation, if not an obsession of the empowered modern (and postmodern) "man". We now are experiencing a crises of self; the empowerment phenomena is evidence of this. The moral problem of the Enlightenment remains. It has only shifted the burden of responsibility onto the shoulders of the "average man". The self's history has been one of dependency for its moral sustenance on prevailing, and sometimes institutionalised, systems of thought. The self has historically gained moral nourishment through: the spirituality of an early enchanted word; the formalised systems of theology and philosophy; and, most recently (as a sociological self) on the normative institutions of society (family, church, state, and economy) within a relationship of trust and faith. This latter self is the modern (sociological) self and is where (shortly) the mapping will begin. In the midst of a secular world and the erosion of these traditional institutions (and thus traditional relationships of trust), this self is in the

process of looking elsewhere for its moral nourishment. The problem remains one of where to look for the moral basis of meaningful social action. Empowerment practices are mostly, but not always, seeking such.

My earlier review of empowerment academics and helping professional practitioners shows how they remain tentative, if not reluctant and unwilling, to engage the totality of empowerment practices. However, I emphasised how this is mostly a result of the rationalities of a modernist discourse which fuels their respective empowerment interventionalist practices (i.e., not authorial intentions). As a consequence, the self that their empowerment practices target as the subjects of intervention may be cast in the old internal "realities" fortified by the "expert knowledge" and traditional textual apparatus of their discourse(s).

In the following chapters, the network of presuppositions that constitute the discursive configuration of empowerment's present historical realities are mapped out. The empowerment selfs are located in their past, present and forming "totalities". They are thereby implicated in larger social, political and ideological totalities (of self). As such, the problematic of empowerment is formed as a focus for re-considering a network of possibilities and limitations we (as sociologists and "empowerment" practitioners) are placing

upon how we think and why we think about the moral matters that empowerment clearly carries with it. Empowerment truly is a battleground for "the emergence of new identities, the resurgence of old ones, the transformation of existing ones" (Foucault, 1988:7). Let us have a closer look.

ENDNOTES: CHAPTER III

1. The Reformation and Protestantism are the historical moments usually accorded responsibility for the shift in our subjectivities, that is, our self identities (Hall, 1996).

2. Descartes gave us the "Cartesian subject" (I think therefore I am); Locke constructed the "sovereign individual"; Mead, Thomas, and Cooley presented the "social self", and so on through to the present. Now there would appear to be a preoccupation with self and identity. Giddens', (1991:100) "reflexive project of the self" speaks to this. Lemert (1994:100) argues that out of this concern has emerged "two different groups that subject the 'Self... to dark thoughts.'" One group takes the self to be a "moral or natural thing, out there in real history, and thus susceptible to analysis." They have in common "...a set of assumptions about the 'ideal' which strains harshly against actual life. The other group talks not of self, but instead articulates (reflexively) the historical experience of 'herself' as, for example, 'a Chicano, tejana, lesbian native to the dangerous economic and territorial borderlands between Mexico and the US Southwest' (1994:100-102). The second group is likely to use "identity" without too much "fuss over it" whereas the first group is likely to use self and identity as "good enough identicals thereby ignoring the differences" (1994:100). While Lemert's essay is instructive here, we'll leave the sorting to the claims of empowerment which do articulate these differences in the totalities of self which follow.

3. For example, feminism is an accomplished "truth game" which has offered the possibility for self-making "without" the discursive terrain of the modern subject. It has de-centred the self of "mankind" by offering the self an "identity" that is culled from the culture of sexual differences - from identity politics. It has fragmented the cohesive enlightened self, thereby allowing other selves of like-differences to form. Gay, lesbian, and transgendered "selves" resist the enlightened self. These are the selves of new social movements.

IV: The Empowerment Selves

IV-1. THE MODERN EMPOWERED (SOCIOLOGICAL) SELF

The Modern Self

This "self" is the quintessential self of modern sociology. It is a self captured in eighteenth century Scottish Moral philosophy's quest for "the facts of human association...(which)...had to be taken into account if a science of man was to be achieved" (Stryker, 1981:5).¹ Writes Adam Smith (1759, as quoted in Stryker, 1981:5):

Bring him into society, and he is immediately provided with a mirror which he wanted before. It is placed in the countenance and behavior of those he lived with. This is the only looking glass by which we can, in some measure, with the eyes of other people, scrutinize the propriety of our own conduct.

Not that Adam Smith's self of propriety - his "impartial spectator" (Coser, 1977:350) - was to form the modern self of sociology. No, the modern self of sociology was to stress the value of "superindividual, collective, institutional forces" and certainly not as Smith would have it, the value of individualism (Ebenstein, 1965:622). In effect, modern sociology produced the modern self during its "desperate search for structure in the world" (Bauman, 1992:xv). This

notwithstanding, Smith's text reveals (tacitly) all the acknowledgement of "other" - later taken up by Cooley and Mead to create a thoroughgoing modern sociological self.² Prior to this accomplishment, however, the self was to be refashioned within an emerging (naturalist) sociological methodology. Durkheim's work (1893; 1895; 1897) was particularly seminal in this task.

What this emerging "modern" self needed were constraints that were inherently and unambiguously social. It needed to be set within a structural context against which the self could be, thereafter, measured and sorted according to its moral/social life or alternatively its pathological self-interested (asocial/amoral) existence.

Durkheim was one who supplied such things. His epistemic concern led him to the construction of "social facts". Social facts, he states,

...are ways of acting thinking and feeling that present the noteworthy property of existing outside the individual consciousness...(and)...are not only external to the individual but are, moreover endowed with coercive power, by virtue of which they impose themselves upon him, independent of his individual will (Durkheim, 1895:2).

Within this text we find sociology attempting to "break" the self free from its then existence as an essentialist cognate of psychology - as conflated with individual. Durkheim tells

us how to identify this reductionist self. He states: "... every time that a social phenomenon is directly explained by a psychological phenomenon, we may be sure the explanation is false" (Durkheim, 1895:104). Freed from (deterministic) psychology, the self is pushed into the domain of the moral-social wherein it must shoulder a greater burden of responsibility. For Durkheim, the self is a social self and if the social is now to be understood as a composite moral structure of social facts, then to be moral, the self is obliged to participate in the production and reproduction of society. As such, this is the localised self of Durkheim's (1893) "mechanical solidarity", acting according to custom and tradition with any possibility of a critical reflexivity being buried by the coercive demands of the "conscience collective".

But a self that is not given the opportunity to demonstrate a capability to transgress against the social - not given a theoretical space to demonstrate the "other" of morality - can hardly be considered a moral self. The conundrum is that the self is social/moral because of society and therefore must be other than moral because of society. To be otherwise, would cast the self without the social and as a dangerous agential autonomous self explicable, say, in the reductionist terms of psychology. Durkheim's **Suicide**

(1897) confronts the conundrum through bringing an empirical context to the self. We are shown how there are structural "causes" of what more commonsensically appear to be the result of psychologically construed pathologies. Anomic suicide, he says, "results from man's activity's lacking regulation and his consequent suffering's" (Durkheim, 1897:367). In effect, the self has lost the "social". It has been denied what would otherwise be the nurturing forces of normative institutions. In times of rapid change, the self loses the social and the self-serving and egoistic appetency of the individual emerges. The self's moral constitution comes from without, from the social which must remain vigilant in its responsibility of over-powering that which is immutable in the individual's nature. Thus, this self represents a victory of normative institutions, as socialising agencies, over the self's moral ambivalence residing as a latent characteristic of the Durkheimian human condition of fragility (Shilling and Mellor, 1998). It also marks sociology's claim to an analytical interest in the "moral" of modernity.

However, this modern self was still not fully accomplished. It was still conceptually pre-modern, trapped as it were by, as Weber might say, its respect for sacred custom and governance of its moral life according to

reflections on the past. It needed to be freed from a history of indistinctiveness as a "creature" of habit consuming its morality from custom and tradition. Ironically, it needed to be reconstituted as a self that could fail a moral status so that responsibility for failure could be assigned and the question of how to (re)organise the "good society" could be placed front and centre in intellectual and political life. It needed to mark distance from the self inhabiting the discursive constraints of political philosophy and classical economics.

This self was morally nourished on individualism with its accompanying liberal rationality which endowed every individual with a rational capacity. Thus every individual had an equal chance (in the marketplace) if they took the responsibility for their "selves". Cooley's work exemplifies the objection to this laissez-faire liberal self and a re-capturing of the emerging modern sociological self:

So strong is the individualist tradition in America and England that we hardly permit ourselves to aspire toward an ideal society directly, but think that we must approach it by some distinctive formula, like 'the greatest good of the greatest number.' Such formulas are unsatisfying to human nature...The ideal society must be an organic whole, capable of being conceived directly, and requiring to be so conceived if it is to lay hold upon our imaginations (Cooley, as quoted in Coser, 1977:307).

Modern sociology produced a pre-modern self made modern by its embeddedness in the modernist science of the social. The modern self of sociology needed the external and constraining domain of social facts - one which could now be construed scientifically - to be the source of the self's moral constitution. What Durkheim wants is to demonstrate (scientifically) society as the moral entity; the self as duty bound to: "... (a) ...regulative force... (which) ...must play the same role for moral needs which the organism plays for physical needs. This means that the force can only be moral" (Durkheim, 1895:248). Morality is a force which has as its object a society that must be, as Durkheim (1924:53) claims, "considered as a personality qualitatively different from the individual personalities from which it is comprised." The modern self was increasingly indifferent to the past; to tradition and custom as the centre of moral life. Durkheim turns to his **Division of Labour in Society** (1893) to affirm the self's moral responsibility in the modern world (see also Durkheim, 1924; 1925).

Within this work the problem of social order is advanced as **the** sociological focus and the self is weighted with the moral responsibility of contributing to this end. The self is moral if it participates in the reproduction of the normative institutions which thereafter will dictate the

terms of submission of self. The self's moral life is, then, inextricably tied to the social and the social is the composite structure of normative institutions dependent on the maintenance of social order. Hence, this self was to be burdened with a sociologically-construed moral obligation to participate in society - to be socialised - and in a way that was to affirm the status quo.

George H. Mead's work served to assure the moral burden of the modern self through its construction of a complex theoretical edifice to support the "simple proposition" that "one has to be a member of a community to be a self" (Mead, as quoted in Wolfe, 1989:216). So one is a "self" because of society, and if one is of society, one is moral.³ This self, then, is afforded no theoretical space to occupy within which it can reflect upon the morality, or not, of being in the world as a moral self. It is, in effect, the pre-modern self dressed in the theoretical wrapping of an advancing modern sociology which wishes to withhold (from the self) a space for critical reflexivity as an aspect of the self's moral life.

Further moral nourishment of the self was had in the philosophical habitat of early American pragmatism, particularly in the work of William James and John Dewey. John Dewey's work was seminal in the development of the

modern (sociological) self, particularly his **Human Nature and Conduct** (1922). He states:

...to a larger extent customs persist because individuals form their personal habits under conditions set by prior customs. An individual usually acquires the morality as he inherits the speech of his social group (Dewey, 1922:58).

However, he is quick to reassert his position as pragmatist with the warning:⁴

To talk about the priority of society to the individual is to indulge in nonsensical metaphysics. But to say that some pre-existent association of human beings is prior to every particular human being who is born into the world is to mention a common place. These associations are definite modes of interaction of persons with one another; that is to say they form customs, institutions. There is no problem in all history so artificial as that of how 'individuals' manage to form 'society' (Dewey, 1922:59-60).

What this self did not need, and what a forming modern sociology needed to escape from in the ongoing formation of its disciplinary boundaries, was the nominalist, reductionist and amoral trappings of the then "instinct psychology". Sociology needed its own conceptual glue - a uniquely social/moral theoretical underpinning - to account for social order and conversely the problem of disorder and chaos. Clearly, its preoccupation was with establishing a space to argue moral concerns as social scientific questions. It needed an epistemic autonomy that would not

forsake its growing possession of "self" as the enabling concept for its "moral" discourse.

It is therefore understandable why Dewey's work was embraced and, as the following demonstrates, greeted with great enthusiasm by modern sociologists:

On what basis does any group...become a unit... How do its members become motivated by common goals...The school of instinct psychology answers these questions by saying that man is by nature gregarious...The general notion fell apart with the fall of instinct psychology, which was given its greatest blow by Professor John Dewey...More recent research, with its careful control of laboratory conditions, has backed up the theories Professor Dewey put forward...The explanation for group unity lies in the individual's taking over, from birth onward, the social habits of which his society approves (Dawson and Gettys, 1929:23).

In short, Dewey is credited (along with Cooley and Mead) as providing the "basic framework within which sociologists have analysed the interrelations of culture, personality and society" (Wilson and Kolb, 1949:207). In other words, they provided a viable alternative to the then prevailing understandings of the possibility of society and the correlative basis for construing moral arguments. The psychology of the time was likely to assume that the fact of society was due to aspects of a human nature that were inherently social while political philosophy, more often than not, would construe this fact in terms of a "contracting"

civil and political society. The viable sociological alternative draws the self into a "social framework" wherein its morality is measured by, as Dawson and Gettys (1922) state, "social approval". Thereafter, the morality of the self, more precisely the self engaged in the reflective process of understanding and acting upon "self" as a "moral" actor (Goffman, 1961), is given over to the tyranny of a measured consensus. It is given over, in other words, to norms, whose very essence "means that there can be failure to live up to them" (Goffman, 1963:130). This predicament of self was to become a central focus in the work of, in particular, the symbolic interactionists, Erving Goffman and Howard Becker. The symbolic interactionist self became, for the time, the vehicle to assert that **the** problem of sociology was human progress and that knowing "what people know about themselves and others" could reveal the conditions of such (Fisher and Strauss, 1978:482).⁵

This now formed modern sociological self is thoroughly social because it forms in the context of socialisation and in the "ongoing processes of social interaction within which individuals define and redefine themselves and others throughout their lives" (Jenkins, 1996:20). The self, now in the hands of symbolic interactionist Herbert Blumer (1969),

is involved in "continual reflection" (Whittaker, 1992:200).

States Blumer (1962:141-142):

Self-indication is a moving communicative process in which the individual notes things, assesses them, gives them a meaning and decides to act on the basis of the meaning...It is through this process that the human being constructs his conscious action...He forms and aligns his own action on the basis of such interpretation of the acts of others.

Accordingly, there is, as Mead's (1934) classic formulation states, "no self apart from society and society is the very process through which we produce and reproduce our 'selves'".

In this view, the "self" is dependent on others, particularly on "others" grouped into the normative institutions which carry the "the moral rules of interdependence" (Wolfe, 1989:19). As such, morality from this thoroughgoing

sociological approach, takes on the force of an obligation (if not duty) because it is "the way individuals and society interact...(that)...make the moral order possible" (1989:213).

Hence, moral authoritarianism as vested in regulatory institutions bears (Durkheim's) "fruit of regulation".

The modern sociological self carries the morality of a pre-modern world. It is made modern by theoretical practices that are persistent with their claim that the self can be located systematically and relationally to social structure and culture. In other words, it forms within a theoretical

trajectory and according to the discursive demands of a developing modern social/psychological theory. Captured by such sociological theory, the self is elevated "...to the universal, to the level of theoretical logics or central problems or to the study of social laws or the structure of social action" (Seidman, 1991:132). Such theoretical framing assures that the self will be given attention as a phenomenon amenable to scientific management and remain available for measurement. And, the current of pragmatism that flows through this framing assures that the modern self will be (as Part One has demonstrated) problematised as a social/moral problem whose solution carries the confidence of "truth".

What makes this self modern, in the practice of experience, is captured by Luhmann's explanation of why (as Mead states): "one has to be a member of a community to be a self" (as quoted in Wolfe, 1989:216). Luhmann states:

Anyone who has been around for some time is...entangled with his self-presentation in a web of norms which he himself has helped to create, and from which he cannot withdraw without leaving part of himself behind (as quoted in Wolfe, 1989:216).

Given that these "web of norms" have their source in the normative institutions of society and the modern self (unless it is to withdraw which it cannot do while remaining modern, leastwise in a sociological sense) is nurtured on their

internalisation, then this self must act to defend these institutions, lest it lose part of its self to uncertainty. Stuart Hall (1996) frames this dilemma in the question of "identity". He writes:

Identity, in this sociological conception, bridges the gap between the 'inside' and the 'outside' - between the personal and the public worlds. The fact that we project 'ourselves' into these cultural identities, at the same time internalising their meaning and values, making them 'part of us,' helps to align our subjective feelings with the objective places we occupy in the social and cultural world. Cultural identity...thus 'stitches' the subject into the structure. It stabilises both subjects and the cultural worlds they inhabit, making both reciprocally more unified and predictable (Hall, 1996:597-598).

The modern self, then, is understandably fearful and therefore unwilling to face the dramatic consequence of withholding faith and trust in the authority of civil institutions. A critical reflexive stance toward the normative authority of these socialising institutions could shift the self to uncertain grounds that other selves occupy outside the frame of this parochial modernity. This is unimaginable for these modern selves. Another way to state this is that modern selves are inexorably tied to imaginings of a civil society which hold "...sources of social cohesion in shared assumptions so deeply engrained in everyday life that they do not have to be articulated: in folkways,

customs, prejudices, habits of the heart" (Lasch, 1995:92). Wolfe (1989) would call this the "gift of society"; we might prefer "freedom through constraint".

Modern selves are experiential (in society) and conceptual (in sociology) predicates of the social, and therefore are understandably contemptuous and fearful of selves which mock such dependency. These "other" selves, as we will see, do not fret about such things and instead venture into uncertain ontological grounds wherein moral sustenance may or may not be a consequence of the creative and imaginative wanderings (as for example, postmodernity). Liberty is indeed the fruit of regulation for these modern selves. Active pursuit of submission to regulation, to something imagined to be more powerful than the self's will, is a telling mark of the modern empowered self.

The Modern Empowered Self

These modern "empowered" selves (MES) historically have occupied such places as the "moral majority". It is an ironic "modern" that these selves carry, given their strong contemporary presence in concerted efforts to "re-moralise society". It is here that these selves often claim empowerment through, more or less, enlivening a communitarian tradition...

Communitarians argue that democratic societies require a core of shared values; that if democracy is merely a procedure that allows individuals who have different ultimate normative commitments to settle differences, then the polity will lack legitimacy (Etzioni, 1998:183).

In doing so, these selfs are locating their selfs as advocates for communities, as "guardians of order, and as the source of individual identity" (Haste, 1998:4). These empowered selfs say, in their "moral voice" (Etzioni, 1994), we are only moral because of society and it is "community" that holds the moral nourishment of self. Etzioni (1996:1), a "new" communitarian spokesperson for these selfs, puts it this way:

Authentic communities, ones that are responsive to the "true needs" of all community members, reflect the appropriate balance of order and autonomy,

and

communities gently chastise those who violate shared moral values and express approbation for those who abide by them (Etzioni, as quoted in Haste, 1998:4).

To constitute itself as a modern self, the self, as we have seen, entered into a historical relationship with modern social institutions.⁶ Thereafter, its moral life was to be nurtured by internalising the correlative demands of this "web of norms". A modern moral self embarked upon a history of passive dependence; of an unreflexive consumption

(internalisation) of the moral directives of socialising institutions. It says (in its empowered voice),

...the rate of family breakdown can be lowered through couple-empowering, preventative skill-based education...America's divorce rate has held steady at over 50% for twenty years...which shows we don't learn from our mistakes (About the Coalition, 1998).

Its "narrative of self" told of an identity unified by imaginations of the likeness of purpose and commonality of tradition. It told, then, of "communitarian societies" where,

...individuals are densely enmeshed in interdependencies which have special qualities of mutual help and trust. The interdependencies have symbolic significance in the culture of the group loyalties which take precedence over individual interests (Braithwaite, 1989:100).

With the rise of industrial capitalism the modern self was drawn into a new and modern institutional relationship. The modern state emerged as a normative institution mediating the interests of the marketplace by offering up to the modern self "enlightened self-interest" as a moral directive, often in the name of the ethics of good citizenship. If the market was to thrive, it could only do so by celebrating the individual pursuit of interests with some guarantee that the individual was "to determine what they ought to do" (Wolfe, 1989:107-108).

The modern self of tradition - of sociology and of communitarianism - was threatened by this emerging liberalism. It perceived the self-interested individual as "detached from the bonds of a well-ordered society" (Wolfe, 1989:107-108) and thus "without" the web of normative institutions that would otherwise facilitate its self-understanding of its obligation to others. Reluctantly, it was led to rely on the state as a "moral agent" acting to "organize and regulate "rules of obligation to others" (1989:107-108). Its source of moral nourishment remained the civil institutions but it needed the state to defend it against the intrusive individualistic morality of the market and to legislate the boundaries of an imagined "moral" civil society. Voices of modern "empowered" (by God) selfs say as much:

We have seen a few significant decisions from the Supreme Court justices and from other levels in the court system that have held back the trend toward redefining the family and undermining moral truth. These efforts are worth it... I believe that God requires us to be salt light and leaven in all areas of our society. I know he will empower us for this witness...(FOF Resources/Newsletter/January1998, emphasis in original).

As such, the modern empowered self facilitates a political/social "reality" amenable to liberal rule wherein
a,

...liberal theory of politics was linked to a conservative theory of society. By simply assuming that liberal citizens were tied together morally by tradition, culture, religion, family and locality, liberal theory was able to emphasize the benefits to be gained by the free exercise of political rights, since society could always be counted on to cement the moral obligations that politics neglected (Wolfe, 1989:108).

These occurrences can be set within the beginnings of what Giddens (1991) would call the "post-traditional order." It is "post" because it is the beginnings of opportunities for the self's self-constitution beyond its traditional relationship with the institutions of civil society. It is now being offered a "plurality of choices" (inclusive of identity) from which to empower itself as a moral self. However, the modern empowered self is reluctant to enter this complex world. Instead, it knows itself as empowered self when it actively seeks salvation of and for the un-empowered or alternatively vilifies those selfs which step beyond the morally instructive boundaries of an imagined traditional civil society. Christopher Carr, Associate to the Corporate Adviser-Chaplaincy, Corrections Service Canada, is the reluctant empowered/empowering self (as above). It says,

...the family is still universally recognized as the basic unit in society...is a primary delivery point for personal growth and change...must drive our response to criminal activity...empowering the family and freeing the spirit are comfortable

partners, and both are for ever (May 1995, Volume 7, Number 2-The Family Side of Corrections, 1999).

The empowered modern self, although cognisant of this threatening plurality, does not inhabit this world. Its world is a traditional (parochial) imagining of a romanticised American-European-Christian past (Whittaker, 1992:210-211). It is heard to say, "we are supposed to have a community, but we don't and we want to do something about it" (I or We, 1998). It urges the "fulfilment of America's historical civic ideals" (Institute for the Study of Civic Values, 1998). And, it claims its,

ultimate goal is to help communities empower themselves and develop a civic culture that nurtures and supports inclusive collaborative decisions (Program for Community Problem Solving, 1998)

Modern western history is a history of the successes of institutionally embedded morality in its governance of the self's moral nourishment; of the hegemony of the modern self's imaginings.⁷ Wolfe (1989:187) is right to observe that "...both markets and states spill over the borders of economics and politics and begin to organise the moral rules associated with civil society." The voices of modern empowered selfs are distinguishable (from modern selfs) by their reaction to the "spill over" of the state into their

imagined boundaries of civil society; are distinguishable by their expressed grumbling and dissatisfaction with the historical compliance of the (non-empowered) modern self with the moral demands of the modern institution they know as the state - with liberalism. They say,

...we can't wait for government to take care of us...liberals destroyed the god-like the family and respect for the community" (I or We?, 1998).

And, they say,

our goal is to empower citizens to shape better communities worldwide" (League of Women Voters of the U.S, 1998).

"Do Something"; they urge,

"empower young leaders across the country to bring improvements to their communities" (Do Something, 1998).

And,

empower youth in equal partnership with adults, to become active citizens in their community through service (Community Partnerships with Youth, 1998).

Also, be sure to hear our collective empowered voice in "The Civic Practices Network"

...an online journal that brings together innovators and educators across America to share tools, stories and best practices of community empowerment and civic renewal (Civic Practices Network, 1998).

The envisioning of the state, most often as a threat and always in its modern liberal form (as above), is crucial to these modern self's act of situating their selfs as empowered (i.e., to identifying their relationship to their self and others). In the end, however, they stay well within the boundaries of a traditional relationship of self to (pre) modern society. They are after all communitarian conservatives: their empowerment imagines a romantic past amidst a threatening "liberal" present.

An empowered modern self **always** defends the sanctity of traditional socialising "civil" institutions, particularly family and religion. These are regarded as the "bedrock of moral consensus" that has been, for the time, replaced by a strong sense of entitlement...and a weak sense of obligation" (Hughes, 1996:22). As such, this empowered self is a carrier of the legacy of the modern self's (sociologised) belief that it is moral because of society. However, given its current imaginings of a social world bereft of a common moral base, empowerment as a re-moralising of society is not (for them) just a moral crusade but is a quest for a moral identity of the self.

Imagined civil institutions are regarded by this self as essential normative structures that mediate the space for the self to know itself (and others) as a social/moral

individual(s). They imagine, for example, the "monogamous family...as the crucial unit of social stability" (Hughes, 1996:24). Intact, it provides the nourishment of "moral authority and good manners...and is an indispensable civilising force" for kids who would otherwise "run wild" (Murray, 1996:133). Traditional civil society is the central theme in this self's self-narrative of the "good" society.

An empowered modern self is fearful of "others" who represent a constant threat to its established pattern of organising its moral life according to norms/values universalised by a "world view" narrowed by the tradition it inhabits. It would fear, for example, the "empowered group for abused gay men" (Vancouver Hospital, 1998) and any such group which reaches beyond imaginings of the traditional boundaries of civil society as the moralising agent and toward the "like-differences" of an (political) identity to empower their selves (selves which we later see as inhabiting a different empowered landscape). Its world view comes into particular focus with this modern self's peculiar preoccupation with law and order. Testifying to this it says:

In non-authoritarian societies - 'free' in the sense that social order depends on self-control rather than control by the agents of the State - crimes increase to the extent that the mechanisms of socialisation and the mores lose their ability

to reproduce and maintain a culture of decent mutual respect, trust and restraint (Dennis and Erdos, 1992:85).

Cultural relativism is foreign to the mind of the modern empowered self. Its thinking is Americanised (hegemonic culture); its "reflexivity"⁸ is local, not global. It carries this history to its contact with the "other" in ways that are hegemonic and colonising. In doing so, these selfs in the name of empowerment actively pursue, as Lasch (1995:25) pointedly states:

the regimentation of opinion, the repression of dissent, and the institutionalisation of intolerance, all in the name of morality.

The empowered modern self "knows" with blind certainty what is best and what best is. Etzioni's (1995:21) communitarian manifesto says as much in its demand "...for people to live up to their responsibilities and not to merely focus on their entitlements, and to shore up the moral foundation of society."

As such, the empowerment claims of this modern empowered self are most often expressed within movements which "preserve traditional values and the institution of family" (FOF Resources/ Newsletter /January 1998). Jim Slater is a testifying modern empowered self; the "The Focus

on Family's Newsletter" is a forum for such self's expressions. It says:

We have seen a few significant decisions from the Supreme Court justices and from other levels in the court system that have held back the trend toward redefining (sic) the family and undermining moral truth. These efforts are worth it! We can expect to see some solid results in the midst of a tough cultural situation. Again, I believe God *requires* us to be salt, light and leaven in all areas of our society. I know he will *empower* us for this witness as we pray and dedicate ourselves to Him (1998, emphasis added).

This self is one among "Thousands of Canadians" which, in the words of one cited anonymous source from Prince Albert, are becoming "aware of our ability to empower each other to act and follow through on social and moral issues" (FOF Events/CIS News/Comments, 1998). These "thousands", according to James C. Dobson, PH.D (sic) (and president of Focus on the Family US), are "standing in the gap for the family and morality in your community" (FOF Resources/Newsletter /January 1998). They are the selfs who, amidst the challenges to traditional notions of family and spirituality, have become empowered to serve as moral midwives readying the family to receive the morality of the church.

The (modern) "Real Women of Canada" may be heard to offer a collective voice of this modern "empowered" self.

They say:

Our view is that the family, which is now undergoing serious strain, is the most important unit in Canada...the fragmentation of the Canadian family is on (sic) of the major causes of disorder in society today...Our objectives are: 1. To reaffirm that the family is society's most important unit, since the nurturing of its members is best accomplished in the family setting...3. to promote, secure and defend legislation which upholds the Judeo-Christian understanding of marriage and family life (Who We Are, 1998).

They would partner well with the empowerment goals of the League of Women Voters of the U.S. mentioned earlier.

As earlier indicated, empowered modern selves regard the state's (liberalism) moral authority as a threat. While they acknowledge and defend the authority of the state to participate in this mediation of the moral (a rational-legal authority), they deny its participation as a source of moral authority in the process of the self-constituting its moral life. The "Promise Keepers" are one example of this. Their "D. C. Covenant", (in the name of empowerment) appears to be actively seeking the subordination of the state to a greater moral authority. It reads:

Our great and awesome God and Father, in Your sovereignty You have brought us to Washington D.C., in the name of Your only Son, Jesus Christ ...we commit to pursue an ever-deepening

relationship with you through worship, prayer and your written word, *empowered* by your Holy Spirit (Official PK Web Site: Stand in the Gap, 1998).

Its mission statement suggests it can share the global stage with the state and as a "moral" player - a peacekeeper - in international affairs:

Promise Keepers global ministry exists to communicate the PK vision worldwide by cultivating relationships with godly leaders and empowering them to establish vibrant men's ministry in every church in their nation (Official PK Web Site: International Promise Keepers, 1998).

And, although not constitutionally "empowered" (God does that), its mission is "authorised" by "four key biblical principles". Empowerment, for them, is accorded the status of "biblical principle" and is located by the Peacekeeper in "2 Corinthians 8:9." (Official PK Web Site: Statement of Reconciliation; 1998). John Falk, a Peacekeeper recruit, announces his empowered self in the following "Testimony of the Week":

Your ministry is truly anointed and inspired from above. Thank you for showing me the road home...I was *empowered*, as well as humbled, by the strength and wisdom that I was privileged to see, hear, know and experience at this watershed in my life (Testimony of John Falk, 1998).

The Modern Empowerer

Empowered modern selfs imagine a paternalistic state serving the pragmatic and instrumentalist function of protecting and defending through legislation the morality of, in particular, the traditional "Christian Family". However, the state's rationality of government, as its empowerment discourse makes clear, has shifted its rationale of governance. In fact (as we will see shortly), the state is claiming itself as an empowering moral authority suggesting that it is re-working anew its relationship with the institutional sites sanctified by the empowered modern self which together constitute civil society as the "good" society.

All empowered modern selfs are righteous guardians of tradition: of family, of religion, of law and order. This is one of their identifying strategies. Another is their denial of the state the right of moral authority (over self) as a legitimate and active "mediating structure" - family and religion do this. But these selfs cannot leave behind the state without putting into jeopardy "the moral" of the self they are fighting to hang onto. They are the begrudging selfs of an imagined (barely) post-traditional order. The state cannot disappear from their communitarian imaginings of civil society...

Civil society...is a rich array of voluntary associations that countervails the state... (and)...serve to reinforce individual's normative commitments...good societies promote...limited sets of core values that are promoted largely by moral voice and not by state coercion (Etzioni, 1999:93-95)

The communitarian morality of the modern empowered self is likely a trajectory stemming from its resistance to the state undertaking an active role as empowerment advocate; as a moral authority issuing demands upon the self to internalise responsibility for self as a citizenry obligation and thus as a moral requisite of a modern self. In other words, the state is imagined by these empowered selfs to have taken another step beyond its function as moral agent. It has breached the function that this empowered self (as I have earlier argued) begrudgingly accepts. It has undertaken the nurturing function of being a "surrogate for moral ties of civil society that are no longer especially binding" (Wolfe, 1989:109). Its first step in this direction was welfarism, its second step is now empowerment authority.

This no doubt offends this modern empowered self because the state is treading the sacred terrain of this self's source of moral nourishment. In response to a world that seems increasingly interested in looking to civil society for moral and practical guidance [leastways it is

taken "less and less for granted" (Wolfe, 1989:108)], the state could have embraced the ostensibly morally disinterested practices of "economic models of politics" (Wolfe, 1989:108). Instead, and with its empowerment claims, it has moved boldly into the moral thick of things. It has, in essence, revealed itself as a champion of liberal polity — as an agent of the "political good" (Held, 1996). Situated in this moral domain, it assumes the responsibility of mediating, through policy and institutionalised practice, "who is responsible for others when people are expected primarily to be responsible for themselves" (Wolfe, 1989:109). As the welfare state, it urged its citizens to take responsibility for self while, through its welfare policies, maintaining and protecting the "moral" order. As such, its wielding of moral authority within welfarism appeased (albeit never satisfied) both conservative concerns for moral order and traditional liberal concerns for an unencumbered economic actor. Now, as the empowerer state, moral authority (under the seductive rubric of empowerment) demands a liberal citizen who must take responsibility for self but which must re-imagine its relationship with the state as "equals" — as "partners". The loss of the welfare apparatus is the end of the paternalistic relationship of the modern self with the state and a gaining of "equality". As

Burchell (1996:23, emphasis in original) states it, "individuals are identified as...the necessary (voluntary) *partner* or accomplice of government."

As the traditional social welfare apparatus changes, (if not fades away) so too does the state's traditional demonstrated principle of compassion, welfarism. Emerging is empowerment as a new way to rekindle a "moral" relationship with the modern selfs imaginings of civil society and thus retain purchase on its subjects - on their selfs. It is quite simply a matter of retaining an authority within "nation" boundaries in a world rendering such boundaries as doubtful. Or, if you like, empowerment is a way that the state appears to be signifying a status of authority and thus administer power. Empowerment is, in short, at the centre (along with partnership) of forming "imagined" communities of nationhood as old (structural) forms of national identity (e.g., welfarism) are being displaced. [There is a strong theoretical inclination to argue that this has much to do with the process of globalisation (see for example, Hall, 1996)].

Empowerment talk is evident in the governments of the US, Canada, and England. They appear to have embraced empowerment and located it within a developed system of language friendly to the modern empowered self - its largest

constituent. Here is an example from the empowerer known as the White House:

Through our *empowerment* agenda, we have turned Washington's traditional approach upside down - working hand-in-hand with mayors, listening to *communities*, supporting *bottom-up* innovation and encouraging flexibility. Today, our cities are stronger and our *neighborhoods* are healthier as a result of our efforts to work with and *empower* America's communities (The White House: Office of the Vice President, Press Release, April 16, 1998, emphasis added).

This language of empowerment has the peculiar ability to bypass the ideological differences in the traditional political landscape which historically have been clustered around the poles of the liberal Left and the conservative Right. The former's ideals typically expressed "the party of compassion", bringing "an activist government to the support of the needy": the latter's ideals typically emphasised individual responsibility and wherewithal for solving one's problems (Berger and Novak, 1996:3).⁹ Now, it is suggested that American politics, since 1977, has enacted a "new public policy hypothesis" that has collapsed this traditional and "outmoded...mis-diagnosis of social reality" (Berger and Novak, 1996:2-4). This new "hypothesis" (we know now as the "empowerment agenda") has, it is argued, "restored the vitality of mediating structures, as replacements of or supplements to the welfare state" (1996:5).

What I am saying then, is that governance is, through empowerment discourse (in its appeal to modern empowered selfs), in the process of establishing itself beyond the function of mediating moral agent. While it remains a moral agent as part of its liberal legacy of mediating the interests of the market (free expression of individualism) with those of civil society (nurturing function for moral/social order), it is at the same time, through its empowerment discourse, constructing itself as a moral authority in its own right. Empowerment "ideals" - take responsibility for self and know (imagine) that self as inextricable from the community - allow the retention of a government with ostensible (liberal) compassion while shedding itself of the immense burden of social welfare policy construction and administration. And, this "ideal" that the empowerment discourses appear to support, is one that mollifies any political tensions flowing from the residual ideological camps of the Left and Right. In instrumentalist terms, the trick is for the state to assume its new function of moral authority while at the same time allowing the burden of responsibility and compassion (individual and social moralities, respectively) as would accompany this to fall softly on the shoulders of its empowerment subjects.

Although I speak here of "state" (probably construed instrumentally), it is more precise and compelling to suggest that what is at issue is a conflation of rationalities of government. Wolfe (1989:109) argues that as

the moral world associated with civil society comes to be taken less and less for granted, liberalism moves in two directions: either toward a reliance on economic models of politics (in which it is assumed that rules of self interest can bring about appropriate results without civil society playing a role) or into a defence of the state (as the only agent capable of serving as a surrogate for moral ties of civil society that are no longer especially binding).

While these two trajectories may speak adequately to liberalism's possible histories, the present history of empowerment suggests their conflation. "Take responsibility for self", a theme that runs throughout empowerment discourses, fits well with the economic model of politics. "Know that self as inextricable from responsibility to community" acknowledges the heart of the other trajectory of liberalism (as above) but in the process shifts responsibility away from the state. In short, the empowerment discourses of government suggest that liberalism hasn't followed one or the other of Wolfe's trajectories. Rather it has assimilated both into a new rationality of government that we can call empowerment. Small wonder it makes little sense to talk of political ideological

differences (or attempt to politically locate the Tony Blairs). Empowerment appears as a strategy that contests moral authority amidst a contemporary domain of political reason wherein traditional "political doctrines" and ideological matters are "unstable and difficult to classify" (Barry, et al., 1996:1).

But, modern empowered selfs demonstrate, by their uncertainty regarding the role of the state as a moral authority, that the state has not fully accomplished itself as an empowerer; as a normative institution imagined by these selfs as indispensable to their moral construction. The state's on-going attempt to present itself as such, may have much to do with the phenomena of empowerment.

To restate, modern empowered selfs, inclusive of the state as modern empowerer, are involved in a major restructuring of the relationship of self to moral authority. The "political" landscape through which the state articulates itself as a normative actor appears to be shifting away from the "Left - Centre - Right" heroics of the traditional ideological battles to that of the more subtle and seductive "empowering" moral domain. While modern empowered selfs articulate the inseparability of self from the traditional (morally) nurturing institutions of civil society, they remain committed to an idea of the state as authoritative,

but remain uncertain as to the extent to which it should be sanctioned as a player in the construction of the moral life of the self. They are bound to include the state because to do otherwise would take a "stitch" out of their moral landscape and lead the modern self into the reaches of a (late) modern domain where the moral shaping of the individual drives toward an ideal that excludes the state as a participant in this quest (as we later see). Let us have a closer look at the relationship of self and state, of citizen as empoweree and state as empowerer.

The modern empowered self, as empowerer is comfortably authoritarian and impositional. He (it is most often a he) can trade on the uncertainty and the fear that the modern self has of the other empowered selfs which occupy the contemporary landscape (others which follow). He says:

...the failure of government to act can yield disempowerment...the basic rules of social order must be enforced against those who have failed to internalize these rules as morally binding. This is rightly regarded as the first duty of government because it is the precondition for every activity that free individuals might reasonably choose (Galston, as quoted in Berger and Neuhaus, 1996:61).

This empowerer assumes the moral obligation to intervene in the modern self's moral life, should the nurturing institutions fail this responsibility. We are reminded here

of Hobbes' atomised "undersocialized" asocial individual that the empowerer presents as the threat (in need of coercion) to his subjects and Durkheim's (over) socialised self as the righteous potential victims - subjects that the empowerer will protect. Or, if you like, we are presented with the traditional sociological "poles" of the motivations of social behavior: self-interest and values and norms (Wrong, 1959). Ironically, the (political) empowerer constructs a pre-modern self (the former, as above) to demonstrate its "responsibility" to the modern empowered self (the latter, as above). The empowered modern self relies on the paternalism of the state as a rational-legal authority to guard its imagined moral boundaries of civil society. Hence, the empowered modern self grants the state an authority because the modern self fears other selves. Modern selves are selves who contract with the state through fear and not through the calculated rational principles that enliven the political actors of liberal democracies.

The empowerer knows that the sanctity of civil society - the pastoral vision of his modern self constituents/subjects - can not be violated. He knows too that "strong social obligations make weak political ties" (Wolfe, 1989:108). In effect, he knows the paradox: the more he acknowledges the centrality of civil society to

social/moral life, the less credible is his authority in these domains. Logically speaking, his empowerment discourse ought to work against the state's self-enhancement as a moral authority and situate it instead within, say, an "economic model of politics" (Wolfe, 1989:109). Ostensibly this is the case - is the "reality" of the state's programmatic liberalism. But again, empowerment suggests that the state is restructuring itself as a player in the moral governance of social life. The empowerer is obliged to present a communitarian vision in his empowerment discourse. "Community" and "neighborhood" speak to this; "partnership" assures it. These are the "bottom" of the "bottom-up." But without constituting a threat within this pastoral vision, the moral has no meaning and authority has no purpose. Ideology does not work anymore. So threat acts to refortify the vision that the moral/political institution claims it can empower. The empowerer speaks these things in the following way:

While government cannot wholly substitute for the formative effects of strong families and sound cultural cues, legislated benefits and burdens may nonetheless induce young adults to accept responsibility for their children and to take more seriously the imperatives of self support through productive work...as part of this general reorientation, we must rethink the grounds on which religious institutions may join forces with government to promote important public

purposes...(Galston, as quoted in Berger, 1996:62-63).

This acknowledgement of the sanctity of the traditional institutions of civil society combined with the will to present the indispensability of a politics with moral authority - i.e., empowerment - in governing modern (economic) life, is what Galston means as a rethinking of a "general orientation." It is what Vice President Gore means by the turning "upside down" of "Washington's traditional approach" (Welcome from Vice-President Gore, 1998). And, it is what Canada's Foreign Affairs Minister, Lloyd Axworthy, is asserting as an "empowerer" on the international stage when he states:

The continued presence of SFOR will provide the overall security and stability necessary to various civilian projects aimed at rebuilding a functioning society and government. Canada will continue to empower civil society organizations and to promote basic human rights including freedom of movement and property rights (Canadian Participation in SFOR in Bosnia After June 1998).¹⁰

This "rethinking" the political empowerer urges is now established in the contemporary empowerer's voice as the "New Partnerships." "Partnership", as I have earlier indicated, is the new link between power and civil society; between moral authority and the consent of an empowered citizen subject. It has, so to speak, thrown a spanner into the

works of traditional conceptions of power. And particularly "contemporary accounts of government" or what Foucault refers to as the "city-citizen" model wherein "subjects are regarded as citizens, and governments are seen to rule by their rational consent" (Hindess, 1996:19).

This "...new partnership, between Washington and America's communities...(is)...signalled by Empowerment Zones/Enterprise Communities" (Welcome From President Clinton, 1998). Empowerment Zones are computer mapped places (see, Welcome Vice President Gore, 1998) that were "bypassed by the American Dream" (Welcome HUD Secretary Andrew Cuomo, 1998); "communities whose challenges are the toughest" (Welcome USDA Secretary Gluckman, 1998). An empowered community is one where:

...a vital civic spirit is nurtured...where learning as a commitment for life can foster the skills, habits of mind, and attitudes that will make life rewarding and families nurturing life (Key Principles, 1998).

and where, as Bill Clinton says:

a partnership...recognizes the importance of the bottom-up revitalization process where people can seize opportunities for themselves (Welcome From President Clinton, 1998).

Empowerment Zones are American places of re-affirming the indispensability of the state's moral authority over selfs, the primacy of traditional institutions of civil

society in forming the moral actor, while lessening the "welfare" burden of the state. The linking of empowerment with geographical zones enables a strong and very real construction of (contained) morally impoverished modern selfs. These form the needed contrast to imagine the morally robust self that forms the ideal self of community enabled by the new "partnership". As such, we have Galston's earlier rhetorically constructed vision of the empowerer being reconstituted with increasing acuity and accompanying sense of urgency in the more "real" boundaries of geographical metaphors. We are reminded once again of Hobbes' asocial individual, here identified as an empowerment zone dweller; the state as the heroic figure which ventures in to "tame the beast" thus freeing up the "zone" as a "social unit with place and purpose"; as a "community" (Riprosa, 1996:537). Ironically so, empowerment zones are sometimes designated as "Showcase" communities (Center for Sustainable Development: Land Use Success Stories, 1998).

The "new partnership" reminds us (i.e., as modern selfs) that we possess no inherent moral capacity to form the "good" society. It speaks well to modern selfs because they know they are only moral because of society. "Partnership" reminds us of an immutable dependency on the state; that we are and must be modern selfs. As Bauman (1995:32) notes,

"there would be no moral individuals if it were not for the training/drilling job performed by society..." The new partnership is, in effect, the state distancing itself from that liberalism which demands its participation as moral agent mediating social welfare programmatic while affirming its authority (politely, as partner) over the domain of self's moral construction. This marks an imagined shift of power from the rational instrumentalities of state, to sovereignty sought in the moral domain of imagined political communities. "Partnership" is not a levelling of power through equal association. It is a technique of governance that marshals the subjectivities of modern self into mentorship with the empowerer's liberal imaginations of local, national, and global "communities".

Empowerment of the modern self is impositional and authoritarian. It may appear to be the act of a benevolent authority - empowerment surrounds acts with such "humanistic" auras - but it is, in essence, a demand to collapse the moral modern self of civil society into the idealised state sanctioned vision of citizenship. As such, to be an empowered modern self/citizen is to comply with, and lend support to, the hegemonic liberal imagination and thus to the reconstitution of the moral authority of the state. Such empowered (subjectivities) speak as follows:

I just want to commend your government on its fiscal responsibility. I feel empowered...A government is elected to govern in the long-term interests of Canadians - Martin, Whitehorse, Yukon, February 7, 1998" (Prime Minister's Web Site\Prime Minister\ Guest- book, 1998).

Canada has not designated empowerment zones.¹¹ However, it has selected places within which one sees the same empowerer logic/rationale as that which characterises the American empowerment zones. It is perhaps ironic that Canada's history has provided sites that serve the purpose of establishing the moral authority of the state as empowerer. This may have much to do with our distinctive claims to cultural identities.¹²

Which are these places of empowerment in Canada? My research has found that the Canadian state has selected, in particular, Aboriginal Peoples, Women (particularly within the criminal justice system), children, and the obligatory disabled as sites to demonstrate and further its self-reconstitution as a moral (empowerment) authority. In other words, it has selected sites of traditional/contemporary powerlessness.¹³ In this, it is complicit with other western industrialised societies: particularly the US.

Aboriginals are a Canadian empowerment zone. The Canadian state as empowerer speaks to its sometimes unwilling potential empoweree subjects in these terms:

...Aboriginal people are welcomed to the democratic process...not as antagonists-but as partners and friends" (Prime Minister's Web Site/Publications/Speeches, 1998).

It often speaks through its appendage, The Aboriginal Corrections Unit, Policy Branch, Solicitor General Canada, which sees this partnership as a,

process of opening doors and breaking down barriers, of advocating, of being proactive, of connecting people with information, expertise and ideas" (Community Development and Research, 1994:9, 1998).

In this instance, it acknowledges that "governments can help best through flexible responsive partnership" (Community Development and Research, 1994:2). At issue is "community development" which "starts with a vision arising from an appreciation of a balanced look at the community and its people" (1994:7), and:

it recognizes that the power of a community rests with the people of the community, not solely with its leaders. Development is the community taking responsibility to make change. 'People own both the process and the results' said one participant. Another participant won wide agreement with the proposition that communities need to return to communal responsibility (1994:8).

This is clearly the voice of the modern empowerer state. It exhibits a distaste for welfarism within its morally toned urging to take responsibility for self while placing this

self's self-identity firmly in an imagined community. To locate its responsibility, the empowerer poses the question of, "How can Governments Help" (Community Development and Research, 1994:8). It replies (in bold face), "Partnership" and then proceeds to talk the talk of empowerment. It says:

Partnership, though, is much more than financial help. It starts with listening to the whole community, not solely its political leaders and organizations and by being accountable to the community (Community Development and Research, 1994:8).

In this instance, and because the imaginings of "community" are cut through with the realities of aboriginal history, the empowerer must circumvent the traditional power hierarchy (as above, "its political leaders") of this culture. It must prepare its empowerees to receive the moral authority of the empowerer.. It continues: "...it is important to consult with women and children in a community" (Community Development and Research, 1994:8). With this, the empowerer has acknowledged the sanctity of family; as it must do to acknowledge the modern self's affinity with this sanctified civil institution. Leaving nothing to chance, the empowerer emphasises this requisite of the modern self's moral construction with the statement of "the need for government to support Aboriginal people in the practice of their tradition and religion" (1994:8). Clearly, the

empowerer has accomplished its construction of the "empowerment zone" of an imagined civil society within an imagined community of nationhood. In doing so, it has constituted itself as "moral" player in "partnership". To reassert this "new" (moral) relationship the empowerer states:

Partnership is not directing peoples' lives. It is a process of opening doors and breaking down barriers, of advocating, of being proactive, of connecting people with information, expertise and ideas...Government...should also play a role as a central information gathering and sharing agent (Community Development and Research, 1994:8).

States the empowerer Jean Chretien: "there is one thing that is essential to any real partnership - and that is shared values" (Prime Minister's Web Site, 1998). Empowered modern selfs, particularly empowered communitarian modern selfs, like this talk. But we are speaking here of attempts by the empowerer to partner with "Aboriginal Communities" on the basis of "shared values" - a difficult manoeuvre indeed. However, the Solicitor General of Canada's expertise with such manoeuvres is aptly demonstrated in the fact of its "discovery" that,

many of the features of restorative justice have deep cultural roots in Aboriginal communities. The community corrections movement is a means of returning responsibility for justice to these communities" (Linden, 1998:4).

The requisite point of contact for asserting shared values is located. And, "The restorative justice model requires the empowerment of local communities and the involvement of local people" (Linden, 1998:4):

In its commitment to restorative justice, the Correctional Service of Canada is joining with other government partners and community organizations across the country. As Ms. Miller-Ashton points out, restorative justice is based on alliances and partnerships, and government is but one seat at the table (Blumenthal, 1999).

Furthermore, the model provides an opportunity for offenders to be good/moral liberal citizens by taking "...ownership of their offenses...(and)...responsibility for their crimes" (Blumenthal, 1999:3-4). This demonstrated "empowered" cultural sensitivity on the part of the Solicitor General of Canada, bolstered by its claim that the model is aimed at "repairing the harm that has been done to the (aboriginal) victim of the community" (Linden, 1998:4), expresses well the state as a moral player. But we should keep in mind that "A major focus of the restorative justice approach is reducing the number of people in prison" (Linden, 1998:4). Fiscal, moral and social control concerns lose their distinctiveness within the dialogues of the state as empowerer.

Empowerment talk, within Canada's national boundaries, seems particularly focused on the Aboriginal site. But, as I

am arguing, one ought not to construe this as signifying a new enlightened relationship of the state with Aboriginal peoples. As with the US empowerment zones, so too with what we might deem "empowerment reservations". These are pointed places - most visible places - where rationalities of government can be seen to signify moral authority as the state draws back from the traditional programmatic responsibilities of welfarism. All the while, the moral dictum of empowerment to take responsibility for self, is present. In short, these are places rife with the creation of modern selfs. The irony here ought to be clear. Empowerment discourse finds the traditionally oppressed, and disenfranchised, not to articulate emancipatory possibilities, but to affirm moral authority. In other words, empowerees would appear to be a host of empowerment discourses engaged in a process of expanding, reformulating or reconstituting power within the moral domain. In short (and with a guarded cynicism) the more improbable the possibility of the potential empoweree attaining any meaningful power, the more likely is the chance of being "empowered". Take for example Corrections Canada's selection of "Federally Sentenced Women" as empowerment subjects:

Women are regarded as experts on their individual life experiences and treated with respect. The survival strengths within each women (sic) is focused upon in order to promote *empowerment* and effect change (Criteria for Effective Programming for FSW, 1998).

So says Corrections Service Canada in its recommendation for empowerment as a central "Women-Centered Principle" in correction programs for FSW's (Federally Sentenced Women). The CSC in its "Correctional Program Strategy for Federally Sentenced Women" (1994) formerly states the empowerment principle as follows:¹⁴

Empowerment- the inequalities and reduced life choices encountered by women and experienced even more acutely by many FSW, have left them with little self-esteem and belief in the power to control their lives. This reduces a woman's ability to cope and increases the self-destructive behavior that is so prevalent among FSW. Low self-esteem can also contribute to an inability to plan the future, take responsibility for one's actions and to violence against others. Improving self-esteem increases the ability of each FSW to make choices and gain control of her life. Empowerment is the process through which women gain insight into their situation, identify their strengths, and are supported and challenged to take positive action to gain control of their lives (1998).

Empowerment was put forward in a CSC publication entitled "Creating Choices" as a principle proposed to guide correctional intervention away from "management based on control and punishment" (Hattem, 1998). Hattem (1998), a

Senior Research Officer (Corrections Research, Solicitor General Canada), articulates the empowerment principle in the following way:

We must also recognize that these women are capable of understanding their own needs and allow them more decision making power in determining what programs and services they require and are best suited to them. The ability to exercise choice is crucial to all women (and men) in prison, whatever the length of their sentence or the range of options available to them.

What is interesting here is that Hattem's FSW self's are not imagined as modern empowered selfs. Her methodologically constructed selfs broach the conceptual parameters of a modern self that I have earlier described as a modern sociological self. In short, they do not belong here in the modernist totality wherein the modern communitarian selfs dwell. Because they are, oddly enough, a site for the government's empowerment discourse and for the purpose of demonstrating how these problematic selfs are managed by this empowerer, we will allow them a brief tenure in this chapter.

These FSW selfs emphasise the distinctiveness of "women's realities" and the ability to demonstrate a knowledgeability of their self's (reflexivity) within the "broader context of their lives" (Hattem, 1998). Identity, is central to this self's self-awareness/construction which is a threat to the modern self's "reflective" communitarian

construction. In other words, identity has supplanted traditional civil institutions as the foundation of the FSW self's moral self-constitution. Why, then, would the state select these selfs for empowerment when identity is a politics which poses the question of morality "without" the moral terrain the state is attempting to inhabit? Perhaps it can be reasoned as follows.

These "women's realities" are soon brought back into line with the old "realities" of a gendered modern (disempowered) self, or, if you like, the modern self. FSW is an empowerment site wherein the state can exercise, at will, its display of moral authority; of its benevolent act of giving "women" the opportunity to empower their selfs.

Prison is a practical laboratory to observe the process of redirecting external methods of punishment and control inward to an ethic of being responsible to do so to oneself. Foucault drew our attention to the emergence of the psy sciences and its conceptual apparatus for turning discipline and punishment inward through controlling our subjectivities. First the body, then science; now morality/ethics. Listen to the findings of the empowerer as social science researcher:

...prisons for women provide fertile ground for peer-counselling programs...Recent studies at the Prison for Women attest to the overwhelming need for programs that 'empower women to make positive lifestyle changes within a context of education,

support and recovery'...**What the consumers said...**
'She let me know it's not entirely my fault'
(Pollack, 1998: 199)..

Clearly, the state is not interested in partnering with FSWs. Apart from contemplating this as an absurdity, the point is that it offers no benefit to the state to do so. FSWs are denied participation in the civil society that the state must demonstrate (to modern empowered selfs) it holds as sacred; as a partner. Ironically, the empowerment "principle" (as above) in this case prioritises women's subjectivities as a primary source of useful carceral knowledge. In effect, this knowledge must be contained as usefully programmatic, practical, and instructive. It cannot carry moral weight, that is, it can not be conceptualised within frameworks that would issue challenges to the state's authority to structure boundaries of moral responsibility. As such, it is at best wishful thinking to suggest that the "principles of choice and empowerment are a significant challenge to traditional correctional philosophy based on control" (Meyers, 1996). Its merely a "jazzed-up" version of a carceral rationale but one from which it could be argued that the state draws moral currency for its empowerment rationale.

This is accomplished by displaying FSWs' subjectivities as clearly knowing the boundaries of moral responsibility. Consistent with Foucault's (1973, in particular) writing, it is not the body that is the focus of discipline and correction. The facts of FSWs' physical confinement are left mundane. Instead it is the FSWs' subjectivities that express, first of all a successful capture, and then a successful discipline and correction. This can be heard in the following passage from the empowerer Hatten (1998), who speaks for these subjectivities in the following way:

...whatever the circumstances of their lives-being sent to institutions or foster homes, living on the street, being involved in substance abuse, or experiencing physical or sexual abuse-they were not used to minimize or excuse what happened or to absolve themselves of responsibility.

It is elsewhere in the criminal justice system that the state's empowerment discourse speaks to the broader interests of moral authority.

Jan Fox (1994), Warden, Edmonton Female Facility, (unwittingly) explains to us how this is accomplished in her article entitled "Creating choices through community consultation and partnership: The site selection process for Edmonton federally sentenced women's facility." She states:

It is no longer possible, nor is it desirable, to build a new correctional facility without involving members of the local community...we must

ensure that we are a positive presence in the community and contribute socially, culturally and economically to our host neighbourhoods...one objective is to be a 'good corporate citizen' (1998).

Once again we see the state acknowledging, through "partnership" with "community", its moral character as empowerer.¹⁵ Corrections is a site replete with such empowerment discourse. A pointed example will suffice to end this discussion.

Community Corrections tells us that a "revolution is occurring in law enforcement...called 'community policing' ...the terms 'customer service,' 'partnership,' and 'empowerment' best characterise the paradigm shift underlying the community policing revolution" (Bringing Community Into Community Corrections, 1998). Community Corrections is another Canadian empowerment zone. Listen to how Corrections, as empowerer, speaks to its potential empoweree subjects (as community, of course):

Community correctional centers are generally located in distressed neighborhoods, the very neighborhoods where most offenders live. Our police officers have discovered, however, that the vast majority of the residents of these neighborhoods are good people who want a quality life. These are our partners. We must work with them to change community risk factors (Bringing Community Into Community Corrections, 1998).

Of course, Canada does not have empowerment zones; they are an American imagining!

To summarise, the modern empowered self knows its self as such through its defence of, and participation in, institutions of civil society upon which it depends to construct its obligations and responsibilities to others. Outwardly, it most often appears confident and with a certainty of purpose and moral certitude; not because it knows but because it is unwilling, if not incapable, of knowing the contemporary complexity of social life. It knows the world fearfully as one of social problems stemming from failings of the traditional institutions it imagines. It knows nothing of the deeper crises of self because this requires a critical reflexivity that it does not engage.

It imagines the state as a threat to civil society when the state's programmatic contest the domain of moral authority. Welfarism did this. This self surely celebrates the state's dismantling of its programmes because it signals an end to the terror of co-existing with other selves who dwell there (often empowerment zone dwellers) as failed (disempowered) selves unencumbered by the "moral" responsibility of full-participation in civil society.

Small wonder that the modern empowered self offers little resistance to the discourses of the empowerer which demand that citizen-subjects take responsibility for self. It welcomes the state's "revitalisation process" (Welcome from the President, 1998) fostered in such "empowerment" programs as "workfare". This captures, contains, and remoralises (see Cruickshank, 1993; 1994) an unemployed "other" of the modern empowered self. Modern empowered selves may nourish their selves on the "morality" of communitarianism but for the "other" (disempowered and morally impoverished selves) some "combination of liberal-therapeutic, disciplinary and morally coercive techniques" is surely needed (Cruickshank, as quoted in Valverde, 1996:361). However, there are consequences of the state's move from welfarism to empowerment that the modern empowered self does not appear to quite understand. In short, and this is the rub, the fear that the modern empowered self has of the "other" (an imagining sustained through such programmatics as "empowerment zones", as earlier discussed), allows the state to gain the moral ground that the modern self empowers itself by defending, i.e., the state moves freely into "civil society". The modern self accepts the state as empowerer and in doing so allows the state to move from the status of moral agent to that of moral authority.

As I have discussed in this chapter, the modern self demands that the state act as a rational-legal authority to defend the traditional institutions it holds as sacred. It is held as agent, not authority. To have accomplished this relationship with the state is for this self to have held the state as a moral authority at arms-length. This it claims as an act of empowerment. Ironically, this also signals this self's lack of autonomy in constituting itself as moral.

But it is when it willingly subjugates its will to be moral, in its act of empowerment, to the true empowerer it knows as traditional values filtered through an imagining of civil society with the family, God and community at its moral center, that it announces a self that is "unfit to be free" (see, Valverde, 1996). It is truly a modern sociological self, a carrier of strong imaginations of "institutionalised" traditions which provide the "certain" meaningfulness of being "morally" in the world against what would otherwise be the "feared" condition of anomie. This appears to be the (ironic) essence of this modern empowered self - a defender, sometimes in partnership, of a "modern" and "certain" world.

IV-2. THE LATE-MODERN EMPOWERED SELF

The Late-Modern Self

This self is being made amidst a fusion of post-modernism and post-marxism. It emerges in an analytical gap between a range of possible identities being offered the self beyond class and changes in capitalism that impact on these identities (Thompson, 1996). It is a self dialectically bound to the epoch of a late modern history characterised by "the emergence of new mechanisms of self-identity which are shaped by - yet also shape - the institutions of modernity" (Giddens, 1991:2). As such, these epochal selves are accorded a responsibility to produce and reproduce their present historical sociological reality. They remain, like the modern self, sociological selves inextricably tied to the social and thus sociology remains a privileged moral discourse in its task of articulating, perhaps "periodising" (see Barry et al., 1996:3), the present social landscape of the self. This self, then, imagines its self as the essence of an epoch - thus as an historical self - and has pursued this as a "political" responsibility and with vigour.

Late modern selves are shouldered with the existential burden of making their selves in a very "real" (read sociological) setting where the "principle of radical doubt"

has worked itself into everyday life to form an "existential dimension of the social world" (Giddens, 1991:3). Here, uncertainty as to how to act upon self and "other" coexists with an ever-increasing multiplicity of authoritative sources willing to offer the self "certain" direction.¹⁶ It is amidst this context of a "puzzling diversity of options and possibilities" that the self must, as it always must, reflexively make itself. And to do so it must "trust" (1991:3).¹⁷ But trust what; trust whom? Certainly not, as is the case with the modern self, the traditional normative institutions, as we will shortly see.

Thus, this self is shouldered with the burden of choosing its way of knowing itself as a competent and present actor - assuring a way of knowing the world from amongst a plethora of expert and authoritative knowledges. Not only this, having abandoned the traditional institutions of civil society as its source of moral nourishment (after being abandoned by them), it is now confronted with the uncertainty of how to act morally upon "others", or as we see, how to imagine and act upon a reconstituted civil society that stands against that imagined by the empowered modern self.

The Empowered self of Late-Modernity (ESLM)

Giddens (1991), who speaks for and to the late modern self, understands empowerment more or less as a technical accomplishment which demonstrates the use of the expert knowledge that "reflexive modernity" has made routinely available to laypersons; as, for example is announced in the following (from the point of view of a late-modern self as "empowerer"):

SPECIAL NEWS REPORT...While traditional publishers try to extend their publishing empires onto the Internet, an underground movement of researchers hopes to head them off. Its goal is to turn the electronic medium into a means of "author empowerment," in the words of physicist Paul Ginsparg of the Los Alamos National Laboratory. Led by Ginsparg and Stevan Harnad, director of the Cognitive Sciences Center at the University of Southampton in England, they are trying to prove, as Ginsparg puts it, that not only can scientific articles be published over the Internet "unbelievably efficiently," but they can be offered virtually free to all comers (Science on-line, 1999, emphasis added).

The "reflexivity" of modernity is meant to convey that selfs are increasingly questioning and doubting those Meadian (1934) things that lie at the heart of the making of self - i.e., the "normative" of traditional institutions that serve as the "moral" source of self [as carried by the trusted "significant others" (see, Cooley, 1902)]. Indeed, the self's identity (construed sociologically as modern, late-

modern, and/or postmodern) is always tenuous, amorphous, and not a collection of traits carried forth into the social world as if a possession gained. It is rather an identity that is maintained only through the on-going ability to reflexively locate the self within an imagining of one's tradition inclusive of "others" who are trusted as carriers of such. But, this biography,

...cannot be wholly fictive. It must continually integrate events which occur in the external world and sort them into the ongoing 'story' about the self. As Charles Taylor puts it 'In order to have a sense of who we are we have to have a notion of how we have become, and of where we are going' (Giddens, 1991:54).

These late-modern selves, then, have acquired a historical and critical dimension in their experiencing of reflexivity, thereby taking it (reflexivity) beyond the cognitive dimension as a social-psychological (Mead/Cooley) and necessary "instrument" fundamental to making the self modern.

Reflexivity is inherent to the experiencing of late modernity. It expresses the now intimate relationship that the self has with an epochal/structural condition characterised by the increasing proliferation of expert knowledge and information particularly regarding practical "self-making" means to accomplish imagined ideals of self.

Paradoxically, then, the late-modern self has come to know the freedom to make self ("without" traditional institutions) and hence has come to know the uncertainty that accompanies this now unfettered responsibility of choosing and the tyranny of an ever-present measuring of choices - of self-questioning. In short, reflexivity is here a generic contemporary condition of being in and thus experiencing the world as a late modern self.

As a consequence of all this, empowerment, as we are beginning to see through the claims of the (reflexive) late-modern self, is an accomplishment amidst a plethora of choices which are themselves reducible to an effect of epochal changes. The character of the late-modern, as captured in the rapid proliferation and technological dispersion of knowledge (and hence, ways to act upon the self), contributes to the uncertainty of our times. However, it does not enable the empowerment of late-modern selves; it merely offers them a plurality of ways to be (morally/practically) in the world. We know (from my last chapter) that there are modern selves and therefore that they exist amidst late-modernity and among late-modern selves. As such, (reflexive) late-modern self's claims to empowerment point to one way of being (morally) in the world. They are

part of the larger quest of selfs confronting the Kantian problem anew.¹⁸

The self of late-modernity must experience anxiety and uncertainty in a way that the modern self, as its empowerment claims have told us, cannot know. It is useful here to develop this contrast of the late-modern with the modern self. The modern (sociological) self, as its empowerment claims have told us, exhibits only that (Meadian) reflexivity that is required to make itself. The web of norms it inhabits, in its imaginings of traditional civil society, provide it with an ontological anchor from which flows a demonstrable moral certitude in its interaction with others. Socialisation, as Durkheim might say, insulates this self against the "moral fragility" that is a latent characteristic of being a social actor in the modern world. The more totalising the socially produced ethical/moral standards - the more functional consensus among and between the normative socialising institutions which stand "over and above" selfs - the more desirable is the state of moral affairs for this self (see Durkheim, 1895; 1912). It lessens the possibility that this self may indeed have to confront the moral ambivalence that is increasingly argued as being an essential component of a modern sociologised selfs.¹⁹

"Trust" does not appear to be an intervening cognitive consideration in the self-making of a modern empowered self. Indeed, amidst a mistrust (particularly of the state) if not an imagination rife with fear of different "others", it blindly wills its own submission in an act of faith to the "certain" sanctity of traditional moral authorities that inhabit its imagined "good" civil society. In other words, "trust" is given freely. For example, embarking on the third of "16 steps to empowerment" these modern selves "... make a decision to become our authentic selves and trust in the healing power of the truth" (16 Steps to Empowerment, 1998). As unlikely and ironic as it seems, this act of submission is its empowerment.²⁰ "Empowered Living" begins when I (as modern self):

...admit that I am powerless to improve my life. I need help. I come to believe that available within me is a creative intelligence and power that can completely change my life. I make a decision to place myself completely under God's direction and guidance, and become willing to be changed (Church of Today, 1998).

This modern self appears to hunger for submission - to escape from uncertainty - as the growing number of "Step to Empowerment Programs" would seem to suggest.²¹ Typically, this modern self takes its first step toward an admission of powerlessness: "... we were powerless over the effects of

addiction...that our lives had become unmanageable" (Twelve Steps for Adult Children, 1998). And then steps to the belief "...that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to wholeness" (1998). Its submission is complete when this self has decided to (step three) "...turn our will and our lives over to the care of God, as we understood God" (1998).

The selfs of late-modernity, on the other hand, know the ontological terrain as "times of strongly felt moral ambiguity"; strongly felt because "these times offer us freedom of choice never before enjoyed, but also cast us into a state of uncertainty never before so agonizing" (Bauman, 1993:21). Remember, they are epochal/historical selfs. "Trust" is no longer a silent partner of tradition embedded in the process of the way the traditional modern self makes and remakes its self.²² It is now a commodity offered up to the late-modern self for its reflective consideration and sometimes consumption. Trust is now, for these late-modern selfs, contested in an anxiety ridden ontological terrain because it has become conjoined with risk. It has, in other words, emerged as a conditional aspect of the way we make our late-modern self in a world known as pervasive with risk. This world demands an agential self, one that must choose who and what to trust and one which must take responsibility for

such choices — if it is to make itself. This existential condition is, as Giddens (1991:32) poignantly states, "the reflexivity of modernity...(which)...extends into the core of the self." It is demonstrable in terms of the uncertainty that accompanies the late modern self's search for moral nourishment in its making of self.²³ It is, in other words, demonstrable in the late-modern self's claim to empowerment; a claim that announces who and what to trust/distrust in the making of self...

...Political Empowerment...is dedicated to providing information which can be used for empowering individuals to pursue political solutions to problems they see...(to)...provide readers tools for creating positive change...I have found new ideas in science, technology and politics...Political leadership has become a system of manipulation. Science and Power: One of the purposes of Earthpulse Press has been to develop greater awareness of the coming possibilities in science...which provides a framework for creating change* in a political environment. It is designed to give insight and recommend specific methods for changing political realities(Earthpulse Press: Political Empowerment, 1999).

So, underscoring the analytical landscape of late modernity is a moral predicament that relentlessly confronts the self. As stated by Hans Jonas (1974:176-178), "never was so much power coupled with so little guidance for its use...we need wisdom most when we believe in it least." Giddens (1991) is probably correct in suggesting that anxiety and insecurity

has existed throughout the ages.²⁴ But he is also correct in adding that "the content and form of prevalent anxieties certainly have become altered" (1991:32). Empowerment claims of late-modern selfs suggest this; they suggest that the self is exploring (reflexively) its connection with "personal and social change" amidst a modern world that has replaced the "protective framework of the small community and tradition" with the impersonal instructives of expert knowledge (1991:33) - i.e., the "contractarian view of morality dependent on reflexivity and rational thought" (Shilling and Mellor, 1998:195). Giddens (1991:34) may also be correct to suggest, (because it fits so well with many empowerment claims) that:

Self-identity becomes problematic in modernity in a way which contrasts with self-society relations in more traditional contexts; yet this is not only a situation of loss, and it does not imply either that anxiety levels necessarily increase. Therapy is not simply a means of coping with novel anxieties but an expression of the reflexivity of the self.

However, if this is true, what are we to make of the selfs that I have revealed as modern empowerment selfs in the previous chapter? They too inhabit the present, and although sociologically they may be constructed as parochial, their empowerment claims suggest a lack of meaningful reflexivity but yet a determination to maintain the boundaries of their

moral terrain - to carry the modern self forward as "empowered".

There are a number of empowered selves out there. And, as we move through the empowerment claims of late-modern selves, we can uncover a number of variations dwelling within the sociologically constructed boundaries of late modernity. And while "reflexivity" may usefully point to an epochal juncture in humankind's history (useful for theory qua theory), how do we square this with the fact that some selves (as expressed by their empowerment claims) do not understand their selves therein? Reflexive modernity seems to be a sociological imagining of a totality that many "layperson's" empowerment claims would appear to doubt.

Having discussed in general terms the late-modern self and some of the parameters of its empowerment, I turn now to a more precise mapping of late-modern empowered selves

The Paradoxical Empowered Self of Late Modernity (PESLM)

These are late-modern selves whose reflexivity locates their selves as experiencing a remaking of the world; selves of "New Times" (see Thompson, 1996). Their selves are constituted through a reflexive encounter with their experience of difference which we have come to know as their "political" identity. One such empowered self (i.e., PESLM)

is former NAC President and now co-host of CBC Newsworld's "Face-Off" Judy Rebick. It announces:

I think identity politics is also about belonging. I know that I have often felt that I didn't belong in society. It's a common experience among people who feel marginalized. In my case it's not so much about being Jewish as being female and trying to rebel against the role that was set up for me as a female. I always felt weird, like something was wrong with me, something was different about me. What identity gives you is a way to say, this is my group, the group that I belong to. I am part of this. And that's very empowering for people (Rebick and Roach, 1996:74).

Rebick and other such PESLM selfs capture the "inner struggles" of the "divided self...a battleground for what he (William James) feels to be two deadly hostile selves; one actual the other ideal" (Lemert, 1994). They have severed the historical (nurturing) relationship of the modern self with the traditional social institutions by challenging, rather than submitting to (as modern selfs do), the moral directives and fixed roles of traditional norms as embedded in (parochial) ideals of the traditional institutions of civil society. Empowered now as "we's, these PESLM selfs say,

we...take a stand for the rights and freedoms of women as full citizens of the world. Reproductive freedom, the right to live without the fear of being violated, and full equality on all fronts are just a few of the issues we address...(and)...the empowerment of women to be in charge of their own lives without the

restrictions imposed by religion or the patriarchal establishment...(Female Empowerment Ring, 1998, emphasis added).

These PESML selfs have experienced oppression within the traditional web of norms which remain hostile to these selfs. As an empowered Asian female PESLM self, it knows "The family...(as)...the last frontier of patriarchy...as disempowering" (The NGO Intervention, 1998).

The emergent knowledge of their differences has led to these PESLM selfs with like-differences coalescing in a new plurality of "we- images"²⁵...

Established in 1995, The Gay Vietnamese Alliance provides a safe and supportive environment for gay, bisexual and transgendered men of Vietnamese descent from all over the world to network, to foster self-empowerment, to voice issues and to create leadership (Gay Vietnamese Alliance, 1998).

Empowerment for these late-modern selfs is, in part, an act of relocating their self in an acknowledged identity of difference coupled with an (often political) effort to preserve such difference amidst the historical and present threat of marginalization and "seperatedness" (Melucci, 1995). This is a self preoccupied, understandably, with the historical and philosophical as the ideals it seeks continue to strain harshly against the hegemony of the "real" it knows experientially, historically, and culturally. Listen here at

length to this late-modern self's struggle within a Mexican Latino empowerment "we-group":

WARNING...These materials are written primarily for people of "Mexican" descent...We, the Original Inhabitants of Aztlan and Anahuac are a people of one same mother culture, brothers and sisters separated by artificial European boundaries----their boundaries on our land...CAUTION: SPECIAL NOTE FOR PEOPLE OF EUROPEAN DESCENT...in reading all of our pages remember that the phrase "objective view of history" has always unfairly meant a "European view of history"...we have seen...the theft of our lands, the theft of our wealth, the theft of our labor, and, most importantly, the theft of our true Indigenous identity, history, and heritage...This tragedy of the imposed ignorance of our people serves American society with an unproud, passive people who serve seemingly happily as maids, busboys, gardeners, farmworkers, fast-food service workers and other poverty-equivalent jobs...WHY "MEXICA" AS AN IDENTITY FOR ALL OF OUR PEOPLE? AND WHAT IS ANAHUAC? First of all, Anahuac is the Pre-European Indigenous cultural area that unites our people from Costa Rica to the Four Corners Area (east and west of there to Texas and California) ...Anahuac is our nation and Mexica is the identity for all of our people to reconstruct as a collective identity...Mexica is the collective identity, history, and heritage that we are rebuilding. Collective is the Indigenous Anahuac approach; our approach. Individualism is the anti-Indigenous Eurocentric approach. The Maya, Zapotec, Mixtec, Purepecha, Otomi, Huastec, and Mexica-Aztec were the only large civilizations that we could have realistically drawn our collective identity from. Mexica is the only one who has the combined factors of a written classical literature, defined theology, and a record of its society that we can use as a base from which we can recreate ourselves...we too can reconstruct ourselves based on our Mexica Anahuac civilization...NOT Hispanic Hispanics are the Spaniards, the people of Spain. We are not Spaniards!...It enslaves us to the interests of

the "Spanish" white world. NOT Latino! Latino just means Latin in the Spanish language. Latino is cultural ethnocide when promoted by the Spaniards and their descendants. It betrays our true Indigenous ancestors...is part of the continuing Spaniard colonization of our people. NOT Mestizo. Mestizo is not an identity. It ...stresses the false "beauty" of our supposed Spanish side at the expense of our true Indigenous beauty and history. NOT Raza. Raza is not an identity. It is basically the same thing as Mestizo, it takes pride in Spanish blood and puts shame in our Indigenous blood and culture. It is like the "N" word in the African-American community, some African-Americans use it all the time for themselves; but it is still a racist insult (We Are Not Raza Not Mestizo---We Are..., 1998).

Embracing the struggle with imagined others of like differences ("we-images") is the telling moral urge of this self's empowerment.²⁶ They struggle to replace the modern empowered self's imaginings of (traditional) civil society, as the moral core of social life, with their own re-imaginings of civil society as a revitalised and idealised public space - a reconstituted polis if you will. Some prefer to see this as the process of the self-production of social movements (see Melucci, 1989). In this imagined now open ethical space, we-identities gather to "ensure that the anonymous and impersonal power relations of complex society are rendered visible and negotiable, and that those who exercise power are subject to greater control" (Keane and Mier, in Melucci, 1989).

Ironically these selfs, for the most part, remain tied to the modern imagining of the sources of moral nourishment for self and it is this which makes their self-construction somewhat paradoxical. By this I mean that they tenaciously hang onto the idea of locating the self in a claimed reinvigorated civil society, which more often than not, slips into a vision they know as "community". Thus, they remain dependent on the idea that their self can only be moral because of society and therefore these late-modern selfs are kindred of the modern self [This could be seen as a lingering vestige of the traditional parochial modern self (perhaps a "colonial hangover") or a Durkheimian fear of the "unfreedom" that accompanies the freedom from constraint]. But, these are nevertheless the "new" selfs of "new times" because they demonstrate an "enlightened" pursuit of an idea of sociability, a refashioned "civil society" as the "good" society, within which to construct their moral constitution (Jenkins, 1996:44). These late modern selfs are, as their empowerment claims tells us, active in (re) imagining civil society as a moral entity palatable to these self's newly "discovered" self-identity and the "we-ness" within which it places this self. As such its empowerment is a striving toward sociability as an end - as an achievement²⁷ - in itself: something which the modern self (the sociological one

offered us by Mead) tells us is merely a consequence of adapting to the web of norms (i.e., an instrumental/cognitive process). These selfs are, then, the paradoxical selfs of late modernity because in looking forward to new moral associations, they place limits on such imaginings by binding them to the idea of civil society as the place within which these associations must form. They are afforded the imaginings of identity and accompanying freeing up from the web of norms through the reflexivity that late-modernity brings, yet they seek through their imaginings of civil society to (re) subjugate their selfs to an idea of the social that remains more powerful than their willing selfs (in matters moral). Restated in Lemert's (1996:104) language, they are "reflexive with respect to inferences drawn from their own experiences" but unite with the modern self as a "strong-we group...because it enforces the illusion that humanity itself constitutes the final and sufficient identifying group."²⁸

In short, like the modern self, this PESLM self stays within imaginings that tell them that they can only be moral (empowered) because of society. Both are modern sociological selfs. Unlike them, their empowerment is an ongoing struggle to connect newly discovered identities to imaginings of civil society. Then, through their empowerment claims, they bring

this idealised society into a struggle often against the state and against those imaginings of other empowered selves which carry forward the traditional normative institutional morality (Cohen, 1985:665). In this they demonstrate their reflexivity and thus a distancing from the modern empowered self. Listen, here, to how the PESLM selfs of the Gender Identity Project understands their selfs in the "empowering" process of helping its transexual and transgendered clients discover their "we-ness" (note the attachment to community):

How the Gender Identity Project can help? In the tradition of the Lesbian & Gay Community Services Center's commitment to fostering empowerment for lesbians and gay men, the Center's Gender Identity Project offers transgender and transexual people an opportunity to discover who they are in an atmosphere of self-acceptance and to build community (Center Gender Identity Project, 1998).

In this case, the late-modern self is provided the opportunity to empower itself - to "discover" and then situate its self in a "we-image" - and then, as is most often the case, given a nod toward a "community" imagined but not articulated. Community remains the "ideal" which struggles against the "real" of these historically/culturally marginalised identities...

To develop...empowerment, a child must have a sense of cultural identity. Accordingly, it behooves reservation schools to help Navajo children develop a sense of identity and self-pride that is compatible with Navajo values (Navajo Empowerment Case Study, 1998).

Beneath its wrapping of difference, this PESLM self shares with the modern (traditional) self the moral heart of communitarianism — as would appear to be the case for all selves that fear the "freedom" that lies beyond a self not "morally" anchored (and therefore dependent upon) to a thick idea of the social (as is the case for the fragmented and fractured postmodern "selves"). But its empowerment lies in the active resistance to moral authoritarianism whether administered by God, The Christian Family, the state, Socialism or Marxism. It resists this traditional authority but acquiesces nonetheless to authority secularised, and politicised — the authority of what it imagines as communitarian ethics. Such is the case with the following self which clearly wishes to be formally acknowledged as a dweller within the social institution of family; albeit one constructed by a "we-group" coalition as part of its imagined civil society. It says,

All people, regardless of sexual orientation have the right to determine for themselves their primary personal relationships and to have these relationships supported and recognized in law and by social institutions. Coalition for Lesbian and Gay Rights in Ontario (CLGRO) Statement of Principle adopted On Our Own Terms Conference, Guelph 1989 (All of Us Empowered: Equality within the Family; Equality among Families, 1999).

These PESLM selfs imagine a re-awakened civic society in which its self, as an active citizen, has "...a certain pre-eminence among our identities given its status as the "democratic political identity par excellence" (Mouffe, as quoted in Hughes, 1996:29). As an active citizen, its imagined community often needs a push to be re-awakened, as is clear in the following self's empowerment declaration from the "International Seminar on Women's Empowerment Conference" (1999):

The push from civil society to bring female empowerment on the agenda started in the seventies, when it was discovered that the gender-blind development programmes marginalised women ...It was shown that it is not enough to make contraceptives accessible, women must also have ability to implement their decisions. There was a change in the agenda of some donors who decided to support the women's empowerment approach to population policies. That was promoted through a push from the civil society. The major shift in power relations in the world today is that the governments have by force to be more receptive of the inputs of civil society. The women's international movement is a major component of the major growth that we see today in the civil society (Fourth World Conference Empowers Women, 1998).

As such, identity mixes with but does not supersede (as we will see it doing with a postmodern self) a self acknowledged as a constituent of civil society. It is the hope of the "Youth Empowered for Survival" "we-group" to produce such selfs by offering,

...inner-city youth a chance to experience a day in the life of doctors and nurses. Teaming students with successful African American medical professionals at work, Y.E.S. is designed to encourage these students to pursue their dreams ... "There are thousands of successful African American men and women in our city, who are -- for the most part -- invisible to large segments of the community and the media," he said. "Y.E.S. offers students an opportunity to see and interact with us, learn about our work and FIND OUT HOW WE GOT FROM WHERE THEY ARE TO WHERE WE ARE TODAY." (Y.E.S., 1999).

These PESLM selfs, then, actively resist traditional forms of moral authoritarianism be it in the hands of the state or traditional institutions of civil society. Yet they share with the modern empowered selfs fear of, say, a postmodern self who may abandon imaginings of civil society (the social) and displace the moral through its random expressions of identity (I say more on this later). They often direct their empowerment programatics toward youth empowerment, as these "selfs" are not completely formed and may indeed be lost to the "postmodern". Typically, when these empowered selfs shift to "empowerer" self, they speak in the following way (note the reference to "partnership"):

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY YOUTH SERVICE (Statement of Purpose) The purpose of youth work is to ensure equality of opportunity for young people to fulfil their potential as empowered individuals and members of groups and communities and to support young people during the transition to adulthood... designed to be empowering - supporting young people to understand and act on the personal,

social and political issues which affect their lives, and the lives of others and the communities of which they are a part. Youth work is delivered through partnerships between young people, local authorities and voluntary and statutory agencies which:...encourage active citizenship and awareness of rights and responsibilities so that young people can participate fully in the democratic process;...to work with "marginalised" groups or individual young people including:- * young people with special needs or disabilities * young parents * young women * young people who are gay, lesbian or bisexual * young people from ethnic groups (Hampshire County Youth Services, 1999).

In sum, because PESLM selfs acknowledge in their imaginings of civil society as a place from which the "moral" of the self emerges, these selfs can be placed in the same genealogical trajectory as the modern empowered self. They, too, cannot leave behind the social without leaving part of their self behind.

However, the relatively brief modern history of the PESLM self reveals a "radical" past - a departure into terrain that the modern self no doubt fears. After an hiatus into this conceptual landscape, as an "enlightened self" vis-a-vis the revolutionary politics of marxism, and Gramsci in particular,²⁹ it has, ironically, returned to reclaim - to re-imagine and re-moralize - the civil society it once disavowed as "bourgeois". Community emerges in its normative imaginings; but so too in the imaginings of selfs whose

"political empowerment" looks to a vision of (in the case below) civil idealism. This is where once again the ground gets muddled between the modern self and the reflexive late modern self; between the traditional ideological distinctions at the heart of modernity. It is where the parochialism of the PESLM self is revealed, or if you like, where we see the late modern self as reflexive but "backward" looking...

At a time when millions of Americans are struggling to identify the values that we share, the Institute for the Study of Civic Values believes that it is our civic values--the principles embodied in the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and the Bill of Rights--that bring us together as a people...The Institute for the Study of Civic Values has been a leader in developing innovative programs for neighborhood revitalization and empowerment...Civic Values are the ideals of freedom, equality, democracy, and justice embodied in the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and the Bill of Rights. Whatever else we might believe, these are the basic values that we share as Americans. At the heart of the Institute's work is an ongoing effort to apply these principles to the major social, economic, and political problems facing the country...Community in America grows out of collective efforts to fulfill our shared civic ideals (Institute for the Study of Civic Values, 1998).

PESLM selfs of this idealised civic community, while perhaps suspicious of political authority, retain a trust in the moral authority of traditional American values. Their vision of the community appears to hold a desire to reconstitute the

"way it was" of a romantic past. And while this self's imaginings are considered reflexive (and this may mark it off from the traditional modern self) its (unreflexive) belief in shared ideal of community marks this self off from those other communitarian (read "radical") reflexive selves who have lost faith and trust through their experience of separateness that has accompanied marginalisation and oppression. Interestingly, then, the coalescence of self (modern and PESLM) around the imaginings of community as expressed in empowerment claims begins to muddy the traditional ideological waters.

The PESLM self is tenuously distanced from the modern self because its empowerment claims infuse community (civil society) with imaginings of identity as being central to the moral constitution of society and therefore a moral self. In other words, the imagined "web of norms" upon which the modern self nourishes its moral self, have been found to be exclusionary; so too for the Marxism which nourished the "enlightened" self, the self of praxis (see ff. 27 and the conclusion of this dissertation) by reducing it to class and steering its appetite for morality to revolutionary ideals (see Mouffe, 1988). If not these as a source of moral nourishment, where then the source?

The PESLM self, as its identity politics would seem to attest to, is also characterised by a reflexivity - the knowledge that the self is in crisis, but also (and this it shares with the modern empowered self) an assumption that the moral substance must come from without, from the social - and a faith that it can be located in civil society. It is interesting that it returns to the site of civil society to look for its moral content; the point at which the modern self got going (Wolfe, 1989:187-188). It accepts that we are moral because of society but its imaginings of society move to those of (re)imagining a civil society wherein "community and social justice are captured in practices that constitute local governance society" (Hughes, 1996:17). Such imaginings and practices are the "empowering" component of this self. Its loss of faith in the moral authority of traditional institutions marks this self off from the modern self. But, and just as importantly, its "re-moralisation of the social order" - its will to empower - involves constructing alternatives to state governance through active pursuit of "new local governance, as for example, multi-agency community 'safety' strategies; generation of the common good, social inclusion" (Hughes, 1996:19). And underneath all this it fears uncertainty.

Whereas the modern self is empowered when it subordinates the state to a rational-legal authority in its demand for it to protect the foundations and boundaries of civil society (and thus "empowers" the state as agent); the PESLM self is empowered when it offers (political) practices that supplant these institutions as foundational moral authorities thus rendering the state's role as moral agent superfluous. Civil society is not, for these selfs, a "self-founded" source of moral authority. On the contrary, it is imagined as something to be achieved amidst the very "dissolution of the landmarks of certainty" (Mouffe, 1988:34). It is, in other words, "...a 'project of projects'" Giddens (1994:33) imagined as an emancipatory struggle towards the achievements of justice, equality and freedom (Mouffe, 1988). Democracy itself is a project; empowering civil society is, for these selfs, its core concern.

PESLM selfs are ambitious insofar as they wish to refashion social democracy constituted by local networks and not just by the state, the market and the nation (Mouffe, 1988). Their imaginings of the ideal do struggle harshly against their experiential knowledge of the actualities of life, but their particular ideal struggles against other claims to the ideal - other claims to empowerment. Mostly,

they struggle against those ideals expressed within "empowerments" which voice universalising emancipatory projects - their struggle is really with "praxis" (see the last chapter). Their ideals focus on moral human interaction within localized struggles of new social movements (Mouffe, 1988:28).

To summarize, it would seem that the PESLM is marked by its characteristic of reflexively, i.e., its doubting of the traditional hierarchy of relations of authority (and morality - as with the modern self). Its confidence (also a product of its reflexivity), on the other hand, is expressed in the moral certitude that accompanies its push for a co-operative environment of "solidarity, trust, and reciprocity" (Hughes, 1996:28). Local strategies (of empowerment) to "counter reactionary law and order tendencies of central government" (1996:29; see also Mouffe, 1992); "re-imagining a response to the narrow legalism of the liberal definition of citizenship; and, challenging the statist conception of politics (the left's alternative), are encompassed in its empowerment directives. This PESLM self is truly a different creature than the modern empowered self.

Its empowerment voices a "different way of appealing to values like "community" and "solidarity" which does not leave room for exclusion and injustice (Spicker, 1994:17).

As such, its empowerment is attempting to demonstrate a responsibility of being a late-modern self in that it urges "morality itself as a public good" (Jordon, 1992:159). This self is, then, actively seeking to escape from the uncertainty and moral ambiguity of being in the modern world. Its escape is centered on the replacing of uncertainty through a re-imagining of a civil society which is more palatable to their self (identity). It returns to repossess, and then reconstruct, the notion of civil society. "Trust", in their case, is turned inward to be balanced against Schutz' (1971) structures of everyday thinking, Mannheim's (1936) "existential determinations" of knowing, or what Dorothy Smith (1990) terms, "grounded experience". Hence, identity or a standpoint of self-reflexivity attained, allows this self to see, with assurance, the "line of fault" in the institutions that nurture the modern self. This is a self confirmed by, and confirming of, how a modern sociology of knowledge imagines a self; or as C. Wright Mills (1959) might phrase it, a self that has an intimate personal relationship with its "biography" and is therefore in possession of a developed "sociological imagination". Empowerment - feminist, gay, lesbian, latino, youth - acknowledges this.

The Empowerer of the PESLM

As discussed earlier, an aspect of the modern self's empowerment is its pursuit of the ideal society wherein the state is envisioned as a rational-legal authority which acts as a moral agent in its defence of the moral boundaries of traditional civil society. I also argued how, in short, the state as empowerer is reconstituting itself as a moral authority irrespective of the modern self's idealisation of its relationship (of suspicion) to the state. The PESLM self also imagines the state as a threat to be contained "without" civil society. In making its self, this PESLM self engages in the act of reflexively locating its now accomplished "different" self in the context of "we-images". As such, it moves away from the modern empowered self (and its imaginings of traditional normative institutions) to arrive at, in essence, a reconstituted "identity" which coalesces within "we-images" which are wrapped into the structural realm of what we have come to know as New Social Movements. The PESLM self is now ready to confront the state, as it has been moved to the realm of the "real" to pursue its:

... 'self-understanding' that abandons revolutionary dreams in favor of the idea of structural reform, along with a defence of civil society...the self-defence of 'society' against the state (and the market economy)...to struggle for a 'post bourgeois, post patriarchal', and democratic civil society (Cohen, 1985:664).

In common with the traditional modern self, then, this PESLM self envisions civil society as its source of moral nourishment. Both are selves of what Lemert (1994) refers to as the "strong-we group"; selves who fashion their moral constitution by a demonstrated allegiance to an idealised imagining of the "good" self-founded on the (re) discovery of a universal essence in "civil society". In particular – and their empowerment claims demonstrate this – these are selves attached to moral values (Rose, 1996a:6) that evince "that liberal democracies have done away neither with moral codes nor with the institutions and practices that embody them" (Wolfe: 1989:6). They can only be moral because of society.

Both modern and PESLM selves are seduced by the Nineteenth Century ideal of civil society. Though, for the PESLM selves, this ideal is not filled by the traditional historical institutional arrangements that the modern empowered self imagines and wishes to perpetuate in its empowerment strivings. It is this backward looking historicity that nevertheless marks the paradoxical character of the late modern self's empowerment strivings. Its "modernness", although obfuscated in these times by its articulation of identity as a politics with its protective moral shroud of "correctness", is implicitly asserted by the

assumption that the historical institutions associated with civil society were erroneously constructed and are merely in need of redress - redress being an act that brings "the moral" into "event history" (Lloyd, 1993). Hence this self battles on within an imagined landscape of ideological differences; ironically needing the modern self as the "other" to clarify its own moral/ideological concerns. In this sense, the modern self and the PESLM are peas of the same pod. Dick Hebdige (1989:91) captures this well in the following statement (along with assuring us of their endurance in the modern world). Speaking to the effect of mass media on the creation of social movements he states:

Once again the desire to feel and feel connected to a transitory mass of other people, to engage in transitory and *superficial* alliances of this kind is not intrinsically good or bad. Instead it has to be articulated. Jimmy Swaggart managed to articulate the yearning for community and righteousness one way. Jerry Dammers, founder of the Two Tone movement and co-organizer of the Mandela concert, helped to direct the flow of similar desires in a radically different direction.

As a PESLM (if we claim our selves as such) we need not, in other words, throw out the baby we know as civil society organised around universal moral concerns, with the "bathwaters" of gendered and racialized institutions.

So, the paradoxical self of late modernity shares with its "we group" an "'ideal' which strains harshly against actual life" (Lemert, 1994:101). Formulating these ideals within the context of an institutionalised politics of civil society is its will to empowerment. Its empowerer is, in short, an imagined essence of society as contained within an imagined reconstituted civil society. As such "selfhood and morality" (ideology?) turn out to be inextricably intertwined themes" with empowerment serving to express the "substantial moral dilemma" this self labours under with its "implicit faith in the self-social axis as the hope for "universal progress" (Lemert, 1994:104-105). And, this axis turns around a concerted effort on the part of these PESLM selfs to keep open that political space within which the struggle for the "political good" can be demonstrated. In effect, the PESLM selfs serve to occupy the space we know as liberal democracies and act to, as Held (1996) would have it, serve the "political good" by preventing other less desirable forms of governance from coming into play. They keep the "ideal" in a struggle against the "real" and it is their accomplished "reflexivity" that allows for this. However, the reflexivity of late-modernity has also opened up a space in which other late-modern "empowered" selfs are flourishing; ones whose

reflexivity does not appear to be directed toward "knowing" the "ideal". We can know this self as follows.

The Archtypical Empowered Self of Late-Modern Risk Society

(AESLMRS) ³⁰

So, we are saying here that late-modernity has opened up a space within which a number of empowered selves (perhaps a plurality) are flourishing. With modernity we had a hegemony of the modern self's imagining of a totalising (and we can add, Eurocentric and Androcentric) space wherein traditional (parochial) civil society was the source of moral nourishment. Empowerment claims that continue to issue forth from the voices of such selves are, in essence, calls to maintain the constitutive boundaries of such imaginings and thus the moral making of self. Reflexivity has emerged to make this task of the modern empowered self wholly problematic.

As I have argued, the selves of late modernity exhibit a different order of reflexivity than that which characterises the traditional modern self. Through their empowerment claims, modern reflexive selves show reflexivity having gone beyond its status of the cognitive process of making (modern sociological) self and to that of being central in attempting to reconstitute civil society (as historical selves). They

are, in effect, selfs (as exemplified by the PESLM) which imagine a renewed relationship with an idealised more compassionate and just society. They are selfs which have weaned their selfs from the moral nourishment gathered from their imaginings of traditional institutions. As Beck (1992) would argue, these selfs are "freed" from an existential condition of "unreflexive" immersion in the (moral) determinations of institutions and are thus marked off from the traditional modern self. From the point of view of the traditional modern self, the reflexive selfs are now, of course, (Durkhemian) "unfree" selfs. Some of these late modern selfs (i.e., PESLM) we now know have self-consciously (reflexively) re-situated their selfs in the "we-groups" of like differences and re-subjugated their selfs to the authority of the imagined, and most often communitarian, ideals of the "New Times". Others have not. The AESLMRS is such an "other" that we will scrutinise here.

Reflexive modernity, as an epochal condition, expresses a space that has opened up between the individual and the social formations within which doubt and uncertainty can flourish. And while we can see how the PESLM selfs have wedged political identities (and civic ideals) into this space and allayed for the time their ontological uncertainty something else - another empowerer along with "willing"

empoweree subjects - has moved into this space. Here we will find uncertain selfs being "empowered" through their "knowing" of impending future risk and their "knowing", and thus acquisition of, present "kits" that offer ontological security. Reflexivity frees the self from unreflexive determinations, that is, it necessarily thrusts the self into a world where the self must now decide - must choose how to constitute its self. Risk is a companion of decision-making (Beck, 1992) and in this case, the self participates in a risky "marketized" landscape as a "consumer" of "insurance against the future possibilities of unemployment, ill-health, old age and the like..." (Rose, 1996b:58).

This uncertain and risky space in the landscape of late-modernity is the domain of the predatory empowerer; also known as the accomplished liberal economic actor. Liberalism, as we saw was the case for the PESLM self, is brought forth into late-modernity through the imaginings of how the self is fixed to polity (and civil society) - the polis, if you like. Here, we see liberalism being carried forward by empowerment claims expressing the other (historical) trajectory of liberalism - the "practical" economic domain. The empowerer moves freely through this economic space (as liberalism guarantees) in the search for selfs that are not gathered up by the "we-groups" of like

differences (i.e., the PESLM selfs) but which nevertheless express, in their empowerment claims, knowledge that the world is an uncertain place and knowledge that the self's attachment to the traditional (insitutionalized) "moral" has been broken. These selfs can be readily distinguished from the PESLM selfs because they demonstrate no strain of the ideal against the real and no preoccupation with philosophical broodings. This, of course, would be expected of the "good" liberal economic self.

In short, the reflexive self of risk society is unencumbered by "moral" dilemmas and instead is preoccupied with the more "practical" endeavour of managing the risks pervasive to the risk culture it imagines it inhabits. It is the self engaged in the practices of risk management which has, according to Beck (1992), become a central feature of (late) modernity. As a consumer of risk reducing products/knowledge, its potential empowerer seeks it out and offers packaged certainty within its risk management kits. If Giddens (1991:124) is to be believed, no one can escape this "risk climate" of this "dark side of modernity."

A "Risk Society" is, as Bauman (1993:201) points out, necessarily a reflexive stage of modernity. He states:

Reflexivity 'means skepticism', but skepticism is not a late arrival in the house of the modernity and thus reflexivity 'means not less but more

modernity'. There is a tacit, but pervasive implication in the description of the 'risk society' as a territory marked primarily by watchtowers and Geiger counters, that 'reflecting' makes the world safer and that knowing what is going on means knowing how to go on and being able to go on.

In this risk society, the "empowerer" is the "real" technical knowledge, as a derivative of the industrialisation process (not ideals, as with the PESLM), that can offer reflexive selfs information about the dangers of contemporary life and the Do-It-Yourself "survival Kits" and other risk reduction packages. In the service of this empowerer are an ever-increasing and diversified body of "professionals" who have wrapped their selfs around,

...the present recognition of the endemic character of risks and the appreciation of contingency permanently ingrained in the action settings. Risk expertise fast becomes an important branch of the professional world and itself turns into big business (Bauman, 1993:207).

They offer up to potential empowerees (and usually at a cost, hence the empoweree is also constructed as consumer) a plethora of risk diffusion packages. For example, and as one might expect, the traditional traders in contingencies have re-packaged their offerings to make them palatable to the "empowered" consumer....

BUYING INSURANCE...Yuk. There. We said it. We know you're not happy about it, and this would be a perfectly good time for Julie Andrews to jump down

out of nowhere and start to sing, "Just a spoonful of sugar helps the medicine go down..." Which is precisely why we designed this site...to make the prospect of buying insurance more palatable. And accessible. We are trying to impart as much information to you as we can for the ultimate in consumer empowerment (Killian Agency, 1999).

Less traditional are new empowerment packages offered up to AESLMRS's from domains of knowledge previously cloistered by professional interests...

Why patient education? Managed care and managed competition have given consumer satisfaction new meaning for physicians. We believe it is vital that our patients receive not only the right treatment, treatment that works, but that they also experience the medical team as caring and willing to take the time to educate. Patient empowerment, too, has taken on new meaning in this era of physician report cards, of competition among managed care providers to keep customers, and of recognition that well-informed patients tend to use the system more effectively and have better outcomes. In a recent survey of board-certified family physicians, more than 80% of respondents agreed that patient education is a critical part of providing high quality care - but that their own system for educating patients was woefully inadequate. Our challenge was how to fit a high-quality, consistent education process into the typical busy physician's schedule (Patient doc toremp, 1999).

These "packages" offer at the very least an "illusion of control over one's destiny" (Bauman, 1993:201). So too with the...

Latest in Risk Management: Our Behavioral Safety is a carefully designed training program that can enhance a traditional safety program in 9 different areas. The benefits are not only

injury reduction, but also team building and employee empowerment (Argonaut Group Inc., 1999).

And because statistics are, as Bauman (1993) notes, the next best thing to a direct offer of certainty, we see them slipping in as a normal "technical" part of the empowerment packages and kits; as rationales to promote surety (or quell fear)...

Opportunities For Access (OFA), established in 1990 is a community based, not-for-profit agency promoting the empowerment of persons with disabilities. The Center is consumer operated and controlled with a minimum of 51% of staff and Board Members being persons with disabilities (Opportunities for Access Centre for Independent living, 1999).

Reflexivity, then, carries with it anxiety (Giddens' ontological uncertainty) which is, in consumer society, ultimately turned into a device that aids the "good" liberal economic actor in accruing profit...

In business, the right technology can afford huge strategic advantages, while missed opportunities could be ruinous. Our new business group helps technology companies reach the business consumer, corporate information officer, and vice president of advertising/marketing. We believe in the empowerment afforded by access to technology at the individual as well as the enterprise level, and we recognize how the rapid pace of technology innovation creates an exciting and yet frightening environment for businesses (Connors Business Group, 1999).

And, ironically, AESLMRM selfs that have consumed these "opportunities" for security have unwittingly opened up their future to be colonised by corporate entities whose interests clearly remain in the present. More knowledge of the impending risks therefore means more do it yourself "empowerment" packages and kits. As Giddens (1991:119) states it:

A significant part of expert thinking...is made up of *risk profiling* - analysing what in the current state of knowledge and in current conditions is the distribution of risk in the current milieu of action.

This is particularly evident in our health concerns and is forming as an epistemic antecedent to empowerment directed at quelling the ever-present "mortality" threat...

Health Profiles and Economic Impacts...If information is to be gathered and analyzed, patients will need to consent to profiling... Through a partnership formed between Village (New York, NY) and WellMed (Portland, OR), the Health Quotient risk profiling tool has been made available on the Better Health Web site. The goal is to facilitate delivery of personalized health information, and Health Quotient allows participants to receive a report based on each person's unique health status. As one of the most accurate such risk profiling systems currently available, a questionnaire is used to cover family history, general overall health, and lifestyle. The degree of abnormality and interaction among risk factors in a given profile help determine the likelihood of developing a chronic disease, using algorithms and a continuously updated library of medical data. Within the industry, the benefits to consumers is empowerment to become better

health care decision-makers...hopefully improve future options (Disease Management, 1999).

We have been briefly exploring the empowered selfs of risk society. These are selfs which, through empowerment claims, evince a strong imagining of threats to their existence which may be just around the corner or already there but undiscovered (as with disease). In essence, the empowerer has, through her risk reducing packages, brought the future into the empoweree's imagined present. The present cannot help but be one characterised by an overwhelming existential anxiety (see Giddens, 1991: Ch. 2). This is colonisation par excellence.

This thinking, in the hands of sociologists, has formed a formidable conceptual social theoretical framework that presents society as a current and present formation. But "risk" has been carried away from what some might consider as a totalising epochal "world view" and pegged to technologies of self. We will go there shortly, to a conceptual landscape wherein empowerment seeks intelligibility in a world of fragmented realities and fractured ontologies. We are, then, moving quickly toward postmodern empowered selfs.

IV.3 THE POSTMODERN EMPOWERED "SELFS"

The "Constructivist" Empowered Self of Post Modernity (CESPM)

This self is an odd creature, situated' as it is in a postmodern world insulated from the "negative" aspects of modernity - materialism, secularism, individualism, patriarchy, scientism, anthropocentrism and ecological vandalism - yet seeking to reconnect with, say, religion and family in a new and positive manner (Thompson, 1997). It is a self rooted in the "self actualisation" movements of the 1960's; a self not entirely reducible to one of the "new age" philosophies, but pervasively represented by them. It is reflexive to the extent that its empowerment acknowledges that

...self-religiosity may owe much to the failure of the ideology of progress to produce collective solutions by way of reforming institutions, leaving people to seek perfection and utopia in themselves (Thompson, 1987:589).

This self appears to be particularly drawn to new age psychology to seek its empowerment. And there is no shortage of empowerers willing to service this self's new (age) construction.

James F. Shea, the "Director,(of) The Institute for Transpersonal Empowerment" located in Vancouver, is one such

empowerer. The institute is offered as "a private educational research and development organization dedicated to Work and Family and Wellness". Its slogan reads "A Call to Greatness" (Welcome to the Institute for Transpersonal Empowerment, 1998). While it offers one-to-one instruction at the institute, it recently provided 3 opportunities (at \$35/seminar or \$85 for all 3) for Vancouver residents to "explore the heart of wellness, empowerment and well-being". "The Wellness Empowerment™ Seminar Series: Explorations in the Heart of Ultimate Well-Being" (1998), posted the following solicitation for a seminar, entitled "The Heart of Empowerment":

Don't like the way you live now? Explore the key issues that determine Empowerment. Research evidence is mounting affirming the role of caring, appreciation and love in building empowerment. Discover how to take charge of your life without giving up or losing anything.³¹

In California we find Dr. Gary Sinclair, Cyberphysiologist, "Award Winning Speaker/ Therapist/Coach". As an "Empowerment Coach", Dr. Sinclair,

changes the lives of all he meets...has quickly become one of the recognized leaders in personal success coaching and human performance enhancement...teaches life as an inside job to a confidential Who's Who client base...(and)...as a speaker, he knows understands and teaches Miracles as a way of life (Motivational Inspirational Miracles Speaker/Therapist Personal Success Coach, 1998).

This "Man of Miracles" also offers a Practitioner's Certification in "Life Cleaning Out" and "Empowering a Lifetime". The training takes place at Dr. Sinclair's training center located at Salano Beach California. "Your Investment" is \$1500 for 3 days of "private one-to-one training" (if you "qualify"?) otherwise its \$1250 unless you book 15 days in advance. After completion, the certified practitioner will, it is claimed, understand how to:

balance the molecules of emotion using the obedient servant principle...(and)...increase your income providing a service people can recommend [suggested price for complete life clean out is 12 times your hourly rate for complete program. Average 10 to 16 hours] (Motivational Inspirational Miracles Speaker/Therapist Personal Success Coach, 1998).

Both Dr. Sinclair and Mr. Shea's offerings have recourse to making claims to the "transpersonal". Mr. Shea links empowerment to "transpersonal"; Dr. Sinclair claims to have been "Awarded Outstanding Transpersonal Contribution in the Field of Bridging Mind, Body Spirit- (ABH & NATH)". Neither, however, link "transpersonal" to "psychology". It is as if the **institute** of Shea's empowerment offering and the **Dr.** of Sinclair are given to carry the weight of legitimacy backed by the promise of spiritual (and financial) capital. Neither claim affiliation with the broad conceptual

boundaries of transpersonal psychology: a virtual generative engine of empowerment claims and another site exclusively speaking to CESPM selfs.

"The Association for Transpersonal Psychology" has, for 28 years, published the *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*. It claims that its "perspective" is:

...being applied in many fields from psychology and psychiatry to anthropology, sociology, medicine and business, education and ecology (The Association for Transpersonal Psychology: *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*, 1998)

The perspective emphasizes the experiential "in which the sense of identity of self extends beyond ("trans") the individual or personal to encompass wider aspects of humankind, psyche or cosmos" and the developmental as a "process of continual transcendence...evolution is indeed, self-realization through self-transcendence" (The Association for Transpersonal Psychology: *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*, 1998). As such, it draws the self into "otherwordly" imaginings of the way the self can act upon its self and others.

While there has been at least 40 definitions of "transpersonal psychology" since it "first appeared in the literature in 1968 (Lajoie, 1992), it is argued that proponents of this perspective most often hold in common the

themes of: "states of consciousness, ultimate potential, beyond ego, transcendence, and spirituality (Lajoie, 1992). Davis and Wright (1987) acknowledge the centrality of a "hierarchical ontology" to this perspective and Walsh and Vaughan (1993) identify the "common cognitive commitments to this perspective as "assumptions about the nature of ontology, the 'Self', ultimate values, highest potentials, states of consciousness and health. Also, "integrity of the ego structure" appears as a concern ((Boorstein, 1994) as does its seeking of union with the exterior world (Wilber, 1995).

It would appear, then, that T P is a way for a self to be in the world (ontology) informed by an inherently dynamic consciousness in need of guidance; empowerment is a directive to this end and empowerers are the conductors of such accomplishments. Proclaims Roger Walsh (1993):

We have mapped transpersonal development beyond what was formerly considered the ceiling of human possibility and have found preliminary evidence of common psychological and spiritual development across traditions (The Association for Transpersonal Psychology: Journal of Transpersonal Psychology, 1998).

Adds Jack Engler (1984): "You have to be somebody before you can be nobody" (The Association for Transpersonal Psychology: Journal of Transpersonal Psychology, 1998).

This self, then, constructs its relationship to the world - its self - via metaphysical imaginings which may serve to insulate self from those selfs whose imaginings draw boundaries of morality around traditional normative institutions (as with modern selfs), are in accord with idealized notions of the "real" civil society (as with PESLM), or, construct the self as a good liberal actor reproducing a "marketized" social landscape pervasive with risk (as with the AESLMRS). Religiosity (Spirituality) may be central in the construction of this self but not as imagined by modern selfs.

Another interesting feature of this self is its expressed skepticism toward the certainty that science brings - not, however, the need for certainty itself. Rather it locates this in a transcendental domain beyond experience of the empirical world. After all, empiricism as the backdrop of certainty is part of the modernist project that this self's empowerment is attempting to transcend.³²

The Fragmented/Fractured Empowered "Self" of Postmodernity

(F/FESP)

In the end, we trust no authority, at least, we trust none fully, and none for long: we cannot help being suspicious about any claim to infallibility. This is the most acute and prominent practical aspect of what is justly

described as the 'postmodern moral crises'
(Bauman, 1993:21).

This postmodern "self", while a wholly different creature than the modern self, is a kin of the paradoxical empowered self of late modernity (PESLM), insofar as it acknowledges its difference as being the core of its being - its ontological centre. But, there is no great mystery in this. Both selves are born out of the experience that "marginality" affords, and marginality is something which "straddles modernity and postmodernity" (Yúdic, 1988). However, having accomplished this act of knowing and thus having demonstrated its reflexivity (and thus its historically progressive identity beyond "modern") this postmodern "self" (ironically) turns away from any imaginings of a moral life (away from, say, a civil society comprised of a plurality of "we" groups) and instead incessantly dwells amidst the uncertainty of contemporary life in its obsessive display of its differences (most often via performative personality displays). In a way, its "self" is a conduit - a signifier through which cultural presents itself - for the present and hence self gives way to a plurality of presentations of identity. And so it must because this "self" knows other selves as creatures signifying "myths of coherence" and as selves bounded by "fixed identities..."

(which)...are the product of the far from disinterested ways in which we are presented to ourselves and to others" (Tucker, 1990:4). In short, "self" is a tyranny.

The post modern "self" is ironically historical insofar as it claims to represent (experientially) an actual history of the present and is not, as a self of the strong "we-group" (i.e., PESLM) would be, dependent on a "proper" identification of human nature or other such things that attempt to cohere the self to the "we" and thus construct the unity of the "social". In fact, its contemporary presence, and by its presence alone, it threatens the very idea of universalising selfs (and the idea of progress) that the previous selfs that I have discussed, depend upon.³³ It could, then, be a "self" imagined to be the "other" side of what Said (1979) has marked off as Orientalist discourses or Western representations of colonised peoples. Of course, without an "empowered" voice, they cannot be mapped.

However, it seems that we are obliged to think this "self" as one that inhabits the domain of post-modern art and culture (e.g., Ferguson et al., 1990), and particularly youth culture (e.g., Epstein, 1998). Therein we are expected to find displays of difference and expressive tactics of the "selfs" marginality used to "make a case for his or her own subversive potential" (Yúdic, 1988:214). Perhaps this is

where we ought to - if we are willing to bring theory to this "self's" practices, and of course we are not - make a case for the empowerment of this self. In the process of articulating its marginality, it celebrates its freedom - its diversity - from the social and thus its freedom from the coercive moralising influences of social institutions and other such normative imaginings. We might call this, in Spivak's terms, disclosure of "self's" positionality (Adamson, 1990). It is the "bad girl" of the self family which knows its "self" only through its production and reproduction of identity - an act of disclosure. "Self" is now left behind as "freedom from moral injunction" is pursued. In an ironic sense, this "self's" empowerment may be its very avoidance of being caught as such. Listen here to a conversation of two film-makers as they reflexively locate their postmodern selves within this ironic predicament:

Trinh T. Minh-Ha: Your films are identified as avante-guard...but they remain marginal even within their own category. I guess this is a way of saying that by their marginality, they contribute to keeping the notion of 'experiment' alive, hence to resisting modernist closure often implied in the very notion of avante-guard.

Leslie Thornton: I see my own work as a kind of 'minor literature' - in the sense that Deleuze and Guattari talk about this, 'like a dog digging a hole, a rat digging its burrow' working through that language that is given to us...being nomads, immigrants, Gypsies, in relation to one's own language (Jayamanne, et al., 1990:50-52)

We saw with the PESLM self that identity emerges out of the self's active reflexive consideration of its difference. Identity does not supersede the self, rather it serves the self insofar as it is the basis - the initial act of reflexive awareness in a processional chain of remaking self - for the self's reconstitution in we-groups with others of like differences. In fact, as its empowerment claims tell us, retention of a self is essential if it is to participate in the idealised civil society which we know now as forming the core of its moral life; thus the PESLM self is moral because of society. "Marginality" may serve to identify this self (to its self) but it soon coalesces with others and drifts back toward the mainstream of "we" imaginings of pluralist civil society. With the empowered "selves" we are looking to encounter here in the reaches of postmodernity, identity emerges to replace the self as "social bonds...recede in favor of an endless and obsessive preoccupation with social identity" (Giddens, 1991:171). Consequently, this self must,

keep its particularity, must remain minoritarian: 'the problem is one of becoming - minority: not to act like, not to do like or imitate the infant, fool, woman, animal, stutterer, or foreigner, but to become all that, in order to invent new forces or new weapons...The 'laziness', 'shiftlessness', and 'cynicism' attributed to the 'marginal' by liberal sociologists and anthropologists of the fifties and sixties are transformed here into

'radical' and 'subversive' tactics of resistance and advantage (Yúdic, 1988).

Narcissism as its "politics" (as its ironic imagining of the "good") is one possible "empowering" route for this "self"; one possible way to insulate itself against the "social" and thus the unavoidable "collective" responsibility that flows from being, say, a communitarian self. I say "possible" because I have yet to hear voices of postmodern "selves" pegging "empowerment" to narcissism, that is, voices "out there" beyond official social-philosophical discourses that urge such possibility (e.g., Taylor, 1991).

One might reasonably expect empowerment claims of postmodern "selves" to demonstrate the "multiplicity" of ways that "selves" experience the present. As such, we would (I think) hear an "ontology of ourselves" as a multiplicity of "...ways of thinking about who we are, how we should act, and how we should act upon ourselves." (Dean, 1996:210). Foucault's thoughts resonate here:

...the diagnostic does not establish the facts of our identity by means of the interplay of distinctions. It establishes that we are difference, that our reason is the difference of forms of discourse, our history is the difference of times, that our selves are the difference of masks. (Foucault, as quoted in Dean, 1996:209)

Perhaps this is why, while listening attentively during my research labours for the "empowered" voices of this postmodern "self", I have heard none. Perhaps this is because this "self" is brought into view via a Foucauldean analytic; that is, by a conceptual challenge to the historicised self of social theory (modern self) and a resulting de-centering of such - a silencing of "self" made subjectivities, if you like.

But this "self" is also battled over, and thus theoretically conceived, by those who would, for example, wish to reconstruct this "narcissism" as a main player in the new moral ethos - a "'new and improved' version of liberalism" (Bauman, 1996:79) - of contemporary life (e.g., Taylor, 1991). They would, in other words, wish to repossess and re-construct this "self's" postmodern genus as (the previously discussed) empowered "citizen" forming selfs (either the PESLM and its "radicalised" idealised community or the traditional modern self and its parochial idealisations of traditional institutions). You can only be moral because of society, they say to the postmodern self. The modern narrative of sociology has told us, self is of the genus "social" and therefore postmodern "selfs" are not of society.

This postmodern "self" has collapsed self into identity, and identity into the present of historical experience. The self it denies is that which the essentialist, Eurocentric and Androcentric - the modernist project - has constructed. Its "self" is its articulation of "concrete experience" (Lemert, 1994:102) and as such this articulation of its immediacy (against the *durée* of tradition) is its resistance. But it has not yet voiced this as a claim to empowerment.

Speaking to this construction of "self", Butler (1993) adds theoretical order (while dis-ordering the modern sociological self) to the way this self experiences and articulates to social reality. She states: "the subject, the speaking "I" does not proceed its construction as gendered" (1993:3). Consequently, "... subjectivity is no longer unitary, or conceived on the model of the male, but fractured through sexual and racial identifications and regulated by social norms" (Rose, 1996a:8). Hence, this "self" emerges from outside "official philosophical and theoretical language" (Lemert, 1994:103). Is this the reason why we cannot hear this "self's" empowerment voice within the boundaries of this dissertation's "official" social theoretical pages?

What we can reasonably know is that this "self" acknowledges a concrete "we" but it has no intention to universalise it beyond the experience to which it refers (as its identity declares). In other words, its identity is more or less a signifying practice that may or may not refer to groupings of individuals sharing similar or same historical experiences; the latter, I think, being preferable for this self as it is distanced from the tyranny of the "social". Because it resists imagining itself as part of a "we-group" within an imagined civil society, it remains, as Lemert, (1994) tells us, "below or outside the world" that both late modern and modern selfs imagine they inhabit. It reminds us (as sociologists) - but is not an extension of - of that mid-twentieth century Mertonian "deviant" creature known as the "retreatist":

...who are, strictly speaking, in the society but not of it. Sociologically, these constitute the true aliens. Not sharing the common frame of values, they can be included as members of the society (in distinction from the population) only in a fictional sense (Merton, 1968:207).

The anomic Mertonian "retreatist" self is produced through the inability to cope with the "frustration" of having "interiorized" moral obligations for adopting institutional means" while remaining "shut-off" from the actual means (1968). The fragmented/fractured "self", although (arguably)

outwardly appearing as the "retreatist", is fundamentally different. It does not emerge out of a repudiation of the social structure that it has internalised, rather, it is more likely a manifestation of the resistance to that very internalisation of the "moral obligations" carried by the twentieth century normative institutions. In short, it constitutes its "self" reflexively and not as the "essentialist" product of sociology/society that Merton's images of the modern self portray.

So, in this case it is a text of silence rather than that of verbal claims (to empowerment) that pronounce this "self" as a knowing "subject". It knows that an empowerment claim speaks the success of the governance of its subjectivity; of de-centering discourses. It will have none of this empowerment talk. From the point of view of this postmodern "self", "empowerment" is at best a wonderful irony and at worst a practice signifying the colonization of self's subjectivities. These "colonized" selfs have attained their own conceptual status and can be mapped-out as follows.

The "Empowered" Self of Technologies (EST)

We are talking here of postmodern "selfs"; ones whose empowerment voices seem to be rendered mute by the Foucauldean analytic that earlier made its way onto the

conceptual map of empowerment "selves". Amidst its continuing presence here, "selves" are nevertheless being made as relatives of the reflexive late-modern "risk" self, given that they both experience the present as an uncertain place rife with authorities ready to "make a difference in the way that we live...experts, specialists, advisers and empowerers" (Dean, 1996:211). Yet, how can this be, given that the former self is made epochal and unique by the "fact" of its (historically late-modern) emergent "reflexivity" while the latter "self" has become (as a postmodern self) unbuttoned from the social,

fractured by gender, race, class, fragmented, deconstructed, revealed not as our inner truth but as our last illusion, not as our ultimate comfort but as an element in circuits of power that make some of us selves while denying full selfhood to others and thus performing an act of domination on both sides (Rose, 1996a:5).

This, then, is a "self" fragmented by identity and pulled from the epochal landscape of reflexive modernity and refashioned (i.e., "fractured") by a Foucauldean "history of the present". This is a "self" whose empowerment claims would express a "regime of conduct" given a stamp of truth by the "authorities of truth" who operate within and outside local, regional, national, and transnational state bodies..." (Dean, 1996:211). As such, empowerment claims are focused talk about identity and self which display what we

have come to invest in making claims about "who we are and what we should become" (Dean, 1996:212). However, these claims, while having the appearance of expressed subjectivities, are focal sites (a multiplicity of) through which we have:

come to problematize both our politics and our being in such a way that identity, subjectivity and self come to be hooked to questions of politics, authority and government (Dean, 1996:212).³⁴

At first blush, it may appear that this self is agential, "acting upon itself" in such a way that revitalises individualism and relativism and it is therefore hardly distinguishable from the postmodern fragmented self previously encountered. There is, however, a difference that turns around the imagining of "identity". If you will recall, the paradoxical empowered self of late modernity is a historical self that knows its (self) identity as difference and proceeds to form this difference within "we-groups" of like-differences as the basis for a re-imagined civil society. In contrast, the postmodern "self" too knows its "identity" as difference but it remains suspicious of wrapping such differences (its identity) into any "social formation". It is as if this latter "self" is unwilling to forgive the tyranny of traditional, eurocentric and

androcentric institutions because they are irredeemable flawed. In common, however, they both in their own way assume ownership of their self's "self"-identity and therefore are agents in the orchestration of their "self-making". Unlike them, the "self" of technology has lost ownership of self, become decentered, as Foucaultians would claim. It has, in other words, lost the final vestige of a social (sociological) self, specifically, the ability to be the "object of his own actions...to act toward himself as the central mechanism with which the human being faces and deals with his world" (Blumer, 1962: 140).

What I am saying is that we are being obliged, here, to imagine empowerment as "strategies for the conduct of conduct...(which)...operate through trying to shape what Foucault termed 'technologies of self' - 'self-steering mechanisms', or the ways in which individuals experience, understand, judge, and conduct themselves" (Foucault, as quoted in Rose, 1996a:29). As such, empowerment becomes situated in a genealogy of the subject; in this case a novel reinvention of self (as a strategy of conduct) that requires us to link the practice of empowerment claims with technologies as "the actual or imagined authority of some system of truth" (1996a:29). So, empowerment claims here announce the multiplicity of self-practices of self-

subjugation that shape the conduct of individuals. Thus, "creativity" has moved from the "internal" process of self-making - and is now pegged to the "technological" ways in which the self is subjugated, from "without". From the broader perspective, empowerment claims bear witness to the

power relations in liberal and democratic regimes, the government of others has always been linked to a certain way in which 'free' individuals are enjoined to govern themselves as subjects simultaneously of liberty and of responsibility-prudence, sobriety, steadfastness, adjustment, self-fulfilment, and the like (Rose, 1996a:12).

Empowerment claims are, then, vivid significations of technologies of self - there are as many empowered selves as demonstrable technologies. As such, there is little point in bringing new voices of empowerment claims onto these pages. This would be a redundancy. Instead, I ask the reader to recast all the voices of empowerment that I have previously brought to the pages of this work as articulations of technologies of self and as informed by neo-Foucauldean conceptual apparatus. What I think one will discover, via this imagining, is that there is no appreciable meaningful difference between the modern, late-modern and postmodern "empowered selves". They are different only in virtue of the technologies of self-governance - how we have come to rule ourselves (Cruikshank, 1996) - and perhaps by the degrees of

reflexivity that that seem to characterise the differences of self and which may enable, for some, self-knowledge of how power works through these technologies.

IV-4. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The empowerment claims voiced in the foregoing conceptual map of empowerment, in concert, speak to a social landscape contoured by moral ambiguity. In this "uncertain" place (which is arguably now a central characteristic of the post/late modern world) we have encountered, through empowerment claims, selfs which continue to actively and creatively voice imaginings of how we ought to constitute our relationship with our self and others. As such, they lend a supportive voice to the recent and growing revival of sociological interest in the question of what it means to lead a moral life (e.g. Bauman 1993; Wolfe 1989, 1991; Shilling and Mellor 1998; Selznick 1992).

There is, as the voices of empowerment have demonstrated, not one empowerment but many; not one way of acting (or choosing not to act) "morally" upon one's self and "other" as an expression of how selfs imagine the good society, but many. I have captured a number of these "empowered selfs" and "empowerers" in a conceptual map. However, there are (I believe) others which exist outside the conceptual apparatus

of sociology that my analysis has privileged in its configurations of empowerment. I have, however, configured enough selfs to warrant a brief but concise restatement of them.

Within the conceptually mapped-out sociological configuration of modernity, we discovered the modern empowered (sociological) self. It obliged us to understand self as one whose "essential" ambivalence, rooted in the Durkheimian polarities of the possible sources of action - i.e., the "natural self" and the "socialised" self - was overcome by imagining society as a system of normative institutions which bound the self to the social order. I referred to these institutions as "nurturing" the moral constitution of this self. These selfs imagine that they can only be moral because of society and therefore it is understandable that their empowerment claims defend the imagining of a civil society replete with the traditional nurturing institutions. Their imaginings implicate the state as a threat to the "moral" sovereignty of their civil society yet they begrudgingly beg its participation as an agent that acts to defend the traditional boundaries of civil society. Their imagining of a good society as a place of authoritative communitarianism places the state as moral agent and not as a source of moral nourishment (i.e., as a champion of

liberalism). The state's logic of governance appears, however, to have its own ideas of empowerment.

The state found its way onto the conceptual map as a "modern" empowerment player; as an "empowerer". Its claims to empowerment were argued as ones that reveal it as a champion of liberal polity, and as more than an agent of the political "good". It was shown how, under the seductive rubric of empowerment talk (inclusive of "partnership" and "community"), it has emerged as a moral authority which demands a liberal citizen who must "take responsibility for self". The Canadian state was located on the map as an empowerer involved locally and globally in the restructuring of the relationship of self as citizen (empoweree) with state as moral authority (empowerer).

The late-modern empowered self was next to appear on the map. It revealed its self as an historical self insofar as the "reflexivity" that accompanies late-modernity has allowed it to "know", experientially and historically, the "differences" of its self as captured in its imaginings of "identity". But we saw that reflexivity works through self in ways that have produced a number of empowered self configurations. First, we discovered what I termed the Paradoxical Empowered Self of Late-Modernity (PESLM). It was assigned a paradoxical status because, though it reveals

itself as a "progressive" self through its critical reflection on the tyranny of traditional normative institutions - its historical experience of exclusion and thus social marginalisation - its empowerment claims demonstrate an imagining that places its identity of difference in "we-images" that seek to find a place in a re-constituted civil society. As such, the empowerer of this empowered self remains the "ideal" (of civil society) that strains harshly against the "real". So, it shares with the modern self the imagining that it can only be moral because of society and the moral heart of society remains civil society. In looking to redress the social tyranny of a past "owned" by the traditional institutions of modern selves, it returns to the past to reclaim ownership of civil society. Ironically (I think), we find a strong representation of these PESLM selves in new social movements.

The next empowered self to emerge on the map was the Archtypical Empowered Self of Late-Modern Risk Society (AESLMRS). Like the PESLM, these selves are freed from total immersion in the moral determinations of traditional institutions. Unlike them, they turn away from imagining "new" sources of moral nutrition in a reconstituted ideal civil society. Instead, the fear and uncertainty that accompanies this "freedom" is quelled through purchase of

"risk management kits"; be they such traditional kits as insurance packages or "do-it-yourself" kits that flow from knowledges (such as mortality risks) that bring the future into the present. This is a self empowered as consumer of ontological security. Because more knowledge means more DIY kits, the empowerer is the one who brings the opportunities for consumption of knowledge to the potential empoweree (and usually for a price).

We moved next to the conceptual terrain of postmodernity and proceeded to map-out three empowered "selves" that inhabit this domain. We first encountered the Constructivist Empowered Self (CESPM). This self was shown to imagine its relationship with its self and the world through the medium of metaphysics and such things as transcendental psychology. Its empowerment claims displayed a distaste for moral nourishment brought forth from any "real" world source; like civil society. Its empowerment claims, in essence, spoke to the success of this "transcendence" and we discovered that there was no shortage of "empowerers" willing to guide one along the path to empowerment.

The Fragmented/Fractured Empowered Self of Postmodernity (F/FESP) entered the conceptual map as a kin of the PESLM because it, through its empowerment claims,

acknowledges its "difference" as the ontological core of its being. In other words, it too is born out of the experience that marginality affords. However, whereas the PESLM imagines its difference in the shared likeness of "we-groups" constituted in a (re) imagined civil society, the F/FESP collapses its "self" into identity and thereafter into incessant displays of its difference. This is a "self" no longer of the genus "social".

Finally, we encountered the Empowered Self of Technologies (EST). While like the F/FESP the "self" has become "unbuttoned" from the social, it differs because it has lost the last vestige of self-making. This is to say, its "self" is no longer its own - self-making is no longer at the agential center of human experience - but rather is a "conduct of conducts". Or, if you like, it is a "self" that has become decentered, and resides now as the property of governing rationalities. Empowerment here, makes little sense beyond saying that it is one among many technologies of self.

ENDNOTES: CHAPTER IV

1. Everett C. Hughes (1962) in his essay, "What Other", remarks how the theme of the "other" turned up rather late in the study of human society. He states: "A playwright, novelist, or politician insensitive to the gestures and attitudes of others, and of some others more than other others, is hard to imagine. Indeed, what more common theme is there in literature - and in politics - than this? But systematic attention to the problem of degrees and directions of sensitivity to others turned up rather late among those who study human society in a would be scientific way...Adam Smith was the John the Baptist in the field..." (Hughes, 1971:348).

2. It is important to note here that while Smith's observation anticipates a sociological self, it is also placing the self in civil society which, as we later see, becomes the contextual focus that serves some variants of late modernity in their argument of how "morality" of selfs can be refashioned. The point is, there are two distinct empowerment trajectories stemming from Smith's placing of the self within civil society.

3. It is interesting to see how this (tautological) proposition is played out in Merton's (1968) "adaptation typology" wherein one finds the "retreatist" (as deviant) being "in society...but not of it...the true aliens of society."

4. As a pragmatist, Dewey is obliged to hold the view that "Only those metaphysical distinctions that make some difference in practice are worth considering. And the only ultimate defense of any belief is that "it works" (Solomon, 1989:242). As such, pragmatism anticipates the problem of an oversocialized conception of human actors (Dennis Wrong, 1959) that emerges within a sociological construing of the self. The social actor from the point of view of pragmatism must be left the theoretical space to engage the world - experiment with it - and to forge novelties. As Dewey (as quoted in Solomon, 1989:748) states in his essay "Art as Experience", "...all 'conscious' experience has of necessity some degree of imaginative quality. For while the roots of every experience are found in the interaction of a live

creature with its environment, that experience becomes conscious, a matter of perception, only when meanings enter it that are derived from prior experience." The construction of the modern sociological self would have done well to have followed more closely some basic principles of pragmatism. Interestingly, feminism has acknowledged American pragmatism as a body of ideas that can enrich the feminist debates (see, Siegfried, 1996).

5. Arguably, the symbolic interactionist self's career at the Chicago School can be understood as, for a time, serving the liberal imagination of early sociologists whose ideas of progress were shared by the emerging entrepreneurial and helping professional classes (see, Mills, 1943; Gouldner, 1973). Also, in its later development, as exemplified in the work of Goffman (1961), the self serves as an analytical focus from which to gather explanations of human action that stands in opposition to the then prevailing theoretical edifice of structural functionalist deterministic explanations of human action (Fisher and Strauss, 1978:480).

6. Weber's *Verstehen* informed dialogue with the Calvinist actor is brilliant in articulating the emergence of the modern self's growing indifference to traditional authority and increasing move towards the ethos of autonomy and individualism demanded by the emergence of capitalism and the state. Also, Rousseau's "Confessions" can be seen to announce the emergence of the "modern temper...of an individuality, a clearly defined self...the atomistic, autonomous self" (Gutman, 1988:100-101).

7. Of course, Marxism would see this as a history of ideological successes and Neo-Marxism (Gramscian) would add analytical acuity here by introducing the success of hegemonic domination. What I am suggesting is that the "self" has, throughout the various appearances of Marxist regimes, failed to shift its moral nourishment to the broader site of the collectivity - "collective conscience".

8. By reflexivity I mean a self-questioning of one's relationship with the totality (e.g., Giddens, 1990). Reflexivity is, as I suggest here, best understood as indicating degrees of self-questioning of which I believe questioning one's relationship with the "other" is the most profound form of reflexivity and has much to do with marking off an empowered modern self from the empowered self of high

modernity.

9. This would appear to contradict my earlier discussion of liberal and conservative differences. However, these observations point to the ideological battle cries in American politics. Wolfe, (1989) points out that "...moral obligation, once associated with the right, has, with the development of the welfare state, come increasingly to be associated with the Left."

10. It is interesting to note here, that Canada is assuming a key role in the globalisation of the empowerment agenda. Veiled by its tradition of international peacekeeping, it is now carving out a place wherein it may be seen, historically, as expanding the empowerment agenda - the expansion of moral responsibility thrust on the shoulders of individuals. One might suggest here that the logic (though not necessarily the substance) of colonization (and modernization) continues. As Edward Said (1979; 1993) has demonstrated, the "other" has been, and continues to be, constructed as in need of a moralizing influence. Canada can bring to the world the new governmentality which requires "world citizens" to bear the responsibility of being empowered as a citizenry obligation. As such, talk about the erosion of the Nation state ought to be reconsidered. Although the Nation state's traditional boundary-keeping of economic identity is being rendered problematic, what appears to be forming is a Western hegemonic moral invasion of territory. NATO dialogues are replete with empowerment talk. Power becomes empowerment: nations are empowered if they are carrying a moral/humanitarian purpose within their kit of military aims and purposes.

11. Not yet, and certainly not in name. However, an article appearing in the Vancouver Echo (April, 8, 1997) entitled "A Map of the future: Mapping project looks to the past for a glimpse of the future" referred to Doug Aberly's contribution (as editor) to the work: **Boundaries of Home: Mapping for Local Empowerment**. Aberly, who teaches at UBC's School of Regional Planning, is a contributor to "Center of Excellence for Sustainable Development". "Sustainable Community" is central in this groups' stated "Definitions and Principles" and is considered as an "effort...(which)... consists of a long-term, integrated, systems approach to developing and achieving a healthy community by jointly

addressing economic, environmental, and social issues. Fostering a strong sense of community and building partnerships and consensus among key stakeholders are also important elements of such efforts" (Center of Excellence for Sustainable Development Definitions and Principles, 1998). Aberly's own work echoes the aim of this group in "nurturing a new kind of citizenship" and offers to "educate and empower the community" as a step to "successful civic action" (Center for Excellence for Sustainable Development: Overview Articles/Publications, 1998). The group is explicitly supportive of the US Government's "empowerment zone" programmatic as demonstrated by its claiming Vice President Gore's announcement of empowerment zones receiving further assistance from HUD as a "Success Story" (Center of Excellence for Sustainable Development: Land Use Success Story, 1998).

12. The U.S.'s melting-pot cultural identity impedes the state's efforts to construct empowerment sites out of differences. It is obliged not to recognise them and is left, therefore, to turn elsewhere - in this case to carving out the site via the ostensible cultural neutrality that the geographical metaphor of empowerment zones afford. Canada, on the other hand, has the multi-cultural model which accommodates the construction of empowerment sites from within the construction of differences that its cultural policies of enhanced diversity affords.

13. The writer is aware that from the uncritical point of view of empowerment as being some form of enabling, emancipatory, or enlightening, process, the "selection" of sites would appear as the logical ones. But from the point of view I am expressing in this argument, these selections have more to do with the ability of the "empowerer" to express itself as a moral authority without provoking the kind of resistance that it otherwise might if the state focused on an empowerment "partnership" with, say, feminists, environmentalists, or gays and lesbians. These identities have their own claims to empowerment which I later map out.

14. The first page of the document contains an interesting statement that reads "NB Please Note That This Document Does Not Apply To the Healing Lodge. A Separate Framework Will Be Developed For That Facility". In the context of my argument this disclaimer can be read as supporting my observation

that "Aboriginals" constitute a separate site for the empowerment authority (state) and must be managed in ways distinct from that which transpires within Federal Corrections. In other words, FSW's are managed on the basis of coercing empowered selves into "willing" modern (self) gendered subjects. In Aboriginals, gender is subsumed.

15. There are numerous government texts which document this. One such example is as follows. In Quebec, a "tripartite agreement" was struck between "Corrections Service Canada, the Direction Général des services correctionnels du Québec, and their community partners" regarding the administration of community residences for offenders. This initiative featured "empowerment" as one of its "favoured management methods".

16. The modes of life brought into being by modernity have swept us away from all traditional types of social order in quite unprecedented fashion. In both their extensionality ["external aspects"] and their intentionality ["internal aspects"] the transformations involved in modernity are more profound than most sorts of change characteristic of prior periods. On the extensional plane they have served to establish forms of social interconnection which span the globe; in intentional terms they have come to alter some of the most intimate and personal features of our day-to-day existence (Giddens, 1990:21).

17. "Trust", writes Giddens (1991:17) is "a medium of interaction with the abstract systems which both empty day-to-day life of its traditional content and set up globalizing influences. Trust, here, generates that leap of faith which practical engagements demand."

18. If the Kantian problem is seen as acknowledging the "death" of tradition as the basis of moral action (the emergence of Weber's disenchanted world) and emergence of rationality as the basis for constructing the moral constituent of self (acting upon itself and other) insofar as it thrusts this burden onto the shoulders of the "average man", then what we have with the late modern self is a time that expresses this burden in the hands of a multiplicity of authorities. However, the late modern self possesses a reflexive quality that the self of tradition does not. The knowledge that reflexivity affords might be said to be the source of uncertainty and doubt. A modern self, as I have

demonstrated, does not doubt per se. Instead it submits the task of making itself moral to imaginings of, say, God, The Christian Family, The Community. Its dependence on the traditional "social forms" (as for example, gendered family roles) continues despite the structural strains on these arrangements stemming from the ongoing radical transformations of the later stages of industrial society (Beck, 1986; Giddens, 1991; Bauman, 1993). The reflexive modern self doubts for the very reason that its identity has always strained harshly against the "reality" of the modern institutional forms and...has experienced this in the world.

19. Shilling and Mellor (1998) have recognized that in order to discuss, sociologically, the problem of morality within a modernist world-view that a theoretical space for moral "ambivalence" must be opened up. Their position is that we can accomplish this through a creative engagement with the work of Durkheim as an alternative to Bauman's idea of a "presocial moral impulse" of "being for the other" or Giddens' emphasis on a return to the cognitive dimension of "rational control" through "dialogical democracy".

20. Interestingly, the programmatic rationality of Alcoholics Anonymous demands that the self be reconstructed as such a modern self.

21. Step Programs to empowerment include such focuses as: Alcoholics Anonymous, Emotions Anonymous, Adult Children of Alcoholics, Marijuana Anonymous, Adult Children, Steps to love, Lakota Native Americans, Self-Parenting, Phobics Anonymous, etc. All are variations of the AA model and all require submission of self, i.e., an (re)imagining of one's self as a modern self. Consequently, and one can only speculate here, a postmodern self would be required to give up all that "identifies" it as such. It would need to restructure its "moral" constitution. It would be interesting to track a postmodern self through the process of its reconstitution within and according to the "step" programs' rationale or techniques for acting upon self. One might consider the demands on self-(re)making flowing from the essential historicity of the "steps" logic given that it has remained essentially unchanged since its inception in 1940's US.

22. As we see, for example, in Weber's traditional action, Tonnies' *Gemeinschaft*, Durkheim's mechanical solidarity and

Blumer's society as symbolic interaction in process.

23. There are a number of historical examples that could demonstrate what I am saying here. For example, Paul Fussell's **The Great War and Modern Memory** (1976), provides a vivid account of how, in World War One, soldiers in the trenches went to their deaths with imaginings of their selves garnered from the works of literature (ideas of heroics, nation, honor, etc.) that were readily available to them. It was, as Fussell says, the most "literary of wars." The profoundly sad irony was that their deaths were not their own. Joseph Heller's *Catch-22*, in its portrayal of Second World War soldiers is, in essence, a chronicle of the undoing of this self as a heightened reflexivity enters the self's way of constructing self, and so mistrust of "reality" and the knowledge of the irony of war become for these soldiers its very reality. Arguably, this book marks the undoing of the modern self and casts the mold for literature to portray self as incessantly reflexive, and moral ambiguousness as a "normal" way of being in the world. In analytical/sociological terms, it marks the beginning of a self in a moral landscape where the "ideal...strains harshly against actual life" (Lemert, 1994:101).

24. It could be argued here that the modern self's uncertainty is expressing the experience of anomie. Given that it imagines society in terms of traditional normative institutions, its expressions of uncertainty (in the absolute certainty of its claimed empowerment) and its imaginings of a threat to such things as the Christian family, could be the source of its insecurity. However, anomie is not the experience of the late modern self because its construction of its self-identity involves the very critique of these institutions; most often as oppressive. As such, anxiety and insecurity is, for these selfs, moreso the (reflexive) experience of acknowledging institutions as not their own and then being left to look elsewhere and to trust the newly found source of moral nourishment. We see them most often turning to re-imagine civil society.

25. Mennel, (1994) offers a brief and useful illustration of some of the assumptions I am making here. For one, I have implied that this self has a degree of reflexivity beyond that which is portrayed, in particularly vivid terms by the tradition of symbolic interactionism (see Blumer, 1969), as inherent to the process of self construction, as

basic to the human experience, and wherein both the self-image and "we" identity is constructed. The "we-image" of late/reflexive modernity, as identity politics suggests, contains a higher degree of conscious awareness of differences and "others". Mennel sees this as an increasing trend of mutual identification which Elias' work has provided historical evidence for. If so, this allows us to understand the modern self as a parochial "earlier" baseline reflexive consumer of traditional norms and the self of late modernity as possessing a reflexivity imbued with critical historical reflective experience allowing it, therefore, to mark its self off from other selves. Of course, as we move later to the postmodern self which inhabits a world where the social is lost, it may become difficult to explain why, if we maintain "we-group" identity as a mark of heightened reflexivity, this self has apparently lost the "we" and seemingly retained a "hyper-reflexivity" (as evidenced in nihilism, self-parody, and irony).

26. Mellucci (1989:4) would argue this in terms of actors constructing a collective identity defined as "a moveable definition of themselves and their social world, a more or less shared and dynamic understanding of the goals of their action as well as the social field of possibilities and limits within which their action takes place."

27. What I am saying here is, as noted by Cohen's (1985:683) comment on Tilley's historical work, that "the construction of group identity, the recognition of shared interests, the creation of solidarity within and between groups (networks), can, with the emergence of modern civil society, no longer be treated as givens."

28. Rose (1996) would refer to these selves as "challenged"; as coherent, bounded, individualised, intentional, the locus of thought, action and belief, the origin of its actions, the beneficiary of a unique biography.

29. The modern enlightened self forges its theoretical expression through dissatisfaction with the modern self; particularly this modern self's lack of reflexivity in its process of consuming "authoritative precepts or the responsibility of position embodied in the web of norms it inhabits. Its empowerment announces a self whose responsibility is to creating the boundaries of moral social

life. The empowered enlightened self is thus a constructive actor in meaningful determinations of contemporary life and not, as the modern self is, a "plastic self" (overdetermined) allowing theory to construct it as an epiphenomenon (Jenkins, 1996:31-32). This self, while marked by its creativity and "self-authorship" is empowered through its reflexively gathered discovery of one of two possible self-constructions. Its empowerment may claim an authenticity self; its moral constitution being existentially and thus individually construed. Or, it locates its "moral construction" within a class of persons who share a consciousness. In short, the empowered enlightened self makes claims to both the philosophical boundaries of existentialism and those of marxist humanism.

The hiatus I refer to is to a place consistent with the political economic conceptual framework ordained by the modernist theoretical edifice of marxism, the empowered self finds its expression within the collective identities of class. While it is admittedly awkward to propose "self" in the context of Marxism, it is (arguably) best located within the context of Marx's distinction between "class in itself" and "class for itself". The former can be seen as a social category objectively made or analytically constructed; the latter as a social group which knows, reflexively, the "w-ness" of its collective "class" identity and their place in history. It is historically constructed

30. Beck (1992:21) defines "risk" as "a systematic way of dealing with hazards and insecurities induced and introduced by modernization itself."

31. Mr Shea reached out to Vancouverites via a poster (a glossy 11 x 17 inch) tacked to bulletin boards at community centers throughout the Lower Mainland. It included a 4 x 4 inch picture of a smiling and blissful - presumably empowered - James F. Shea. Visual images appear to be important in this domain. If we don't know what it is, we can see now what it looks like. Moving one's gaze away from Mr. Shea's image (and the red rose that encompasses the lower half of the poster) one notices the registered trademark symbol that appear beside the word "empowerment". Shea also claims "TM" for the phrase "The Empowerment OptionTM". It would appear that Mr. Shea has packaged his spiritual New Age messages of "wellness, empowerment, and well-being" in the protective veneer of legal-rational-economic discourses. There seems to be an irony here. Elsewhere in Vancouver one can find the

spiritual path of "enlightenment in his lifetime" through instruction from an "empowered master of Tantric practices". The "instructions are only passed on orally from a fully empowered Master to an empowered student". True tantric empowerment is "signified by an empowerment ceremony, and the student becomes a Buddhist (Corcoran, 1997:34-35)". For those who are sensitive to a gendered spirituality, they can:

receive "the blessing of the female Buddha of wisdom...This empowerment is a special opportunity to make a connection (sic) Tara, the female Buddha of wisdom and compassion...the blessing empowerment and commentary to the practice will be granted by Gen Kelsang Delek. (Tilopa Buddhist Centre, 1998).

The cost is "\$50 for both days and pre-registration is required. Another local "empowerment" opportunity presented itself at Vancouver's Universal Buddhist Temple where on March 7, 1998 Master Fo Fu introduced the "Six Yoga's of Naropa" and performed "an open Empowerment ceremony" (the Universal Hua Tsang Monastery invites you to an evening with Master FO FU, 1998). If one prefers the comforts of "secularity" - essentialism without an exotic mystery - one can engage the directives of Claire Winstone, M.A., R.C.C. within group psychotherapy. She promises to take one "beyond talk therapy to highly effective personalized, experiential processes for healing the past and empowering the present". Should largesse be a problem, no problem: a "sliding scale" is offered. (**Common Ground**, 1997: 29). "Individual and group counseling...to empower yourself to change and grow..." is offered by Eilen Wooding, M.Sc. With membership in **the Vancouver Single Mothers Support Network** and:

a simple gift for the practitioner in the form of a flower, card, craftwork, donation, fruit, or in some cases, exchange of services, etc. With some services, there may be a small fee for supplies (VSMSN Society, 1998)

single mothers can participate in empowerment programs under the rubric of "polishing the Mirror". There are two opportunities offered: "Counsellor Felicia Mareels' workshop entitled Acceptance and Empowerment. "Bring (s) empowerment, understanding and forgiveness to yourself" and "Counsellor John Solano offers straight "Empowerment Counselling" and

lists "family-of-origin, inner-child, mindfulness & regression" as (presumably) areas of expertise.

32. As Habermas (1971:79-80) states: "by restricting the realm of decidable questions to the explanation of facts, positivism removes metaphysical problems from discussion...rationally undecidable (sic) opinions cannot really be refuted. They do not hold up to the indifference stubbornly asserted by positivism in matters of belief, and are obliterated... Positivism does not come to terms with metaphysics but simply knocks the bottom out of it. It declares metaphysical assertions meaningless and, letting them stand as such, abandons them to a self-generating "disuse. Yet it is only through metaphysical concepts that positivism can render itself comprehensible." Skepticism is easily transformed into a supportive argument for positivism. Yet it can serve as a weapon against the "moral entrepreneurs" who inhabit the "New Age" domain. But in the end, it is the certainty of knowing what empowerment is, of knowing with certainty how to empower, and of knowing with self-assured certainty the moral dimension of human action that binds both of these ostensibly divergent positions. The appearance of difference is just that; one being the certainty veiled by science's claim to truth, the other being certainty veiled by "spirituality's" claim to "truth".

33. This is essentially argued by Lemert (1994:106-108) as follows. Strong moral claims of the strong moral position require delicate social historical conditions, specifically, a culture where rival moral claims are incapable of compelling adherents of the strong-we position to doubt the universality of their convictions...the likelihood that such conditions could pertain are in fact slim...evidence...the period between 1750-1968 wherein the hegemony of the position was not strong enough to eliminate effective counter claims...the very existence of counter claims weakens the logic of the strong-we position. In short, we cannot square the strong-we position with actual history, also is dependant on proper identification of human nature.

34. Ironically, the conceptual landscape this self inhabits (see Rose, 1996a, for a concise overview) assimilates all the empowered selves previously discussed in this thesis. It is ironic because it attempts to remove the self from the totalising boundaries of an historically construed late (capitalist) modern epoch (see Giddens, 1990,

1991; Harvey, 1989; Jameson, 1991) — as many selfs as discourses — yet collapses them all into the what can be considered as a encompassing governance (via rationalities) termed the "conduct of conduct" and therefore as a "totalising" characteristic of the history of the present.

PART THREE: CONCLUSION-EMPOWERMENT AND SOCIOLOGY

V: Reflecting on the Normative

INTRODUCTION

The arguments of this thesis have initiated a problematisation of empowerment. They have attempted to demonstrate the conceptual configurations that are provoked by the claims to empowerment issuing forth from many sites within contemporary reality. The resulting map of these configurations, comprising what I have referred to as "totalities of self", was meant to demonstrate the meaningful moral/ontological dimension of empowerment as a plurality of selves involved in demonstrable acts of moral self constitution and therefore as a novel way to "think" empowerment. This map stands in sharp contrast to the modernist (enlightenment) fueled instrumental usage of empowerment and its concomitant "normative" understandings as it was displayed in Part One. I will shortly turn to the concluding argument of the thesis: how, when taking into account the insights gathered from Parts One and Two, empowerment urges revisiting the "normative" in sociology by enlivening questions that prompt us to reconsider the status

of morality in sociological investigation. First, I will briefly review the preceding arguments.

In Part One, I located and expressed empowerment's "usage" in the professional discourses of the helping professions. It was implicated therein relative to disciplinary interests which in turn were seen to reflect (for the most part) the modernist scientific impulses toward the certainty of knowing the social world and the modernist normative impulse (i.e., critical rationalism) toward emancipatory programmatic. As such, empowerment, as it appears in the discourses of the helping professions, says a lot about what might be regarded as the hegemony of modernist rationalities (of the discourses themselves) and little about what empowerment may be, ontologically. I concluded this discussion with the suggestion that empowerment has a meaningful content in need of articulation and that sociology, which has all but ignored empowerment, can meaningfully participate in its articulation to a "moral" problematic. I view this thesis as **initiating** this task and opening up empowerment for further critical sociological investigation.

In Part Two of the thesis, I engaged empowerment analytically with the dual purpose of articulating its meaningful content (beyond disciplinary, and in particular

normative interest) and demonstrating sociology's unique critical analytical capability to do so. To this end, I offered a conceptual mapping of empowerment constructed and organized around an effort to steer empowerment claims to a broader vision of the discursive configurations that sociology can offer while enriching this map with the claims as imaginings of self's relationship with its self, others, and a notion of the "good" society.

Empowerment claims evince the need for sociology to keep open its broad disciplinary horizons or what I have referred to as "totalities" of self - imaginings of the ideal (moral) relationship of selfs to (imagined) others and to an idea of the social (or not, as in the postmodern empowered self).¹ What empowerment claims seem to be saying is that sociology needs to see itself as implicated not just in broad theoretical debate, but also at the heart of rather large and daunting moral debate.

Empowerment claims also tell us that where there is a claim to empowerment, there is an empowerer - be it the (imagined) state, civil society, god, or even insurance against risk. And as welcome as this empowerer may be to potential empowerees, the dynamic remains one that places the question of "power" as significant in the modern world (an observation that is clearly recognized in the helping

professions). But this empowerer - empoweree dynamic also, as the claims tell us, often involves relationships based on trust which appears as a vulnerable mediating "mechanism" at the heart of this dynamic.² But most importantly, what these "empowered selves" tell us is that there is not one empowerment but many; not one imagining and acting upon one's self, the "other" and the social in ways "moral", but many. And, many of these selves fall outside of the "self" required by the "normative" programmatic of the helping professions and the traditional sociological vision of the "moral actor". Hence, this is why we can suggest that the helping professions are often involved in the colonisation of empowerment; that is, of the self as the "empowered" carrier of the imaginings of the moral relationship of the self. In short, they demand a "modern" empowered self as both the object and subject of their professional helping "interests". And, this is why we can now doubt the orthodox sociological view of "moral selves". This Durkheimian view, which Bauman (1989:173) perceptively terms "society as a factory of morality", holds that:

All morality comes from society; there is not moral life outside society; society is best understood as a morality-producing plant; society promotes moral regulated behavior and marginalizes, suppresses or prevents immorality.

Consequently, a self that denies this view - many, if not most of, the empowered selfs (beyond the "modern" self) that we have come across in this thesis - by imagining its self and relationship with "others" as gaining its moral nourishment from an "independent existential mode of moral norms" is excluded from a "moral" (sociological) life (Bauman, 1989:170). In other words, sociology obliges us to "think" the morality of self within its imagining of "moral capacity" as the **product** of the social processes and institutions. Our obligation as critical sociologists is to undertake a "re-thinking" of the "moral" by imagining it as the very **object** of the normative component of critical sociological investigation and as something that must be sought in the "social" (as object) and not exclusively in the "societal" (as product) [Bauman, 1989:175-179].

Empowerment has, in the analogues of social theory, been conventionally treated as an epiphenomenon, having its meaningful content overshadowed by the more popular and dramatic claim that we are amidst a "crisis of self". This de-emphasizing of empowerment as a moral act invoking the relationship of self and other would seem to be consistent with:

The most common sociological practice...[that]... does not seem to endow 'being with others'...with a special status or significance. The others are

dissolved in a much more inclusive concept of the context of action...those vast territories where the forces which prompt the actor's choices in a particular direction or limit the actors freedom of choice, are located...(Bauman, 1989:179).

While empowerment certainly speaks to a "crises of self", it also begins to de-emphasise the urgency that "crisis" begs. It instead expresses a particularly vivid picture of what we do, and what we have always done in our ongoing efforts to facilitate a meaningful basis of acting upon our selves and others - of "being with others". I prefer to see empowerment as part of the mosaic of contemporary life; a positive sign that human striving for meaningful relationships with our selves and others continues in a Weberian "modernized" world, "disenchanted" by the demands of rationality, and where it would make perfect sense to do otherwise. "Modernization", as Turner (1990:6) observes, "...brings with it the erosion of meaning...(and)...rationalization makes the world orderly and reliable, but it cannot make the world meaningful." Empowerment suggests the resilience of moral lives and in doing so reminds us of how we imagine, and therefore tend, the boundaries of reason in human affairs. Whatever the case, what should be clear here is that while empowering programmatic may be well-intentioned, they assume a homogeneous empowered subject as consistent with their

modernist imaginings. There is no such creature, so say the empowerment claims of actors articulated to their respective totalities in Part Two of the thesis.

While there are many implications of what I have argued in this thesis, my concluding comments address how empowerment can contribute to our understanding of what it means to do critical social theoretical analysis and, in particular, what empowerment may tell us about a theoretical and methodological approach to the "moral" as the "normative" of contemporary sociology.

This work is an initial critical investigation of empowerment with its point to explore the conceptual landscape that empowerment inhabits while giving weight to empowerment as a richly informative ontological (moral) concept. It is the first attempt to problematise empowerment within a conceptual framework amenable to the interests of a critical/moral sociology and beyond its most common expression within modernist academic and professional programmatics. In reaching for this, I have had to re-direct the focus on empowerment away from what I have demonstrated to be the apparent professional/academic interest. This interest, as we have seen, involves taking hold of and using empowerment within (mostly modernist) normative programmatics, or, if you like, systematising empowerment's

normative/moral content according to the needs of programmatic utility. I have attempted to direct our critical attention to empowerment as a "moral problematic" by gathering together empowerment claims of social actors into the conceptual landscapes that I refer to as "totalities of self." In doing this, I have privileged the understandings/imaginings of social actors to allow the empowerment claims of social actors to inform (confront, critique, redirect), in particular, the broad social theoretical discourse of modernity while at the same time attempting to demonstrate how critical sociological inquiry can meaningfully engage and manage the normative questions raised by these claims. As such, while focusing my analytical attention on empowerment I have drawn attention to the fact that a unique and laudable characteristic of sociology is its "capacity to draw attention to itself as part of its own inquiry" (McCarthy, 1996:107).³ This is what I mean by a reflexive analysis, as demonstrated by the logic of inquiry at the heart of the foregoing analysis. Sociology is capable of moving beyond and "without" the bounds of its inherited certainty (in both the scientific and normative sense) that the professional discourses of empowerment have demonstrated they are unwilling (or incapable) to do.

In what follows, I offer three reflective considerations on what I believe to be the problematic areas in need of re-thinking in order to move sociology toward a contemporary relationship with the "normative". The first proposes that we distinguish "praxis" as the normative of enlightened modernity (as expressed in Part One) from empowerment as the "normative" of contemporary moral life (as expressed in Part Two). This distinction is not acknowledged in the helping professions, nor is it being acknowledged in sociology (as we will see).

The second reflective consideration emphasizes, by way of enlivening a sociology of sociology, how we ought to situate ourselves as critical sociologists as managers of the normative in a context we can usefully know as the *meantime*. I suggest that the urge for sociology to periodise itself distorts the character of social/moral "reality" that we have seen in the imaginings of self in Part Two of this thesis. In short, the indeterminacy of the *meantime* allows for the much needed flexibility of contemporary analysis and an escape from the historicity and teleology that seems to characterize much modernist normative sociology.

The third reflective consideration revisits the earlier theme of the production of good knowledge as it re-emphasizes the point that empowerment is human striving not human

accomplishment. When sociology is implicated analytically in this, it needs to produce "good" knowledge that emphasizes human striving, not progress in either scientific (positivist/epistemic) or normative emancipatory terms. I propose, then, the "separability" of "good" knowledge from the "enlightened" "normative" of sociology and while this theme is elaborated in the final pages of the thesis, it may be useful here to briefly state the basis of this "separability". The existing "normative" of sociology carries the critical rationalism of the Enlightenment which urges the construction of "enlightened programmatic" mostly in the name of "praxis". It lies at the heart of the modernizing project; it says that the "light of reason" can expose "what is" (ontology) and guide the way to what "ought to be" the case (normative). "Good" knowledge privileges voices of social actors by first listening, then configuring these voices to arrive at why, at this *meantime*, we/they may feel obliged to think and act in certain ways. "Good" knowledge neither knows nor shows the way. These things are being decided elsewhere - i.e., "without" the traditional certainties of "knowing" epistemologically - in the ontological/moral terrain of human imaginings.

EMPOWERMENT AND THE NORMATIVE QUESTION

Reflective Consideration 1.

EMPOWERMENT MUST BE DISTINGUISHED FROM PRAXIS. THE UNIQUENESS OF EMPOWERMENT IS THAT IT TELLS US THERE ARE A NUMBER OF "UNCERTAIN" SELFS IMAGINING AND SEARCHING FOR A "MORAL" BASIS FOR ACTING UPON THEIR SELF AND OTHERS. BY CONFUSING PRAXIS WITH EMPOWERMENT, THE SELF IS "DISEMPOWERED" (COLONISED) BY BEING MARSHALLED INTO AN "ENLIGHTENED" TOTALITY THAT HAS MORE TO DO WITH REPRODUCING THE "CRITICAL RATIONALISM" OF THE ENLIGHTENMENT (AND THE MODERNIZING PROJECT) AND THEREFORE THE DISCIPLINARY INTERESTS OF PROFESSIONAL DISCOURSES.

The major impetus of this project was the question of the extent to which empowerment could enable a meaningful critical sociological dialogue about the normative dimension of human action in our contemporary world. What empowerment practices are claiming about our current imaginings of our selves as moral actors is the curiosity that underscores the thesis. Questions such as these, while clearly foreign to our positivist framing of the social world and antagonistic to some postmodernisms, also find an ill fit with traditional modern sociology's normative theoretical inquiry.

Modern sociology's "moral" concerns continue, for the most part, to be shaped by the theoretical interests of its claimed originators. If one considers the context of its original articulation as emerging out of a profound material transformation of society - as being born out of the industrialisation of western Europe and the accompanying

capitalist market economy - it stands to reason that structural and material changes would present themselves at the theoretical centre of any discussion of the normative possibilities of social life. We see this clearly in Durkheim's rendering of social facts as moral facts and Marx's critique of utilitarian ethics as ideology. Both predicate any normative/moral concerns on a realist social-structural rendering of social life. While their work may, as Horton (1964) notes, express "moral outrage" at the dehumanising conditions of their time (see also Schweitzer, 1982; 1991), they both delegate explanation and remedy to theory. In other words, conditions for transformation (or re-organisation) and the vision of a just and/or moral social formation remain predicated on rendering explicable, in theoretical terms, the "real" social-structural causal mechanisms. As such, the sociological theorist has, because theory has, a privileged relationship with the "normative" dimension of social life.

My approach, as I have earlier admitted, privileges the imaginings of self as "moral self" through its mapping of their empowerment claims in the world. Clearly, it privileges too the ability of this approach to yield a meaningful statement about contemporary moral life. Another way to say all this is that I privilege ontology over

epistemology by understanding the imaginings of self as the ontological centre of moral life - as the best we can do in knowing the "normative" of the *meantime*. As such, my approach to normative dimension of empowerment has been set against strategic scientific approaches that regard the problem of empowerment as a measurement issue. It has also opposed those often ill-constructed (modernist) "theorised" conceptions of obstacles and constraints which form a prelude to the heroic practices of social work as it brings empowerment **to** and **for** its subjects. Some might prefer to understand my efforts here as a confrontation with the problem of reification (see Israel, 1971). Whatever the case, these colonising strategies are well-represented in the discourses of the helping professions. However, colonisation deploys other strategies to accomplish its hegemony. Here we have to indict sociology, particularly (and ironically) one which claims itself as "critical". In fact, my earlier work with "praxis" can be implicated as such (see Seary, 1990).

In my earlier work I attempted to argue how "praxis" provides a pointed focus for approaching the question of freedom critically and sociologically. The logic of my analysis was influenced by a neo-marxist world-view which led me to the bold proclamation that "my perspective has been broadened from one of 'self' to one of 'class'" (Seary,

1990:4). From this perspective, I proceeded to critically examine the various ways that theory was envisioned as guiding emancipatory practices. An assumption that remained unexamined was the ordering of theory as a necessary antecedent to practice; that the "normative" of sociology required us to bring critical theory into the world of creative human practice. I believe the argument failed at an ontological level because it urged an imposition of theory-guided practice on a world no longer (if ever) open to this possibility. Clearly, this current dissertation represents a revision of this view. With hindsight I can see how "praxis" theorising represented a modernist ambition, i.e., a posing of normative questions within the superstructural context of emancipatory projects; ones often founded on speculative philosophical and anthropological claims about this or that "human nature". I had not noticed that empowerment had already emerged along with some significant challenges to modernist theorising and its concomitant emancipatory projects.⁴ And, as we will shortly see, sociology at times remains blinded to this change.

The point is that the emergence of the concept of empowerment should not be taken as a linguistic event, as a superseding of praxis. History is more than issuing new ways to dress up old ideas — something evidently missed by the

helping professions. Rather, empowerment practices mark a distinct and historically novel relationship with a complex social reality.

Praxis readily lends itself to a normative/theoretical expression given that it can be traced to the philosophical domain it has long inhabited, since Aristotle. In other words, to ascertain its full meaning one is obliged to tease it out of the philosophical history which is its genus. Thus, it privileges - in this case, historicism - an idealist epistemology in seeking its full expression as a practice in the world. With empowerment, we have a concept whose meaning is emerging out of, so to speak, the history of the present. These differences have direct implications for how social theory must relate to its object - empowerment as a moral act - if it is to know itself as critical and progressive.

Praxis was/is an epistemologically driven concept requiring an intellectual context to articulate its normative force and ambition. Empowerment is an ontological concept needing only the claims of those in the world to sustain this status. "Praxis" was considered a desirable and attainable form of self-directed democratic social organisation. It arguably formed the core of "...a master narrative able to guide social struggles along analytically prescribed routes..." (Carroll and Ratner, 1994:4). The promise of its

empirical realisation was spirited by the assumption that it would reflect the potential "sociality" of humankind. Its successful realisation remained dependent on (theorists) convincing the social/political world that Marxist ethical norms could and should instruct such a meaningful social practice (Seary, 1990). The point is that praxis was intellectually driven - a normative predicate of neo-marxist theorising - and its limited empirical realisation had difficulty going beyond the status of an experiment in the imposition of ethics and meaning on the world - a world that was well into the process of undergoing an epochal "sea-change" (Harvey, 1989). For whatever reason, and at the centre of this change, "self" was an emergent problematic while class (and "praxis") was becoming increasingly shadowed - not buried - by selfs coalescing in "we-group" identities of race, gender, or ethnicity.

It is not my intention to now theorize the precise nature of this change and march this dissertation into the terrain of the "real". This would contradict the analytical emphasis of the thesis to conceptually map empowerment. However, by bringing Harvey (1989) into the discussion I have hinted at some contours that "background" my mapping. I have indicated an affinity with the position that considers the "froth" of postmodernism as "sea-changes in

surface appearances" and therefore as superstructural correlates of a changing capitalist configuration. Postmodernism may very well be "a jazzed up version of the same old story" (Harvey, 1989:188) but these are "new times" - a transitional time to a new era (Marxism Today, October, 1988, quoted in Thompson, 1996:579) - times where class interests murmur in the background rather than resound as the "base rhythm of society" (Clarke, 1976:41). They are "times" wherein the process of engagement and transformation of "our own identities, our sense of self, our own subjectivities" (Thompson, 1996:579) take the stage front and center: in the *meantime*. Empowerment attests to this; praxis is locked into the imaginings of "old times".

By referring to "times", the reader might understand that I am contradicting my earlier stated intention of not marching the dissertation into the "real". Some further clarification is in order here. All I am really saying here is that difference in "times" is the difference of obligations to think in different ways. Historical context certainly intersects with different imaginings - "think" Locke's empiricism plus History. In our *meantime* - our history of the present as expressed through empowerment claims of selfs "in the world" - empowered selfs can be seen as carriers of historical imaginings. Another way to state

this is that I am not denying the "real" rather I am re-aligning it with the question of what "what matters" in the moral lives of the empowered selfs that occupy our *meantime*. And what matters, they tell us, is that the most pressing moral reality is the "reality" of how we imagine our relationship with our self, others, and a "good" society. And, this "reality" often includes historical imaginings, as for example, the "paradoxical empowered self's" imagining of a re-fashioned civil society. When it comes to the moral matters of our selfs in this *meantime*, history may matter more in human subjectivities than elsewhere; it certainly has taken on a prominent role in obliging us to think about, and thus imagine, our moral lives in certain ways. Given this, it makes little sense to think of "new" and "old" times as the marking-off of "real" historical epochs - at least in moral matters.

"Old times" is a metaphor for the once imagined possibilities of "self" (imagined mostly by "critical" theory in some totalising way) locked within a strong claim to a political economic "real". This "real" has become all but lost to some compelling doubts, spurred perhaps, by the event history Held (1996) refers to as "The 1989 Revolution and the Triumph of Liberalism" (Could this explain the move of history into our subjectivities; i.e., the "failure" of

emancipatory projects [socialism/praxis] and the pluralising of normative/moral concerns [liberalism/empowerment]?). The self of this "real" we knew as an imagined possibility, and most powerfully as the marxian "enlightened self" buried by the conditions of alienated labor. Marx (1959:72-73) refers to this as the process of "estrangement" wherein:

...the worker's activity is not his spontaneous activity. It belongs to another; it is the loss of his self. As a result, therefore, man (the worker) no longer feels himself to be freely active in any but his animal functions...and in his human functions he no longer feels himself to be anything but an animal. What is animal becomes human and what is human becomes animal.

And compelling this alienated condition is "ideology" which, as Schweitzer(1996:23) adroitly sums up:

...reifies, mystifies, or disguises underlying social contradictions (e.g., forms of domination and oppression), which stand out as barriers to dealienation and the realization of a genuinely human social existence. Ideology rationalizes, obscures, and conceals existing power relations at the expense of the weak and powerless groups in society. It is diffused in ways that undermine the perceptions of subordinate groups regarding the real possibilities for ameliorative change and political practice.

Here we find the "self" of "old times" being marshaled into alignment with "praxis". The "self" - the human self - remains "lost" because the "real" remains buried, or if you like, the real exists on the other side of that strong and

persistent "interest" laden "reality" we know (because theory tells us) as ideology. Consequently, as "praxis" theorists it is a critical normative responsibility to provide what is lacking: i.e., "What is lacking is a larger, more imaginative picture that situates the alienation problematic within the broader sociological domain, where societal conditions and structural processes are interconnected with the subjective forms of alienation" (Schweitzer, 1996:24). Here theory - the "real of social structure" - is to be served-up to the subjectivities of the alienated.

"New Times" is a metaphor for the imaginings of new possibilities for selfhood that appear to have challenged the yoke of certainty (and the purveyors of) that surrounds the "old times". It is not, therefore, so much a question of what is the "real" in this *meantime* - class probably remains a site of inequality - rather it is a question of a shifting site for, and responsibility of, the construction of moral selfhood and thus a shifting focus of critical/normative theorising away from its "modern" preoccupation with sorting obfuscation from reality, myth from truth - in short, with the epistemological anxieties of modernity. These new possibilities of selfhood (earlier demonstrated in Chapter 4), are seen in and through

empowerment claims that tell us that there is a plurality of imaginative ways that selfs are searching for their moral construction. Hence, the normative is, so to speak, "in the world". Consequently, the "New Times" suggest that our responsibility as critical sociologists interested in the normative is to develop "methodological tools" as pointed acts of listening to imaginings - in the *meantime* - as, for instance, this dissertation. And, if we were to hear the enlightened self in the empowerment claims of selfs imagining their moral lives, then, as a "normative responsibility", we would surely map these too. I have not heard these selfs; it is possible that I have not been listening closely enough. Or, perhaps, they remain silenced by the as yet inability of praxis theorizing to will its normative/ethical norms upon the world or conversely, by a world that is no longer open to such possibilities. At times, it does appear that although the "world" cannot decide between different vocabularies, from time-to-time it "...can and does decide between different theories" (Sorrel, as quoted in Malachowski, 1990:19). "Times" have changed.

The empowerment helping professions carry the imperialist and modernist logic of praxis to their constructions of empowerment; without, of course, the marxist ethical norms. Consequently, we see them grasping to fill

this normative void with often under-articulated (often liberal) ethical/moral standards to mark the success or failure of their empowerment programmatic (this is particularly clear in the Evaluation Community); retreating to the emancipatory "ethics" of modernism's normative arsenal (as evident in American Social Work); or, abandoning these broader ethics for a focused concern with the "self"-interest of an empowered profession ("How do we do post-modern social work?", ask British social workers, in post-Thatcher England).

Empowerment is, as the claims which I have brought to this thesis clearly demonstrate, "in the world" producing and reproducing often incommensurate imaginings of self's moral, social, political and economic realities. It is an active practice; a predicate with an as yet unarticulated antecedent. "Praxis" was an effort to impose (as practices) theoretical structures that held the promise of optimising freedom understood in terms of sociability upon social reality. At best, praxis wills to be in the world. With empowerment we have the growing entrenchment of practices that are, when noticed as such, able to inform theory about a meaningful dimension of social actors' lives amidst the complexities of the modern world. With praxis we had a theory seeking practice; with empowerment we have practices

seeking to negotiate for a voice in an articulation.⁵

"Praxis" was/is sustained by the theoretical echoes of marxism without which its practices are inclined toward silence. However, "doubts" have entered the domain of neo-marxist and gramscian "praxis" theorists leading some of them to endorse this silence in such reflexive claims as the "the prudent apostasy of marxist intellectuals" (Carrol and Ratner, 1994:3). This is not, of course, a call to abandon the primacy of theory, not a renouncing of a long-standing "privilege" of progressive intellectuals in their "forming and transmitting discourse" nor a change in their self-understanding as intellectuals. To be a "praxis" intellectual, "means to make knowledge/value claims, to gain some degree of social recognition for them, and to participate in social relations on the basis of this exchange of claims and recognition" (Verdery, 1991:16-17). "Praxis", then, while doubting marxism as a theoretical antecedent has not retreated from the "enlightened" modernist ordering of theory - practice (i.e., from epistemological certainty) as it now searches for a new theory to inform its practices, as can be seen in the following example which calls for:

...new forms of political struggle...[which]...
must be conceptualized within a paradigm

applicable to the conditions of a society in which the prospects for a single unifying agency may well have vanished (Carroll and Ratner, 1994:5).

This dissertation has attempted to open-up a theoretical space within which the voices of empowerment actors can be heard as selfs, ontologically, expressing their "moral capacity". What we have heard is a plurality of "moral" imaginings of empowered selfs; one's that "praxis" would maintain "ought to be" brought under the rubric of some "unifying principle"; no longer "totalising" (the marxian doubt prevails) but nevertheless effective in marshalling the "plurality" of selfs into some imagined "socialist project" (see Carroll and Ratner, 1994).

I am not denying then, that "praxis" and its concomitant intelligentsia has at its normative centre a concern for "moral capacity". Rather, I am suggesting that empowerment raises a strong doubt about, and thus urges a re-visiting of, that "vexed 'relation between theory and practice'...an age-old conundrum for theoreticians and activists alike" (Jay, 1996:174). But it demands that, in this *meantime*, we re-order the long-standing privilege of theory over practice that "praxis" demands of its theorists. It demands that we situate the normative in the world as a question of morality heard through the voices of selfs and

not fret about epistemological matters.

These differences that can be attributed to "praxis" and "empowerment" raise questions about how to understand oneself as a critical social theorist. Empowerment facilitates a need to be reflexive; a need to question our relationship as sociologist with the "object" of the analysis. Praxis, in pointing to a way to approach the theory - practice nexus, offered a resolution. Praxis theorising was widely understood as synonymous with a critical humanist version of marxism (Seary, 1990:20); that is, "Marxism as a philosophy of praxis". The task of the praxis theoretician was to assemble the epistemological, ontological and axiological dimensions of Marx's philosophy into a coherent unity. Crocker's (1983) "meta-ethical theory" and Marcovic's (1974) "dialectical humanism" are two examples. The ideal was to mobilise this system of thought on the assumption that man's latent potential (a being of praxis) would emerge, given the appropriate historical conditions (Seary, 1990:24). As such, the praxis theorist, while concerned with facilitating "emancipation", was also attempting to establish a base of "cultural power" for the initial and ongoing "normative...control over moral imperatives and societal norms" (Karabel, 1996:211, n.,31). Praxis begins with an exploration of a system of thought, and

ends - history has not been kind to praxis - as a compelling utopian vision.

The diversity of social/moral "realities" that the claims to empowerment evince, locate it as a phenomena in the world not neatly bound relationally to any one systematised, formal and conceptual body of thought; as praxis was. My construction of the discursive configurations of empowerment claims demonstrate this heterogeneity of moral imaginings as a sign of the "times". And so it should if we understand empowerment claims as the social actors have voiced them in the pages of this thesis, that is, as stating one's moral relationship with one's world; one's moral capacity as the "existential condition of 'being with others'" and not as the sociological (essentialising) construction would have it - as the product of society.

This diversity, then, speaks positively to Bauman's (1989:183) observation that: "morality is not a product of society. Morality is something society manipulates - exploits, re-directs, jams". It also sheds doubt on Durkheim's view of morality as society (i.e., qua community). And it is these empowerment claims that free the "moral" from dependency on any one totalising conceptual system and in the process shed considerable doubt on the colonising projects of the helping professions, in particular. In the case of

"praxis" (and with the luxury of hindsight) we can argue that it is a modernist concept; an action bearing all the desires of the modernist mind and encompassing a political economic theory commensurate with the existing political economic relationships of a time. With empowerment, while it appears to be increasingly possessed by the modernist mind, complete colonisation has not **yet** prevailed.

The conundrum at the heart of this work is how to provide a critical, meaningful and sociological dialogue on empowerment without colonising it. Throughout this project this has remained a source of tension. We must after all speak from somewhere as it is "impossible to attempt to stand nowhere" (Taylor, as quoted in Gordon, 1996:265). It led to the reflexivity in this work and informed my selection of a framework of analysis that is admittedly eclectic, minimalist and flexible. The following clarifies where the analysis speaks from but should also be understood as a more general claim as to what a contemporary critical analysis might look like.

The analysis stops short of claiming allegiance to proponents of a critical social science - it is not interested in explicitly arguing why and how people should change either their self-understanding or their situations. Fay's **Critical Social Science** (1987:48) exemplifies this

interest as it issues "demands for an activist conception of human beings" within its theorising of "human capacities (latent and manifest), a theory of society" and a "theory of history." And while compelling, it is quite simply a variant of praxis theorising.

My analysis of empowerment has resisted the normative (and colonising) impulse lodged in much critical social science. But the same cannot be said of another sociological approach to empowerment, specifically, that found in a recent publication by Canadian sociologist Madine VanderPlaat (1998) entitled, "Empowerment, Emancipation, and Health Promotion Policy."⁶ We need to look at her argument more closely as it does provide another sociological approach to empowerment and, hopefully, the ensuing discussion will leave the reader with the points of contestation to consider between her sociological approach and the one that I am constructing and advocating here. Her argument may have merits for those interested in modernist emancipatory programmatic, my immediate interest is in how her position, because it is firmly embedded in the "praxis" tradition, can act as a lens through which we can filter out empowerment - praxis distinctions thereby adding to the clarity of what I mean by the contemporary "normative" as being a question of "being" morally in the world.

That another Canadian sociologist should express interest in empowerment, while I was in the midst of writing this thesis, was a source of theoretical excitement. As social-theoretical approaches to empowerment are virtually non-existent, I had hoped that I could find a critical affinity with VanderPlaat's (1998:71) stated "emancipatory interest." Instead, I found an argument that only bolstered my own position by exemplifying the kind of approach to empowerment my arguments are set against.

VanderPlaat's association of "empowerment" with "emancipation" (and her participation in the evaluation community mentioned earlier) led me to anticipate that her argument would replicate the colonising logic of "praxis" theorising and thus guide our thinking about empowerment away from the novelty that I argue empowerment is. Indeed, when I re-read the article, substituting "empowerment" with "praxis", it proved to be a smooth substitution. In fact, this exercise added theoretical acuity to her argument because the theoretical tensions that plagued praxis (theory - practice problematic) were no longer obfuscated by the conceptual novelty of empowerment. To me, it was a familiar read because her argument treads the terrain I covered earlier.

VanderPlaat's (1998:71) concern is that,

conventional programs to social intervention assume that the solutions to social problems lie in the ability to organize the social world according to the technocratic mindset of the state administrative apparatus.

Her "critical" offering is "to advance the potential of empowerment orientated intervention as an emancipatory project..." (1998:72). This potential is wrapped in the modernist normative language of "emancipation", "intervention", and the "using" of theory in the context of "solving problems". That this modernist talk should appear in a programmatic statement of our current sociological interests in Canadian Society was, from the "reflexive" and critical point of view advanced in this thesis, disconcerting. It is probably because of the seductive quality of the word empowerment that this modernist rendering of empowerment finds its way into sociological discourse when it is better suited to academic social work (albeit they are, as I have earlier argued, attempting to break this kind of paternalistic relationship).

As I have indicated, VanderPlaat (1998) really means "praxis" where she uses "empowerment". This can be evidenced by the "praxis" thinkers whom she references to intellectually situate "the practice of empowerment oriented social intervention" (73). Among them we find Paulo Friere in reference to his 1970 book, **Pedagogy of the Oppressed**, a work

replete with the "praxis" concept with no mention of empowerment. Patti Lather (1991), is cited as a "feminist pedagogical theorist (s)", whose earlier work (not cited by VanderPlaat) develops "research as praxis" as a contribution to critical theory and emancipatory research (1986) and in whose subsequent work one finds "empowerment" methods serving "praxis-oriented inquiry" by their contribution to "consciousness-raising and transformative social action" (VanderPlaat, 1998).

VanderPlaat's reference to the work of Brian Fay (1987) affirms her argument's affinity with the colonising logic of praxis. She understands Fay as pursuing normative strategies for intervention guided by "emancipatory principles" (1998:74) and there can be little doubt that she means for empowerment guided emancipatory strategy to be brought to the world of human practice, of "praxis". Fay's (1987) notion of a critical social science is no doubt seductive to those (I included) who would wish to acknowledge, as Vanderplatt (1998) puts it:

the individual as a 'knowing' agent capable of reflective action and producing change within their environment, rather than on an individual as the object of change-producing strategies.

As Fay (1977:218-219, emphasis in the original) states,

One test of the truth of critical theory is the considered reaction by those for whom it is supposed to be emancipatory...not only must a particular theory be offered as the reason why people should change their self-understanding, *but this must be done in an environment in which these people can reject the reason.*

I think we would all wish to acknowledge a world where human capacity and agential potential of the human actor was meaningful and unlimited and, as social theorists, we could open a reflexive space wherein we could see ourselves involved in struggles for justice and progressive change. And while there are ongoing efforts to identify and provide theoretical support for these "political spaces" (see Melucci, 1989), these efforts are speaking to the problematic of praxis: **not** empowerment.

Praxis, at its root, is the ontological problematic of the relationship of consciousness to being as expressed in Marx's **Thesis on Feuerbach** (1845:13):

The question whether objective [gegenständliche] truth can be attributed to human thinking is not a question of theory but is a *practical* question. In practice man must prove the truth, that is, the reality and power, the this-sidedness [Diesseitigkeit] of his thinking. The dispute over the reality or non-reality of thinking which is isolated from practice is a purely *scholastic* question.

Its "sociological" legacy, however, has been one of "praxis" being (mis) construed as an epistemological problematic. It

is found in Gramsci's "philosophy of praxis" with its insistence that "intellectuals" have the responsibility as the vanguard of emancipatory action, to make "critical" for the masses an "already existing activity" while emphasising the efficacy of the "historical subject in the changing of reality" (Sher, 1977:63). So too with Marcovic's (1974) comprehensive statement of "man" as a potential "being of praxis" blocked (or alternatively facilitated) by historical conditions. To know the "precise nature of these mechanisms...thereby depriving them of their power" (Fay, 1977:210) is the *raison d'être* of the critical praxis theoretician. Praxis needs theory, and assures normative theorising as an enterprise. This appears not to be the case with empowerment. "Empowerment" issues forth from the world; from "empowered" voices expressing creative imaginings of "moral" lives.

VanderPlaat's (1998:73) other (modernist-instrumentalist) objective is to "assess the emancipatory potential of the empowering approach using a Habermasian Framework." Here theory is seen to coalesce with "utility", to pronounce its instrumentalist logic. Empowerment does not, if empowerment claimants in the world are to be given (ontological) credit, need emancipatory theory; it must be praxis she is talking about. The Habermasian perspective, she argues in vivid

instrumentalist terms, is particularly "useful" in illuminating the following questions:

Do they... (empowerment orientated social programs), in their intent, underlying assumptions, and program design have the capacity to support an emancipatory interest? How do we determine if such a potential exists? (1998:79).

As one might expect (following Habermas), she proceeds to address these questions through, first of all, constructing our contemporary epoch within the ongoing modernisation project characterised by "...the extension of state expertise and administrative apparatus into the realm of everyday life" (1998:79). In other words, she construes the empowerment problematic as an interventionalist "process" within the imagining of a social-structural epoch characterised by a "modern" vision of the instrumental state set within a "late capitalist welfare state" (1998:79).

In contrast, I have earlier demonstrated, with the aid of the empowered voices of social actors, how empowerment is, in part, an expression of "self" closely tied to the state re-working its traditional expression of benevolence (welfare) as it more clearly reveals its (liberal) rationale of empowerer through issuing demands upon citizen/selves to take responsibility for self. In other words, the state may very well be, as VanderPlaat assumes, extending its expertise

and administrative apparatus - we cannot know this with certainty - but the more important question is how it is restructuring its mode of governance alongside its changing empowerer "welfare" face (McGrew, 1996). As such, to conceptualise the "real" threat in instrumentalist terms is to locate empowerment, with certainty, as a site of resistance in the imaginings of the "old -times" of "old-threats". The state has already "colonised" empowerment within its rationale of governance - i.e., it has voiced its reconstruction as "moral empowerer" - thereby rendering, unimaginable, the real "space" of resistance that VanderPlaat's theoretical imaginings depend upon. Another way to state this is that VanderPlaat's argument depends on a "real" threat (of the state in particular) that empowerment renders at the very least, dubious.

VanderPlaat (1998:85) then proceeds to argue how the "systemic takeover of everyday life (Habermas' "colonisation of the lifeworld") can be seen to disempower programs with "emancipatory aspirations." To evince this claim - to bring it to the "real" of the social - she follows sociological scientific orthodoxy by operationalising "colonisation" through the use of three indicators of this disempowerment: "...the privileging of a technocratic and scientific mindset, the appropriating of experience by expert cultures, and the

silencing of the politically active citizen" (1998:79). These indicators are "evidenced by the three social programs" (1998:79) that form the substantive context of the argument. This is, as the sub-title of her section states, "The Threat". It is a threat, which I have earlier demonstrated, as being similarly imagined by the more "enlightened" empowerment helping professions. "Knowing" the threat, we are predictably offered up theoretical/normative resolutions in the form of a "promise".

"The Promise", as VanderPlatt (1998:85) refers to it, is that

...the Habermasian framework also provides a way of moving beyond this dilemma...is linked to communicative competence - the discursive capacity to explore a sense of identity and give voice to shared interests and needs.

To this VanderPlaat (1998:85) adds what I take to be her central theoretical insight:

To this argument...(as above)...I would add the contention that the development of communicative competence requires the existence of 'communicative space' or 'public zone' where needs and interests are made accessible to collective reflection. It is in the carving out of such a space that one finds the emancipatory potential of empowerment intervention.

VanderPlaat refers to the "public zone" as one such "space" within which to presumably reach an emancipatory

potential. It is interesting that she should reach for the geographical metaphor "zone" as a space for "communicative awareness" inclusive of "mutual support activities... encouraged to give participants a sense of community" (1998:85). This is interesting because, as I have discussed earlier, the US state also designates "empowerment zones" as places targeted for "decision-making aids to help communities identify resources and overcome barriers to success" (Welcome from Vice-President Gore, 1998). While I am sure that VanderPlaat would locate such zones within the "state administrative apparatus" (1998:71) and as part of "the threat", the "praxis" driven Habermasian theoretical "emancipatory" vision that she "uses" to elaborate her normative programatics, does not have the theoretical wherewithal to (re) construct what I have earlier described as an empowerer state which has subtly moved into the "public zone" as a moral authority. The point is, "public zones" - now "empowerment zones" - are places where the state demonstrates its moral authority and are not, as VanderPlaat would have, places where the "moral" authority of civil society space can be established.

VanderPlaat (1998:86) states that,

...an emancipatory approach must also encourage participants to recognize and develop the

politically active side of the participant/citizen dichotomy. In essence, there is a need to dissolve the bifurcation and rejoin the political agency of the citizen with the needs and interests of the...client.

I agree with this. But when one looks beyond the emancipatory politics of modernism and toward the contemporary totalities of selfs which I have brought to light, one might see that the state as empowerer is urging this very thing - the construction of a new "moral" self, one that appears to be increasingly obliged to take responsibility for self - to be "empowered" - and as part of liberal governance. This is a process that speaks to the privatisation of morality, the collapsing of the traditional distance between the state and civil society, and thus the very distinction that is required in order to imagine the "modern" state, as "threat". To "empower" the "client" as "citizen" is thus an act of producing a good liberal actor or, if you like, a forming of a "partnership" between the state and (the subjectivities of) self. It makes little sense then to talk, as VanderPlaat does, about empowerment as an emancipatory strategy particularly in a context that relies on imaginings of a late welfare state as, so to speak, the real "enemy" against which we are to construct our political agency. Empowerment is a struggle for a moral life

and the state is a player in this struggle but not in ways understood through the modernist "emancipatory" imagination.

Rather, it makes sense to talk about the problem of empowerment that begins where Vanderplatt's article ends. The need to dissolve the "bifurcation", that she urges, is really the question of how the self is reconstituting itself as a "moral" actor - a question of empowerment. Habermas' communicative ethics is actually only one prescriptive (modernist) ethos among a number of general claims made by the empowerer/empoweree, claims which can be otherwise understood as calls to situate the self as a moral actor.⁷ Commenting on this current state of affairs Bauman (as quoted in Hutchings, 1997:131) aptly notes:

There is no easy exit from the quandary. We have learned the hard way that while universal values offer a reasonable medicine against the oppressive obtrusiveness of parochial backwaters, and communal autonomy offers an emotionally gratifying tonic against the stand-offish callousness of the universalists, each drug when taken regularly turns into poison. Indeed, as long as the choice is but between two medicines, the chance of health must be meagre and remote.

In sum, I am saying that VanderPlaat (1998), first of all, demonstrates an inadequate theoretical understanding of the distinctive differences between the phenomena of empowerment and the methodological construct that is "praxis". This is evidenced by a terminological supplanting

of praxis with empowerment due mostly to the unreflective modernist urge toward "utility" and "evaluation" resulting (in this case) in a reduction of theory to an instrumental tool. And, when assessed as a "praxis" approach on its own terms, her argument demonstrates an inadequate understanding of this well trod problematic.⁸ In short, VanderPlaat's "empowerment" is "praxis" by another name and as such it offers little to the critical empowerment problematic that this work is attempting to initiate.

SOCIOLOGISTS AS MANAGERS OF THE "NORMATIVE"

Reflective Consideration 2.

EMPOWERMENT PROVIDES CLUES TO HOW AND WHY WE SHOULD SITUATE OURSELVES IN THE MEANTIME AS CRITICAL SOCIOLOGISTS WITH "MORAL" CONCERNS.

As I stated at the outset, empowerment has not received much attention from sociologists. For the most part, it appears in discussions with the uncritical assumption that it is hermeneutically unproblematic. In short, its sociological significance has not been noticed and therefore it remains an epiphenomenon (of praxis, in particular).

Empowerment, as I have argued, is not a terminological novelty; not a new aesthetic to address old practices. Rather, through empowerment claims it reveals itself as a novel practice of the self's imagining - via imaginings of

self's relationship with self and the "other" - its self at an intersection between constraints and choices that lie somewhere within its prevailing (imaginings of) social reality. The imagined "good" society or alternatively the renunciation of any possibility of the social (as with the postmodern "empowered self", appears (often, but not always) as its chosen "moral" path; as its "empowerment". As such, while empowerment claims may have been inclined to point to "unneeded/unwanted oppressive sources of domination, or structures" (Bhaskar, 1991), the analysis has not responded by pointing to any possible transformative theoretical programmatics (as, with praxis) that suggest the conditions of their transformation. This rationale is, as I have argued, the normative logic of "praxis"; a vestige of the enlightenment's mode of thinking we know as the "critical rationalism" that has informed much modern sociological/social theory (see Hamilton, 1996). Empowerment lends itself to the suggestion that such changes may or may not be decided in the world and not by theory.⁹ Empowerment, then, appears to be an ontological/moral problematic not an epistemological/normative one; the latter being "praxis".

We have seen in Part Two of this thesis how claims of empowerment articulate the divergent moral/ethical trajectories of selves that characterise contemporary life.

The dialogues (of which this thesis is one) setting out the distinct ethos of each trajectory of self have only recently begun to be opened up as a discursive field of interest that includes sociological discourse (e.g., Bauman, 1993). Previously, discussions of ethics/morals were contained in the often inaccessible analogues of philosophy. In sociology, while there is no compelling argument to suggest that its great works born out of the enlightenment were not underwritten with a "moral" responsibility (see Wolfe, 1991; Alexander, 1990), moral concerns were and continue to be marshalled into social-scientific frameworks as "superstructural" phenomena serving to explain the causes of social order in terms of social interest (Lash, 1996:75; also Bauman, 1989:169-175). A consequence of this is that sociology remains bridled to the "moral" proposition that social actors (selves) are moral because of society. The empowerment claims that I have articulated in this thesis render this proposition, at the very least, doubtful. And if we are not moral because of society but instead, it is the case that society is as it is - is possible at all - because of something, say, "pre-ontological" (see, Bauman, 1993) this spells a major turn in sociological thinking. For one, it loosens traditional modern sociology's grip on its imagining of "moral self" as a product of society and begs us to

reconsider self as an object free of disciplinary sociological determinations though not necessarily "social" ones. At the very least, empowerment claims tell us that the world, constituted here as the imaginations of selfs, is at this *meantime*, richer than the modernist sociological imagining of "self".

At the very centre of the empowerment problematic is a display of the ontological/moral uncertainty of today's world - self's imagining ways to reconstitute their relationship with others in a meaningful way that forms a "good" society. It may be the case, then, that even if it were true that we were moral because of society - that "traces" of meaning had sustained through the process of "disenchantment" (see, Thompson, 1996) to morally nourish selfs - empowerment voices tell us that this is no longer true. Unless, of course, we disavow as "inauthentic" or "lesser selfs", any selfs other than the modern empowered self and the paradoxical late modern self (as discussed in this thesis). We could do this only if we ignore the empowerment claims of the other selfs, perhaps taking the tack of relegating their selfs to the dark amoral/asocial categories of inauthenticity and as narcissistic (see Lasch, 1979) or "facile" selfs (see Bloom, 1987). But this is not what we do as sociologists: is it? It would seem to me that our (moral) responsibility remains

that of articulating a social reality that is inclusive, as untidy as it may be. And, we know that talk of "morality" has always been "awkward" and "ambiguous" in sociological discourse (Bauman, 1989).

Increasingly, it is acknowledged that society is undergoing a transformation from material society to cultural society accompanied by a "contemporary apprehension that if 'society' or 'social reality' is anything at all, it is a multiple reality...that, in comparison with that of our predecessors, is far more tentative, more open-ended, and more contentious" (McCarthy, 1996:26). Given this, it stands to reason that our traditional sociological framing of moral issues would be met with new intellectual challenges demanding novel conceptual (re)imaginings of the moral universe we claim within our constructions of social reality. This is all true, if one holds as I do, that sociology is centred on capturing in discursive configurations the knowledge that emerges out of the social actor's contextual confrontation with their world. It is a disciplined conduit of and for knowledge, a sociology of knowledge. Another way to state this is that we need to be reflexive, that is (re)locate the problematic that speaks to our relationship as producers of meaningful knowledge relative to a social world

that has undergone a sea-change but remains sociologically elusive.

The stance I am suggesting for sociology is to be reflexively situated in the *meantime*. This is not the same as saying "here we are for now" for the reason that we are concerned here - at this time - with a history of the present unencumbered by the idea of change and its kindred idea of "progress". It is to say that sociology ought to represent in its disciplinary matrix, the same uncertainty that social actors are experiencing in attempting to negotiate a meaningful way of being in the world (the presumption of ontological uncertainty that I spoke of earlier). This would seem to me to be consistent with the principle that sociology is historically grounded.

The sociology of Marx, Weber and Durkheim formulated questions relative to the historical changes that characterised their respective social realities and were all driven by the "positive" zeal of the Enlightenment's call for reformation. In our *meantime*, and if we listen to the empowerment claims of selfs, rather than construct "useful" sociological knowledge, we ought to filter sociological knowledge through the intellectual lens of what Hacking has usefully presented as "Locke plus history" to produce conceptual maps. "Locke plus history", as a guiding

epistemological principle for contemporary sociological investigation would look at concepts which are "...words in their sites...[and]...invoke the history of a concept...to investigate the principle that cause it to be useful - or problematic" (Hacking, 1990:359-360). If you like, this can be seen as emphasising experience plus event context minus the teleology (purpose) that might otherwise take us to the conclusion of historical materialism. Thereby we avoid attributing purpose where there is, in the meantime, uncertainty and contingency - we know this through the many imaginings of empowerment set out earlier in this thesis.

Restated, the forming intellectual context within which to think the "normative/moral" of contemporary life (with empowerment at the centre), and thus to re-think what a critical sociology ought to look like, mirrors the complexity of the "cultural society" we inhabit. This kind of reflexive thinking is not, of course, new. From time to time there have been attempts in our discipline to capture the relationship between the discipline and the social world; between, as Gouldner (1970) writes, "the sociologists who study and 'laymen' who are studied." C. W. Mills (1943) is notable here for bringing attention to the contiguous nature of the early Chicago School's social disorganization theorists and the economic and political will of the time.

Gouldner's (1970) call for a "Reflexive Sociology" is another example which places ideology as the key to understanding the production of sociological knowledge. He states:

Reflexive sociology promises that the character of any sociology is affected by political praxis and that further development of sociology now requires its liberation from the political praxis of liberalism...[and we]...And we must...have an historical sensitivity that alerts it to the possibility that yesterday's ideologies may no longer enlighten but may now blind us (1978:499-502).

This reflexivity, a "sociology of sociology" by another name (see Friederichs, 1970), is a (institutional) "self" critique of modern sociology within the grasp of modernity (see also, Smith, 1989; 1990). There, we are situated within, as Gouldner (1970:403) would have it, "a general theory about social theorists" which is said to "illuminate the manner in which theory-products and theory performances are generated and received." We are held too within the clutches of the grand normative dialogues of ideology wherein the question of morality holds no privileged place beyond its role as, perhaps, an obfuscation agent of the "real". All this changes if we allow ourselves to attribute less theoretical weight to material society and throw it instead toward the idea of cultural society. This is to say that we might have to issue a statement to ourselves - a "sociology of sociology" - that could, ironically, unshackle us from the

certainty of mission that characterises Gouldner's statement of who we are as sociologists. In other words, we might have to relinquish our status as social scientists or ideologues and our claims to "what counts as true" (and thus abandon ideology) and accept that:

...truth is a thing of this world...Truth isn't outside power...(and)...by the production of truth...[is meant]...not the production of true utterances but the establishment of domains in which the practice of true and false can be made at once ordered and pertinent (Foucault, 1981:8-9).

If we do so, truth is extricated from the idea of the real, is conflated with power, and while it may become but one of Foucault's technologies, "truth" re-centres itself as the immanent concern of analysis. A reflective sociologist must therefore "speak" a sociology of sociology in a new way.¹⁰

S/he must speak within a "history of the present" wherein one finds the domain of moral philosophers as social scientists who have conceded their disciplinary legacy of scientifically assured certainty to the uncertain contingency of "social" life. This sociologically illusive present terrain of analysis is only beginning to form. The imaginings of empowerment claimants urge this relocation through their displays of what we can presume to be ontological uncertainty and their efforts to quell such by

the means of establishing a "moral" relationship with their selves and others and an envisioned "good" society.

Already present there are the debates that have come to form, as Lash (1996:76) puts it, a "tri-polar discursive field" contending the "ethical issues as faced by moral agents." Well-known vocal protagonists of this contested terrain are: liberalism as expressed in the work of John Rawl's and Jurgen Habermas; the communitarianism of, in particular, Charles Taylor and Alistair MacIntyre; and, most recently, postmodern ethics as forwarded in the work of Zygmunt Bauman (1996:76). This intellectual context, and it is certainly broader than briefly portrayed here, is one that empowerment claims in the world appear to support. Notice too, that the terrain is shared by philosophers, political theorists, and sociological theorists.

Empowerment is a claim to a "moral" self as it relates to others and imaginings of the "good" society amidst a contemporary condition best described as one of profound uncertainty about how to treat others (Wolfe, 1989). A central finding of this study was that there is not one but many discernible empowerments; a number of ways social actors claim their selves as accomplishing a "moral" relationship with their self and other selves and as such many imaginings of the "good" society. One might raise here the problem of

relativism and suggest that I am advocating a form of radical relativism. But, if one recalls that "good" knowledge is aimed at the celebration of human striving, then relativism may be understood as wholly positive expression of this. Moreover, if we are to now free the question of "moral capacity" from "society as a factory of morality" and the moral self as therefore a product of society, and think it now (as the voices of empowerment would have us do) as an existential responsibility of selfs who produce society from their imaginings of "moral action", then of course we must understand morality as relative. However, it is not I who am advocating this, it is the empowerment claims that suggest that this is the current way of "being in the world". Perhaps this *meantime* is not a time for articulating "moral capacity" to, say, some universalist ethic. In short, relativism is only problematic to those who would wish to capture the normative ontological dimension of social life in a universalizing normative "totality", i.e., praxis theorists. It may be a problem to those who demand certainty by wishing normative structures on a world that does not appear open to this.

Empowerment claims direct social-theoretical inquiry to the question of how society ought to work while drawing its critical focus to the relationship of self to other and thus

to how society actually does work. Insofar as this holds true, sociology could become a player in the "the theatre of moral debate in modern society" (Wolfe, 1989), in this *meantime*.

Because empowerment claims embody moral claims sociology is obliged to encompass moral concerns. Articulation of these concerns within discursive configurations while privileging the former over the latter is to engage in the production of "good" knowledge. Empowerment speaks to an existential problem of the uncertainty of our times. But as I have demonstrated, this "problem" is one that is amenable to discussion within social theoretical language that frames the problem as one of presumed ontological uncertainty. All one has to do is listen. Social actors are, through their empowerment claims, informing those social theorists willing to listen that there is at this time - the *meantime* - a general uncertainty in the world as to how to treat others. Finally, we want to understand this *meantime* as a permanent condition of methodological inquiry (given our interest in the history of the present).

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE URGE TO EMPOWER AND BE EMPOWERED

Reflective Consideration 3.

IT IS NOT SO MUCH WHAT EMPOWERMENT IS ATTEMPTING TO ACCOMPLISH THAT MAKES IT MEANINGFUL, AS IT IS THE WILL TO ACCOMPLISH A MORAL UNION WITH SELF, OTHERS, AND SOCIETY AT A TIME WHEN TO DO OTHERWISE WOULD, PERHAPS, MAKE MORE SENSE. THIS PROVOKES THE NEED TO REVISIT THE QUESTION OF THE NATURE OF HUMAN NATURE.

The significance of the urge to empower flows from and at the same time provides support for the proposition that human beings are neither (by nature or because of society) good nor bad. Empowerment revitalises the question of human nature and suggests that humans are "essentially", relentlessly, and restlessly ambivalent. Empowerment, in the most general sense, expresses an urge to guide the conduct of the "self" and the other. It could be argued that this "urge" constitutes a "moral impulse"; the pre-ontological "raw material of sociality and of commitment to others in which all social orders are molded" (Bauman, 1993:13). If so, and following this argument, the harnessing of this urge into practices (under the authority of prevailing social institutions, ideologies, discourses, etc.) is a case of the "social management of morality". If our "selves" are ambivalent (although impulsively moral) that management is essential, albeit a delicate and complex operation. But what remains at issue is the question of the authority to do so.

I am not suggesting here that Bauman is necessarily correct in locating our moral capacity in our inherent "sociality" that flows amidst the general ambiguity of being in the world. Nor am I arguing that Bauman's insights satisfy the classical modernist debate over the nature of human nature. The general ambiguity of Bauman's "pre-ontological" moral impulses do little to discount the possibility of the contrary position that we are "pre-ontologically" amoral. Of course, the latter position would be hard-pressed to sustain such an imagining in the context of those imaginative "moral" strivings that I have presented in Part Two of this dissertation. What I am saying is this: if we accept the plurality of ways of selfs imagining their relationship with others that have been voiced by empowerment claims mapped out in this thesis, then Bauman is correct in taking the question of morality out of its ownership by modern sociology and its moral centre in the sociologically produced modern (moral) self.

The overriding concern for Bauman, and myself, is not to satisfy the question of the nature of human nature - a modernist ambition - but rather to **initiate** imaginative ways to "peg" it to the question of morality. And, if this *meantime* is imagined, as it would be from the point of view of "praxis" theory", as being thick with the "dangers" of

"relativism", then there is little that this dissertation can do to dispel this "reality" without rendering mute the "voices" of empowered selfs "in the world".

I have expressed how empowerment is uncritically assumed to be a "good" thing; we see this in its axiomatic alignment with emancipatory interests, transformative politics and human potential. Consequently, its flip side of "disempowering" is often aligned with the "bad" of conservatism and ideologies that serve as mechanisms to support the status quo (e.g., Arditi, 1996). The point is, the authority of professional empowerment practices (the empowerer) wears the guise of morality both in its instructions as to the process and practice of engagement (means) and to the ends it is seeking. Irrespective of the domain of professional empowerment practices, all are driven by some visionary notion of the ends of an ideal society. Also, they are all presenting some idea of an ideal self of society; differing, however, on the extent to which they can claim this self as a "moral self". When we balance their normative programmatics - a cohesive imagining of what is best for empowerment subjects - against what we have discovered to be a plurality of creative imagining of selfs that comprise our contemporary social reality, then any

empowerment act of the former upon the latter should be understood as an act of colonisation.

Questions of ethics and morality have traditionally been framed within the cloistered discourse of philosophy. With empowerment claims in the world, we ought to now consider ethics and morality as having shifted the analytical focus from an epistemological discourse to a pressing ontological and existential problem - from how we know the world to how we are to be "morally" in the world. This shift, from a sociological point of view, probably has much to do with, as earlier discussed, reflexivity (providing the heightened awareness) and structural/informational changes in the "real" world that make choices both possible and difficult. Insofar as this holds true, Giddens' (1991) work, in particular, is insightful. What seems clear is that social theory is/should be considering a new ontological/moral problematic; a reconceptualised relationship of its critical facility with its "object" of study. This dissertation has urged this all along.

The sociological tradition has, from time to time, breached philosophy's disciplinary matrix and drawn morality and ethics out into a sociological reality. More precisely, the sociological tradition has formed by laying claims to thinkers whose moral ethical observations are rendered

relevant and valid, not just by reason, but also by appeal to the "certainty" afforded by science. Durkheim's work is prototypical in this sense.

Arguably, his brilliance lay in his attempt to mould the question of morality as one central to a forming sociology. Durkheim (1893:36) states:

To govern our relations with men, it is not necessary to resort to any other means than those which we use to govern our relations with things; thought, methodologically employed, is sufficient in either case. What reconciles science and ethics is the science of ethics, for at the same time that it teaches us to respect the moral reality, it furnishes the means to improve it.

This "moral reality" is, for Durkheim (1893:3), society itself which acts as a "regulative force" wherein "(h)uman passions stop only before a moral power they respect...[and]...liberty (we mean genuine liberty, which it is society's duty to have respected) is itself the product of regulation." And, "moral rules":

...enunciate the fundamental conditions of social solidarity...Everything which is a source of solidarity is moral, everything which forces man to take account of other men is moral, everything which forces him to regulate his conduct through something other than the striving of his ego is moral, and morality is as solid as these ties are numerous and strong (Durkheim, 1893:398).

The American sociological tradition - particularly structural functionalism - is indebted to Durkheim's sociology, to his

idea that "Sociology can be defined as the science of institutions; of their genesis and of their functioning" (Durkheim, 1895:Ivi). Its framing of moral/ethical questions pay homage to the idea of society as the moral entity, and the "social problems" it uncovers are sculpted to serve the ends of social order. To be moral, a person must internalise society; to act as such one must defend the institutions which carry and reproduce (through socialisation) its values. We have seen how the "modern empowered self" defends this sociological imagining through its attempts to keep the traditional moral nurturing institutions intact. But we have also seen how, amidst the other empowered selves that occupy the contemporary terrain, this self is having its status as **the** moral actor of modern western society challenged albeit not displaced.¹¹ It follows, then, that modern sociology, with this modern self at its centre, can no longer speak for selves as to what it means to lead a moral life, albeit there are efforts to save it (see Shilling and Mellor, 1998; also, Nisbet, 1993).

While I have presented sociology as a tradition, it is more correct to acknowledge it as an uneasy co-existence of two traditions: European and North American. The European tradition of sociology, because it has remained focused on the historical phenomenon of industrialisation, and

consequently the question of social change, has marked its questions of ethics and morality with the reality of inequality. This has drawn social philosophical inquiries concerning justice, freedom and inequality into the heart of the tradition. While Marx's work is at the centre of this tradition, it is the "praxis" variant of marxist humanism that has steered this tradition's debates on ethics and morality. As I have argued, such emancipatory critiques steer us back into praxis thinking and away from the consideration of what empowerment is, and what our normative concerns should now look like. They oblige us to speak the grand dialogues of emancipation and liberation and to form selfs into progressive agential categories thereby muting voices of empowered selfs which are telling us that there are, and must be, a plurality of ways of being morally in the world. Empowered voices do not deny the way of "praxis" for some selfs, it is a way of being in the world. They are only telling us that for some selfs, this imagining is not their way and that to bring critical "praxis" theory to their "existential" moral practices is a colonising and totalising act.

My point is that empowerment acts provide a methodological insight which guides us away from the urge to cast empowerment within the legacy of the Enlightenment's

certainty. Moreover, they tell us that questions of ethics and morals are being reformulated in the context of a "rethinking of modernity" (Seidler, 1994:157). The rethinking, that is this dissertation, has drawn our attention to empowerment claims which tell us that the moral lives of selfs are situated within and amongst various imaginings of what we (as theorists) call totalities: of modernity; late modernity; and, postmodernity.

Central to the rethinking of sociology's moral concerns must now be the theme of uncertainty about what constitutes morality and ethics and where to begin to look (Wolfe, 1989:3). And while I think Wolfe's position leans too far toward the understanding that we can/must only be moral because of society, his assessment of the predicament in the following terms strikes me as correct:

What makes us modern...is that we are capable of acting as our own moral agents. If modernity means a withering away of such institutions as the tight knit family and the local community that once taught the moral rules of interdependence, modern people must simply work harder to find such rules for themselves. If we do not, then we sacrifice what is modern about us - often, and ironically, in the name of modernity itself (1989:19).

Clearly, Wolfe is concerned about the same things taken up in this dissertation and thus must be considered as a proponent of the kind of moral sociological debate I envision here. We

must remember, however, that Wolfe's position represents but one in the contemporary debate regarding the question of "what it means to be a moral self" (Hutchings, 1997:131) and that such debates cannot be fruitfully engage while maintaining the exclusivity of disciplinary boundaries. We must also remember that it is the empowerment claimants who instruct us as to this.

The problem of empowerment demands the inseparability of sociological analysis from moral and ethical inquiry: not, however, to reclaim morality on epistemological grounds - as "social facts" - rendered valid by reason and the certainty afforded by science. Empowerment does not beg a methodological treatise nor a defence of society as a moral entity. In other words, the problematic of empowerment is not cast within the legacy of the Enlightenment's search for certainty (Cartesian anxiety). Rather, empowerment has emerged as a practice which challenges the central tenets of the Enlightenment legacy. It certainly challenges the idea that empowerment is a subject matter of (essentialist) professional discourses or that it belongs in the domain of "modern" sociology.

With the emergence of empowerment, social theory has an opportunity to reflect upon, as I have done in this dissertation, what it means to be "critical" and to reassert

itself as a principled contemporary critical position. My arguments have tacitly asserted the relevance of the question of human freedom by demonstrating that empowerment is a prevailing and most telling example of creative moral imaginings of persons in the world wilfully attempting to negotiate the "intersection between choice and constraint" (Lather, 1988:576). It is the sheer wilfulness of empowerment selfs to engage others and imagine a "good society" that speaks volumes to the question of human freedom. This is, of course, what this dissertation is all about.

ENDNOTES: CHAPTER IV

1. Empowerment claims express "selves" that co-exist yet live within varying and often divergent social/moral "realities". It is therefore not only misleading but hubris for sociology to claim that "we" inhabit this or that social reality. Yet, there is a continued effort to locate sociology relative to the question of what epoch sociology inhabits and therefore should talk about. My analysis of empowerment expresses "periodisation" as being problematic on the basis that there are selves which do not imagine their selves within the specific structured realities named as modernity, late-modernity and postmodernity. Are we then to understand such selves as, say, pathological? While I understand the need to locate sociology somewhere, it is, for me, a wholly colonizing effort to do so particularly at this *meantime* (as I refer to it). I am not being facetious when I suggest that we avoid such sociology-centering claims as being modernist, late/high/reflexive modernist, or postmodernist sociology, and instead reflexively see our analysis as situated in the *meantime* - *meantime* sociology. *Meantime* is indeterminate and while it places the discipline in history, it makes no claims as to its essential epochal locale and thus its "object" of investigation (other than sociology itself).

2. If we are uncertain, we must trust the "other", or not at all. Empowerment suggests, remarkably, the willingness to trust. So, empowerment trades on uncertainty whether in the domain of the professional discourses or that of laypersons. Empowerment claims urge, in some cases, resolutions to moral uncertainty in terms of what ought to be the self's moral relationship to self and others as captured in "empowering" imaginings of civil society (either traditional or political identities). In other cases, specifically empowerment in Risk Society, uncertainty (more so the reasonable guarantee of certainty) forms the basis for legitimizing pecuniary exchange - here power walks in the guise of the assurance that there will be a future. Empowerment of postmodern selves also trade on uncertainty. That is, these selves claim in their empowerment discourses that the certainty of the modern self, with all its moral

certitude, **is** the "tyranny"; so too with the machismo certainty that "science" has foisted upon the world in all its androcentric and eurocentric zeal.

3. I am in agreement with McCarthy (1996) that the sociology of knowledge is unavoidably at the center of any critical engagement with the social world - at least in the *meantime*. This, I think, has much to do with the primacy of the symbolic in contemporary life. It is interesting to note (as the following suggests) how Mannheim's sociology of knowledge emerged in a **time** surely different in the specifics of event context than today (i.e., post-WW1 Europe) but which resonates with similar observations and uncertainties that characterize this present so called "crises of self" or as I prefer, the empowerment problematic:

What nobody thought possible suddenly turned out to be real; what everyone had taken to be reality itself now stood revealed as an illusion. A complete reorientation was felt to be necessary; a re-examination of all traditional ideas about reality, all values, all principles...one no longer lived in the shameful situation of taking the unreal for the real, of trusting illusionary authorities and values (Kecskemit, quoted in Mannheim, 1971:2)

4. The helping professions are making the same error, albeit without the "help" of grand theories.

5. One could argue here that methodologically speaking praxis theorising begins from and thus wraps the analysis into a form of idealism; given that humankind's sociality is a latent disposition whose existence is wholly predicated on the belief in the existence and correctness of a marxist ethos. It emphasizes epistemological questions. On the other hand, in critically approaching empowerment, the analysis begins from actualities, i.e., appearances of actions claimed to be empowering. It therefore leans toward emphasizing ontology and privileges the voices of "being in the world".

6. It may appear odd to the reader that my concluding chapter launches into a fresh analysis when we might expect

the conclusion to wrap things up. But, it is important that it appear here because it is one of a very few analyses of empowerment by a sociologist proper.

7. VanderPlaat would have done well to consider Benhabib's "synthesis of Habermas' communicative ethics and Arendt's conception of political judgement into an ethic of 'interactive universalism'" (Hutchings, 1997:131). This would have brought an otherwise dated argument into the fold of contemporary thinking on "praxis" - that is, empowerment. She could have had a head start on this by reading "On Habermas on Arendt on Power" (Luban, 1979). Also, her argument adds little to an earlier and similar argument by Molhotra (1987) entitled "Habermas' Sociological Theory as a Basis for Practice with Small Groups."

8. If my critique of VanderPlaat's argument has been harsh, it is because she is making claims as to how we ought to enter the word of social actors and work on their behalf. This makes her, as sociologist, complicit with the rationales of the helping professions. These kinds of normative-moral and prescriptive arguments do not, I believe, require the kind of reserve that might characterise commentaries that profess no purposeful programmatic contact with the world of social actors. One might very well interpret my comments here as a prescription for radical non-intervention. In fact, as I indicated at the outset, this work is meant to provide a basis for empowerment practitioners to critically reflect upon the "object" of their interventions.

9. The mapping of this thesis builds the totalities of self, but as it proceeds it has (from time to time) suggested the assumptive moral ethos at the heart of the empowerment totalities. Such premises are rarely articulated, instead they lie tacit while supporting a particular social political ideology or world view (Cowen, 1994:viii).

10. Hacking (1990:360-361) speaks to this well in the following example:

Child abuse both describes a kind of human behavior and evaluates it, messily mixing fact and value. It is easier to argue that it has been constructed in a macrosociological set of exchanges than that Pickering's quarks and Latour's thyrotropin-release factor have been

constructed in the microsociology of the laboratory. But just because it is evaluative it has an effect upon the investigator quite different from that of quarks. One becomes involved in the subject itself. I began looking at it merely as an example of the ways in which we make up kinds of people. No longer. Child abuse involves pressing moral (not to mention social, political, and when one gets down to cases, personal) issues in itself. It is an *intrinsically moral topic*. It is also *extrinsically metamoral*...it can be used to reflect on evaluation itself. The reflection can be done only by taking a look into the origin of our idea. This is fulfilling the Lockean imperative. But the look must be into the social rather than the personal formation of the concept. It involves history. The application is to our present pressing problems. The history is history of the present, how our present conceptions are made, how the conditions for their formation constrain our present way of thinking. The whole is the analysis of the concept (Hacking, 1990:360-361).

11. I say "challenged" because it would appear that on the global stage the "modern western self" is being carried forward by the "empowerer" state. We saw this earlier in the "empowerer" voice of such international players as Canada's Lloyd Axworthy. As such, this suggests that the Western "empowered" moral self is tied into the imaginings of the globalisation process.

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