CHAPTER THREE: ETHNICITY, RACE AND CULTURE

This chapter examines the concept of ethnicity and ethnic identity as it is deployed and analysed by sociologists from around the world, with reference to South East Asia in particular. It begins by defining the term 'ethnicity' in terms of its origins as well as its current use, and finds that the concept as deployed in analysis across the S.E.Asian/South Pacific region depends upon an identification by individual members of a society with each other on the basis of a perceived commonality of origin. This perceived commonality of origin is usually racial, and usually entails the common perception of a resulting shared culture. This culture may not be complete, in that it may not be a total expression of every aspect of 'the way we live'. Commonality of what we might call 'life-conduct' attitude, mythological heritage and artistic expression are, however, common characteristics of the culture shared by an ethnic group.

The chapter thus focuses on the relationship between ethnicity and race. It demonstrates that the
collocation of these two concepts under an ambit concern with race relations and racial prejudice reveals a fundamental problem of knowledge with the two structuralist approaches examined in Chapter Two - functional structuralism and conflict structuralism. A number of attempts to resolve the problems of these two approaches are also examined - specifically the sociobiological approach proposed by Van den Berghe (1981) and Banton's rational choice theory (Banton, 1983). These are similarly found to be reductionist, and subject to a problem of knowledge described by Harre (1981) as common to the logical positivist approach to sociology. The inseparability of ethnicity and culture in sociological analysis is thus established.

Ethnicity: a concept in binary opposition

As was argued in the previous chapter, the Australian government policy of multiculturalism, and the theory substantiating it, are dependent upon concepts of ethnicity and ethnic identity that do not seem to sustain analysis under its auspices. In what Edgar (1980:43) terms the functional structuralist approach to sociology, ethnicity is a feature of group properties and group or individual interests and, as such, does not account for
the nature of ethnic change - in particular, ethnic change which is political in motive and organisation.

What Edgar terms the conflict structuralist approach (Edgar, 1980:46) does account for ethnic change, by locating ethnic identity as a locus for political mobilisation in the "class" struggle between dominant groups and minority groups in post-colonial societies based on the exercise of hegemonic control within an institutional structure organised on bureaucratic principles. In doing so, however, it fails to define ethnicity as anything but a resource for political mobilisation. As such, it disregards the bonding nature of ethnicity outside the context of political mobilisation.

Conflict structuralist definitions of ethnicity, when they are attempted, inevitably drift into areas as easily considered "cultural" as political, such as ideology (see Milner, 1991) and behaviour (see Rex, 1986). Even Jayasuriya, quoted above as devaluing the 'primordial' element of ethnic identity in favour of its role as a political resource, cannot avoid defining ethnicity in such cultural terms as 'a sense of peoplehood' which 'emphasises an individual's sense of membership of, and belonging to, an ethnic group':
What it does is to differentiate a group or collectivity by the possession of shared values, physical and cultural diacritica (e.g. songs, icons etc.) as well as common ancestry, geographical or national origin. By whatever physical or cultural attributes we demarcate ethnic boundaries, ethnicity is most often sustained by a process of self-ascription and-or ascription by others, especially the dominant groups of a society. It is essentially an intersubjective process of status-identification, whose salience and value varies from individual to individual.

Jayasuriya, 1991:84 (emphasis added)

Nagata runs into the same sort of difficulties when trying to define ethnic identity as 'relatively flexible and amenable to change' but only 'as dictated by external exigencies' (Nagata, 1982:89).

Far from being fixed categories or groups rooted in an immutable (primordial) base, ethnic attachments are merely ... symbolic expressions of more fundamental relationships, even of the infrastructure itself.

Nagata, 1982:89 (emphasis added)

When it comes to actually explaining what these 'attachments' are and how they symbolically express institutional structure, Nagata defines ethnic identity as 'a unique blend of affective, expressive and basic ties, sentiments and loyalties with (sometimes blatantly) instrumental, calculated, political interests'(Nagata, 1982:112; emphasis added). In this definition, the latter are 'explained and given meaning' by the former (Nagata, 1982:112; emphasis added).
Jayasuriya thus cannot discuss ethnic group boundaries without the cultural attributes by which they are demarcated, nor ethnic collectivity without the cultural diacritica by which individuals are identified as group members. The process by which ethnicity as a sense of belonging is thus ascribed is essentially intersubjective, even if based on identification with an objectively observable social fact like status. Similarly what Nagata seeks to devalue as merely symbolically expressive of structure, as affective ties, mere sentiments and loyalties, are in fact what give meaning to the 'instrumental, calculated political interests' that motivate the workings of this structure. The ascription of values touted by functional structuralism as an objective process capable of normatively equalibrating social cohesion is acknowledged here as a subjective matter of sense, of perception. In the same way the salience and value of ethnic ascription itself can only be evaluated on the basis of individual perception.

To begin to acknowledge the cultural aspect of ethnicity, then, is to also begin to apprehend the possibility that without the affective nature of ethnic ties, without their capacity to subtend value, without their ability to imbue meaning and without their essential subjectivity, the structures of which they are supposed to be instrumental might not even be
apprehensible, let alone understandable. To all analytical intents and purposes, they might as well not exist.

There are a number of terms that thus seem to come under the aegis of a cultural understanding of ethnicity and ethnic identity - apart, of course, from culture itself - and these are the concepts of subjectivity (and intersubjectivity), values and value ascription, meaning and the ascription of meaning, symbolic expression, and the cultural features, characteristics or attributes by which ethnic group membership or ethnic identity are differentiated (diacritica). This brace of concepts, then, are amongst those placed in opposition to other concepts which come under the aegis of an objective, observable structure by the separation of cultural pluralism from structural pluralism. This form of conceptual division - called by some binary opposition because of its dualistic, either/or nature (e.g. Grosz, 1989:22,27,31; Milner, 1991:66) - does not involve the schism of just one conceptual organisation of ideas (in this case, pluralism), but the placing in opposition of entire systems of attendant concepts that support each side of the bifurcated ideology.

As stated in the previous chapter, this thesis claims that the conceptual bifurcation itself, between
the structural and the cultural, is what lies at the root of the unworkability of pluralism as applied to multicultural theory. Having hypothesised that the structural theorising of multiculturalism in Australia fails to explicate the concepts of ethnicity and ethnic identity on which it depends, this thesis will look to a cultural analysis of ethnicity, which will include the concepts highlighted above. This analysis will extend beyond the bounds of sociology, but to begin with it is important to review sociology's understanding of the cultural nature of ethnicity. As with the previous chapter, this will be done by firstly analysing the sociological origins of the concepts of ethnicity and ethnic identity, and then reviewing their sociological constitution as theory.

**Ethnicity and Race**

According to Glazer and Moynihan, the term "ethnicity" does not appear in the 1933 edition of Oxford English Dictionary until its 1972 Supplement, where it is defined as "'obs. rare: heathendom: heathen superstition'" (Glazer & Moynihan, 1975:1). The *Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology* (Hoad, 1986:156) traces the term *ethnic* to the the Fourteen Century, where it meant either 'Gentile' or 'pagan'. The concept of ethnicity thus began with a religious connotation. In its original Greek, *ethnikos*, feminine form *ethnos*, however,
the concept had a firmly political and ideological association with the state, meaning 'nation'.

*Ethnicity* is thus an etymologically mixed term, spanning religious, ideological and political roots. These three spheres of meaning could, however, be united under the umbrella concept of power and its manifestation in social organisation, and there are certainly many sociological writers who deploy the concept in just that manner (Abubakar, 1989; Baker, 1983; Bottomley & De Lepervanche, 1984; Bullivant, 1984; Burnley et al, 1985; Castles, 1992; Castles et al, 1990; Cohen, 1982; David & Kadirgamar, 1989; Edgar, 1980; Encel & Martin, 1981; Foster, 1988; Foster & Stockley, 1984; Ibrahim, 1989; Jayasuriya, 1990; Jayasuriya, 1991; Jupp, 1984b; Kadirgamar, 1989; Kalantzis et al, 1990; Keyes, 1982; Lewins, 1981; Linnekin & Poyer, 1990; Martin, 1978; Moran, 1989; Nagata, 1982; Rex, 1982, 1986; Royce, 1982; Rupesinghe & Kothari, 1989; Sestito, 1982; Steinberg, 1981; Storer, 1975; Tapp, 1989; Wallerstein, 1991a, 1991b). For these social scientists, the term ethnicity first entered usage in 1953 to describe what was widely understood twenty years later as "1. The condition of belonging to a particular ethnic group; 2. ethnic pride" (American Heritage Dictionary, quoted by Glazer & Moynihan, 1975:1). Even here, the structural condition of group membership and the cultural condition of group pride are divided.
The origins of this structural/cultural bifurcation can be traced back to the Nineteenth Century, when ethnicity came to be applied far more specifically in relation to the concept of race, with the rise of the academic discipline of ethnography or ethnology (Hoad, 1986:156). Again according to the *Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology* (Hoad, 1986:386), *race* entered English usage in the Sixteenth Century, after the word *ethnic*. Along with the now accepted meaning of a group of persons having a common ancestry, it was also used to denote any class of persons, animals or plants, or even of wine. According to Poliakov (1982), however, it quickly took on a pejorative disposition, specifically denoting people as superior or inferior because of their genetically or physiologically distinctive ancestry. He cites two great figures of the Enlightenment in particular, Voltaire and Kant, as examples of this narrowing connotation.

In Voltaire's view, 'blacks were simply animals' (Poliakov, 1982:56), differentiated on the basis of skin colour or, in the case of Jews, belief. Immanuel Kant, described by Muhlmann in 1967 as the "founder of the modern concept of race" (in Poliakov, 1982:58), was also according to Poliakov a profound anti-Semite. In coining the concept of race, he sought recourse to a pedestalalizing of racial purity over the inferior, impure
state of mixed blood. In this sense, the rational valuing of race as a means of arbitrating human worth seems to reduce human worth to its biology; although at the same time, Kant placed human reason and rationality in the superordinate position of judgement - the site where such arbitrations and valorizations were rightfully exercised (Brand, 1987:57)

It is interesting to note here that a comparison can be made between the emergence of Nineteenth Century anthropology to forge an epistemological link between human culture and racial origin and the emergence of a link between race and prejudicial social marginalisation and persecution known today as racism. For instance, as Charles Lyell's theory of geological succession undermined the Great Flood creationism of Christianity in English language ethology, aided by the archeological discoveries of Jacques Boucher de Perthes in Europe (Haviland, 1975:30-33), so the 'founder of anthropology', Frenchman Paul Broca was attributing the evolution of "the blacks" to 'hybridisation' (Poliakov, 1982:62). In Germany, Fichte and Jahn put Kant's anti-Semitism into large scale social practice. Jahn's torchlight processions and uniformed youths prefigured Hitler's Nazi Youth by a century (Poliakov, 1982:60). Meanwhile the 'father of racism' (Levi-Strauss, 1985:4), the Frenchman de Gobineau was formulating his theory of global racial degradation due to evolutionary
miscegenation from which his followers would draw the racial superiority of the 'pure' blond Aryan - a stereotype so central to Hitler's claim to German racial superiority during the 1930s and 40s.

In Britain, it was Robert Knox who, following David Hume's disdain for "blacks" (see also Castles et al, 1990:108), took onboard the European penchant for biological reductionism and paved the way for Darwin's *Origin of the Species* in 1859 (Poliakow, 1982:63; Rich, 1986:13). Darwin's work itself is, according to Poliakov, inherently racist, riddled as it is with the differentiation of "inferior" and "superior races".

Even the more humanistic social Darwinism to which the original evolutionism gave way, heralded by Karl Pearson and William Sumner on opposite sides of the Atlantic (Poliakow, 1982:64; Van den Berghe, 1981:2), remained reductionist in its attitude to the colonised races. Meanwhile, originary social science works like Edward Tylor's *Primitive Culture* (1871, in Haviland, 1975:33), Lewis Morgan's *Ancient Society* (1877, in Haviland, 1975:33), and Herbert Spencer's *Principles of Sociology* (1896, in Haviland, 1975:33) did little to budge the collocation of culture and race from their reductionist plinth. It wasn't until the work of Franz Boas that a reaction against the quest for rationally
construable universal laws began to challenge the dominance of biological reductionism (Haviland, 1975:34).

In sociological theory, then, the collocation of ethnicity and race seems to have gone hand in hand with a concern over the relationship between racial prejudice and racial tolerance within society. Steinberg (1981), Banton (1983) and Van den Berghe (1981) document the rise of a concern with race and immigration in the United States from the turn of the century. Robert Park began research into immigrant settlement patterns from the University of Chicago in 1910 and developed his "race relations cycle" of contact, accommodation and assimilation - the last stage being one of "superficial uniformity" (Park, quoted in Steinberg, 1981:47) rather than the 'total obliteration of ethnic difference' (Steinberg, 1981:47). 'Park and his followers were struck by the rapidity with which immigrant groups adopted at least the "outward forms" of the dominant culture, and were subjectively as well as objectively becoming Americanised' (Steinberg, 1981:48) Steinberg writes.

Park thus recognises the process of assimilation as being essentially a cultural one. As Banton summarises, Parks is quite clear about the difference between the biological bequest of genetic, phenotypic inheritance and the cultural bequest of social inheritance (Banton,
1983:78). The racial component of the social equation brought about by colonial and post-colonial migration isolated by Parks is phenotypic differentiation. This creates readily identifiable groups within the one society, migrants groups entering into competition for resources, social and material, with the group already dominant in the host society. Phenotypic distinctions present ready markers by which status differences can be identified. As dominant host-society groups prove reluctant to surrender their superior statuses to the newcomers, who in turn become rapidly conscious of their thus-ascribed inferior statuses (and consequent relegations in the division of labour), these phenotypic markers (or diacritica) become the focus points for prejudice, as the dominant group seeks to protect its interests and reinforce the status-based categories it imposes (Banton, 1983:79). Racial prejudice, then, is the key feature of Parks' social or cultural evolutionism served by the concept of race; and race as a working concept is reduced to the quality of phenotypic transmission.

At this point in its historical development, sociology seems not to explore the cultural aspect of ethnicity, other than to recognise its significance and deploy it instrumentally to add a sense of structural orderliness to what was in fact, at the time, only a hypothesised process: assimilation.
Ethnicity, Race and Conflict and Functional Structuralism

The melting pot theory, as Park's view of cultural assimilation became known, endured until the emergence of the ethnic pluralists in the 1960s, led by Glazer and Moynihan, Peter Schrag and Michael Novak (Encel & Martin, 1981:144; Glazer & Moynihan, 1975; Steinberg, 1981:49), and what Van den Berghe calls the great American liberals' (Van den Berghe, 1981:2) such as Lloyd Warner, Gordon Allport (1954) and John Dollard. To these one must also add the influence of Gordon (1975; Encel & Martin, 1981:144) and Adorno et al (1969 from 1950 original). The plethora of sociological analyses of ethnicity and race since is far too voluminous to be treated here. For the purposes of this thesis, it is enough to state that in the post-World War II period, ethnicity and race have generally come to be separated out under a number of discrete epistemological umbrellas. Two of the main sociological schools of thought drawn upon were outlined in Chapter Two: the functional structuralism of Talcott Parsons, Malinowski and Durkheim, and the conflict structuralism of Marx, Weber, Gramsci and the post-colonialists. But in this post-war period, different sociologists seem to dip into and out of these two areas at will, blending them with the biological reduction of racial evolutionism, to produce
idiosyncratic theories of ethnicity. Bullivant (1984:24), for instance, defines race phenotypically - that is to say, in the biological reductionist tradition of the way people look - while ethnicity is coined in cultural terms after Schmermerhorn as:

"A collectivity within a larger society having real or putative common ancestry, memories of a shared historical past, and a cultural focus on one or more symbolic elements defined as the epitome of their people."

(Schermerhorn, 1970: 12; in Bullivant, 1984:24)

Bullivant (1984:25) details some of these symbolic elements as:

. kinship patterns
. religious affiliation
. nationality
. language and dialect
. collective consciousness

These five features of ethnicity - patterns of behaviour or relationship, religious or ideological belief, nationhood, language, and consciousness - appear again and again in different combinations with different sociologists depending on their epistemological
orientation (e.g. Barth, 1969; Cashmore, 1988; De Vos, 1975; Foster, 1988; Gamage & Mahon, 1993; Glazer & Moynihan, 1975; Horowitz, 1975; Keyes, 1982; Linnekin & Poyer, 1990; Parsons, 1975; Royce, 1982; Steinberg, 1981; Waters, 1989). What will emerge as significant in subsequent chapters about Bullivant's formulation of them is that he refers to them as 'symbolic'.

Bullivant goes on to describe the *modus operandi* of ethnicisation in the Weberian terms of social closure—the use of a group attribute, such as race, language, social origin or descent— to exclude that group from social and economic opportunities as outsiders (Bullivant, 1984:26). This he develops, however, in a series of functionalist 'mutual interest' subcategories like 'credentialism'—exclusion and control of occupational entry by examination and certification (after Miller, 1967, in Bullivant, 1984:27)—and 'solidarism', reciprocal social closure by subordinate groups in order to usurp a share of the dominant groups' socio-economic resources (Bullivant, 1984:27)—this latter category having a class analysis component of conflict structuralism to boot.

Bullivant subsequently discusses the ideological confusion wrought by the attempt to combine ethnicity, or ethnic identity, with politics in Gramsci's neo-Marxist
terms of hegemony (Bullivant, 1984:29-30). He bases his
discourse, however, on the Rational Choice Theory of
British sociologist Michael Banton, which he frames in
functionalist terms i.e. the exchange of goods and
services for mutual advantage (Bullivant, 1984:1). This
frame, in turn, is placed against the biological
reductionist heritage of the Victorian cultural
anthropologists Tylor (Bullivant, 1984:2).

This sort of epistemological blend is not uncommon
in contemporary sociological writings on ethnicity (e.g.
see Allport, 1954; Baker, 1983; Bell, 1975; David &
Kadiringmar, 1989; De Vos & Ronamucci-Rosso, 1975; Glazer &
Moynihan, 1975; Gordon, 1975; Keyes, 1982; Nagata, J.
1982; Ross, 1982; Royce, 1982; Steinberg, 1981). This
thesis will attempt to show below, however, that the
recourse to biological reductionism and race does nothing
to relieve the concept of ethnicity and ethnic identity
of the epistemological problems determined at the end of
Chapter Two. On the contrary, it compounds the problem of
knowledge that was found to limit multicultural theory in
that chapter.

Talcott Parsons himself, for instance, in his later
years nominated 'racial distinctiveness' as one of his
five reference points for ethnicity, co-opting the
Chicago School approach directly into his own functional
structuralism (Parsons, 1975:54). Strict functional structuralist and student of Parsons, Orlando Patterson, also coopts Parks' competition theory to reduce ethnicity to the level of an allegiance, like any other allegiance in society, devoted to the maximization of economic and social status and minimisation of survival risk (Patterson, 1974:305). For him, race is the given for which ethnicity is merely the socioeconomic variable. Ethnicity's cultural attributes are 'analytically useless', Patterson says (Patterson, 1974:306). In both analyses, the persistence of racial (phenotypic) diacritica as the basis of ethnic identification through perhaps successive reformations of national boundary and coercive ethnic suppression by conquerors (Barth, 1969), then down the migration chain from country of origin to host culture through second and third generations and, perhaps, inter-ethnic marriage, is not explained.

Race, ethnicity, and the collective perception of phenotypy connecting them are thus assumed by Patterson's functional structuralism to be covariant whereas, as Castles et al argue in a similar context (Castles et al, 1990:107), this is unlikely. Barth (1969), for instance, studying the Pathans of Afghanistan, shows that individuals can cross quite distinctive ethnic boundaries, and thus reconstitute their own ethnic identification, without changing their physical appearance or, to a certain extent, ways of behaving.

As the new ethnic net of nationhood is thrown around these groups, counter-hegemonic ethnic identity on
the basis not of racial origin but of culture - in many cases, religion in particular - asserts itself vehemently. Linnekin and Poyer (1990) and colleagues examine this phenomenon in detail in the Pacific Islands, and will be referred to again below. Meanwhile Wang (1983, 1991), Esman (1975), Chen (1976), Chow (1978), Lai (1988), Rin (1975), Yee (1982) and the full complement of sociologists in Cushman and Wang (1988) all document the pattern of (often enclaved) ethnic assertion and acceptance of minority status found historically amongst overseas Chinese, not only throughout Southeast Asia but in the Americas and, Kee (1988) and Yuan (1983) would add, in Australia - a pattern which combines both of Barth's ethnic participation strategies referred to above. While phenotypy may be important in the exclusion of Overseas Chinese from host society group membership, cultural factors are far more significant in determining both the enclavement of in-group membership and the acceptance of minority status (see in particular Chen, 1976; Rin, 1975 and Wang, 1991 for further explication of this emphasis). (The example of the overseas Chinese will be returned to in Chapter Six.)

Functional structuralism thus seems to epistemologically stymie itself by depending on race as the conceptual basis of its understanding of ethnicity at the expense of the cultural. From the conflict structuralist point of view, Rex goes to the opposite
position, claiming that race, as a basis for physical differentiation, is only a cultural characteristic, and as such analytically useful only inasmuch as it provides the basis for ethnic group formation (Rex, 1986:17). 'Race does not cause action,' writes Rex (1986:15), whereas ethnicity, as a factor in status determination and status group formation, can (Rex, 1986:13-17).

Another conflict structuralist, Ross (1982), pays little service to the concept of ethnicity, referring to what Rex might call ethnic stratification in systems of labour exploitation as 'racially stratified ... systems of labour exploitation' involving the oppression of 'racially stigmatised groups' (Ross, 1982:7). Indeed, race rather than ethnicity has served as the main focus of much British analysis of "race relations" in the post-war period (Jones, 1977; Husband, 1982; Rex, 1986; Rich, 1986; Ross, 1982; Solomos, 1989). In the U.S. too, according to Banton (1983), Oliver Cox and Marvin Harris's contributions to what Banton terms the Class Theory approach to race relations (Banton, 1983:86) are similarly constituted along racial rather than ethnic lines. As such, racial origin merely reinforces the instrumental perception of ethnicity revealed in conflict structuralism in Chapter Two, conceptually lending it a sense of matter-of-factuality.

It thus seems easy to view ethnicity as merely a temporary instrument of political mobilisation based upon
the fact of racial collectivity in this analysis. Even Wang Gungwu (1981, 1991, and in Cushman & Wang, 1988), the noted sociological analyst of overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia and elsewhere, succumbs in part to this deceptive instrumentality, allowing the misplaced association of overseas Chinese ethnicity with racial origin to divide his own definition of overseas Chinese ethnic identity into two sorts. One form of Wang's ethnic identity is specifically political in emphasis (concerned with the 'legal and political rights of a domesticated minority') and is oriented about racial identification; the other, cultural in emphasis, is oriented about 'cultural persistence and distinctiveness' (Wang, 1991:7). Ethnicity of political cogency is thus identified with race while ethnic identity of a cultural nature is conceptually hived off into a category of its own.

The submersion of the one concept within the other, ethnicity within race, however, can equally work the other way. Porter (1975), for instance, writing of the Canadian context, subsumes race within the concept of ethnicity, referring to ethnic groups as 'biological descent groups' responsible for 'cultural transmission' (Porter, 1975:298) as well as status group formation within the conflict-structuralist framework. Other writers again, such as Bell (1975), prefer to ignore race altogether as a component of ethnicity's role in the
conflict structuralist framework, preferring to focus on ethnicity solely as a locus for political action and mobilisation. This at least is more direct, and shows that the conceptual linking of race and ethnicity is unnecessary for conflict structuralism to stand on its own terms and, if anything, lends a false sense of factual legitimacy.

**Boundaries and Race**

A third strand of theory under the umbrella of these two structuralisms develops upon the structural concept of group boundaries. Horowitz (1975) specifically tries to analyse ethnic identity within this context of boundary formation and maintenance, and in doing so manages to totally obviate the need for race as a concept at all - phenotypy in general is sufficient, as are other cultural 'indicia' (as Horowitz terms what has been referred to above as diacritica). Banton meanwhile, draws upon the ethnic boundary theory of Scandinavian social anthropologist Frederik Barth (1969) to develop his own rational choice theory of race relations, based on the individual's propensity to 'act so as to obtain maximum net advantage' (Banton, 1983:103) and its corollary, that such actions will inherently influence subsequent action-choices. This theory actually enables Banton to differentiate between ethnicity and race within
the evolutionist, competition framework on the basis that ethnic groups result from inclusive processes of group formation and racial categories are the product of exclusive processes (Banton, 1983:104). Categorisation by race can thus be seen as the basis for prejudice whereas ethnicity becomes the basis for interest-based group formation and maintenance.

Banton's is an essentially functional structuralist theory which has significant crossover into conflict structuralism by virtue of its ability to differentiate race and ethnicity in a manner which enhances conflict structuralist understanding of dominant group-minority group hegemonic control. Where conflict structuralism as reviewed in Chapter Two had little use for ethnicity as a primordial concept of racial origin, Banton's rational choice theory offers it one. The problem with rational choice theory, and boundary theory in general, is that it attempts to explain a centralising concept - ethnic identity - in terms of its limits - ethnic boundaries. It seems not to show, however, that such boundaries actually exist. To Banton, race offers an historical ordering of phenotypic signs which indicate ethnic role expectations (Banton, 1983:8), but his ethnic boundaries are what is crossed by an individual in order to attain group membership or, like fences, what is put up or strengthened in order to exclude membership. As such, the boundary is a functional metaphor to help explain social
mobility. Ethnic identity, as its conceptual linchpin (in that without the given of ethnic identification there would be no boundaries to cross), Banton theorises in terms of competition for resources and power in order to maximise choices. He does not, however, attempt to explain how identity is actually constituted.

He recognises, for instance, that it is only the cultural significance attributed to phenotypy that creates groups, and thus their boundaries, but does not explain how this attribution of meaning works other than by rational choice (Banton, 1983:104-5). Indeed, he goes as far as to argue that there is a rationality to the unconscious (Banton, 1983:107-9) in order to enable rational choice theory to encompass the theoretical intricacies of individual psychology and the processes of meaning ascription (which will themselves be addressed in subsequent chapters). Fundamentally, however, it can be argued that if ethnic identity were rational in its structurings, then it should not be significantly different from class identity in its capacity to endure change i.e. to cross boundaries. Yet to the contrary, many sociologists (van den Berghe, 1981:242-250; Castles, 1992:201; De Vos, 1975; Glazer & Moynihan, 1975:18; Gordon, 1975:92; Issacs, 1975) argue that not only does ethnic identity either transcend or cross class boundaries but it persists more strongly than class interests, especially in experiences of social mobility.
Moreover the phenomenon of ethnic persistence against self-interest observed by De Vos (1975:7'), and the intensity of passion invoked of ethnic identity theorised by Gordon (1975:91-92) both point to an ethnic identity that exists beyond the grip of the rational. De Vos and Romanucci-Ross (1975b:375) argue for an identity theory that 'embodies both the cognitive and the affective' (De Vos & Romanucci-Ross, 1975b:375).

Boundary theory, as a means of understanding ethnic identity, thus seems to flounder on its own epistemological reef. Even Barth (1969), who many (e.g. van den Berghe, 1981; Keesing, 1982; Linnekin & Poyer, 1990) see as revolutionising the study of ethnicity with his focus on the traversing of ethnic boundaries rather than the content they subtend (see Barth 1969:9-10), fails to explain ethnic identity change beyond the constraints of status and behaviour change. The metaphor of the "boundary" succeeds only in brokering the measurable results of its transcendence, and these remain either structural (status) or cultural (behavioural). The problem of the motivational power and cogency of ethnic identity remains, as does the ascription of meaning to diacritica such as to constitute them "ethnic".
Biology and Race

A fourth strand of thinking also draws upon the biological reductionist element of Park's epistemological heritage. The man responsible for rethinking American assimilationism within the functional structuralist framework, for instance, Milton Gordon (1975), attempts to overcome functional structuralism's cultural inadequacies in accounting for socio-political change by, in part, seeking a biological explanation for behaviour. In developing his theory of acculturation to explain why the natural and total assimilation over time proposed by Park was not observable in post-war America, Gordon divided assimilation into seven dimensions or variables. In keeping with the functional structuralist perspective, each variable bar the cultural is dependent on the structural dimension for successful post-migration assimilation to take place. Structural assimilation is thus seen as more significant than cultural assimilation, but the latter (acculturation) must occur before structural (and thus any other) assimilation can proceed. Central to Gordon's analysis of American post-war society is the observation that cultural assimilation had taken place while structural assimilation had not in many cases. The persistence often of a sense of ethnicity is an example, in Gordon's analysis, of the superficial nature of such acculturation. In order to explain the persistence of such structural patterns of behaviour, Gordon postulates 'biological constants or propensities in human behaviour' which 'fall short' of instinct but
which 'predispose the actor to certain kinds of behaviour in a more forceful fashion than the tenets of conventional cultural determinism would allow' (Gordon, 1975:93).

Sociobiologist Pierre L. van den Berghe returns to the evolutionists direct, attempting to collapse the concepts of ethnicity and race into each other as subtended by the overarching concept of kinship. And kinship, he contests, is not a cultural or social concept but a product of biology:

... ethnic and racial sentiments are extensions of kinship sentiments. Ethnocentrism and racism are thus extended forms of nepotism - the propensity to favor kin over non-kin. There exists a general behavioral predisposition, in our species as in many others, to react favorably toward other organisms to the extent that these organisms are biologically related to the actor. The closer the relationship is, the stronger the preferential behaviour.


By thus ascribing biology a determining role over the relational disposition of humans, rather than some intrinsic physical disposition of superiority or inferiority, van den Berghe achieves the opposite of Banton's contribution. From what is essentially a functional-structuralist approach to social ordering on the basis of individual and group interests, van den Berghe's biological reductionism enables him to assert that ethnic identity is more central or 'primordial' a locus of group solidarity than class (Berghe, 1981:242-
243), but that class conflict - another extension of kinship selection - helps explain the nature of social, and ethnic, change. Where functional structuralism, as examined in Chapter Two, failed to account for the nature of ethnic and social change, Berghe is able to co-opt strands of conflict structuralism to help it do so.

Even advocates of a cultural interpretation of ethnicity seek recourse to this biological basis of understanding. Issacs (1975), for instance, attempts to present ethnic identity as a model for interpreting all group identities. He argues for a 'biological remembrance' to explain how phenotypic characteristics come to represent ethnic groupings (Issacs, 1975:31). De Vos (1975:10) argues that an ethnic group's sense of genetically inherited differences, of racial uniqueness, is as important to its ethnic identity as a tradition of territorial or political independence (De Vos, 1975:11). Once analysis enters into the area of human perception and its interpretation that concepts like 'sense' and 'memory' imply, however, it is clear that the 'examination of relevant basic social-psychological processes of human interaction' called for by Gordon (1975:89) is necessary.

Similarly, the 'consociationalism' van den Berghe outlines to describe the contemporary workings of kinship
selection in post-colonial societies (van den Berghe, 1981:78-79, 185-213) equally sustains cultural analysis with an equivalent explanatory power, as can be found extensively in Linnekin and Poyer's *Cultural Identity and Ethnicity in the Pacific* (1990; see below). In order to stand as theory, the genetic basis of van den Berghe's sociobiology needs to be established. This van den Berghe seems unable to provide because the variables by which he attempts to substantiate the genetic basis of kinship selection's behavioural disposition are either cultural (e.g. territory, behaviour, values and inter/intragroup relations) or structural (structures of power and conflict). The problem here seems to be that van den Berghe posits this genetic behavioural disposition not as a variable in the analysis of ethnicity, but as its cause. Ethnicity is just one effect of many, one of a complex of dependent variables resulting from kinship selection. As Gordon points out, in such a situation 'it is entirely possible that no overall quantitative measure of position on a unidimensional scale is possible at all' (Gordon, 1975:89) and that effects observed must be analysed qualitatively, as 'separated not by quantitative units but by differences in kind' (Gordon, 1975:89; emphasis added). This notion of difference will be returned to later. For the moment, what is significant is that van den Berghe's *cause* can only be observed or verified as a fact by circumstantial observations, by observations which in and of themselves involve acknowledged subjective judgements.
Race as a Problem of Knowledge

What is brought to light here is the problem of what Rom Harre (1981) terms the 'positivist tradition' of 'scientific methodology' (Harre, 1981:3), which holds that 'the only reliable knowledge in any field of phenomena', such as the ordering of society studied by sociology, is knowledge which 'reduces to knowledge of particular ... patterns of sensations' which can be generalised as universal, as laws. Theories logically order such sets of laws, so that there are two sides to positivism, the logical and the empirical (observed fact or experience).

The problem with this paradigm, according to Harre, is that it subscribes to what Harre terms the 'myth of certainty' (Harre, 1981:8), the reduction of meaning 'to a simple referential relation between a linguistic term and something actually experienced' (Harre, 1981:9) without reference to the 'imaginative underpinnings' (to co-opt Harre's phrase) of the subject ascribing the term or to 'the internal processes and activities of agents which bring these effects about' (Harre, 1981:14). As seen above, Banton ascribes to rationality a paramountcy in its capacity to determine human behaviour in relation
to the ascription/adoption of ethnic identity, without examining rationality's fitness for that conceptual task over other human mental processes such as emotion or affective thought. The assumption seems to be that rationality's logicality naturally disposes it to the determination of logically analysable social facts. Whereas the paramountcy of rationality's logicality is more appropriately viewed as historically produced, by philosophers like Descartes, Kant, Locke and Hume, than as in some way inherently superior to other logical approaches (see Darcy, 1987; Hall, 1992:282; Harre, 1981; Harris, 1968). Rationality's 'internal processes', as it were, are thus not examined but merely assumed and asserted as such.

Similarly with van den Berghe above it can be argued that the cause he posits as fact, the genetic basis of kinship selection, is supposedly established by a complex of variables which are themselves observed by virtue of their qualities rather than their quantity, their "factness". In this theorising, as Harre writes, neither 'the activity and productive power of an agent [genetics], nor the generative mechanism [human relationality] are admitted as part of the meaning' (Harre, 1981:14). The further problematic in logical empirical (or, in Banton's case, rational empirical) analysis lies in the assumption that facts are stable; whereas, as Harre states, 'human social life is shot
through with ambiguity and indeterminateness' (Harre, 1981:17).

It could further be argued that the theoretical uses of the concept of "race" in relation to "ethnicity" and "ethnic identity" examined above under the sociological umbrellas of conflict structuralism and functional structuralism are fundamentally confused in ways exemplified by Banton and van den Berghe above. For, despite the fact that the United Nations agency UNESCO has sociologically defined race as a subset of ethnicity since 1945 (Rex, 1986:18-19), race is theorised variously as both a variable of ethnicity and a cause of ethnicity (in the sense of an origin or a point of group mobilisation). The seeming factuality of race, by virtue of its seeming observability by phenotype or by autobiographical report, thus serves to lend a sense of factuality to the study of ethnicity and ethnic identity which it in reality does not. For, as has been argued above, race is no more a stable object of observation than ethnicity itself. It too changes phenotypically and nominally across ethnic and political boundaries. It too is subject to the vicissitudes of history.

As such, it is an epistemological red herring which brings into question the capacity of these two
structuralist approaches to deal with the 'internal processes' of ethnicity and ethnic identity at all.

Implications for Multicultural Theory

It is a red herring, however, which has significant implications for multicultural theory, because the "mix-n-match" approach to the two "structuralist" sociological models outlined above enables an epistemological muddying of multiculturalism's theoretical roots which, this thesis holds, leads to the structural/cultural bifurcation within the ideology of pluralism.

Multicultural theory, like the broader ethnic theory, premises itself in part on the rectification of racial discrimination in society. Thus whilst sociologists like Castles et al (1990) and Foster (1988) base their analyses on policies developed, and these do focus on ethnicity, changes in legislation in fact redress discrimination on the basis of race, colour of skin, and nationality. This was the policy approach adopted by the Federal Australian Labour Party in 1965 which finally found itself into the legislature under the terms of the 1975 Racial Discrimination Act. The only concession to ethnicity in the final legislation, perhaps, is the addition of 'descent' to the qualities protected from discrimination (see Foster & Stockley, 1984:54-60).
All subsequent approaches to multiculturalism have been effected in terms of policy rather than legislation. Australian law thus predisposes Australian multiculturalism to this epistemological confusion between race and ethnicity to the extent that it lends biological reduction to the logical positivist analysis of the social fact of ethnicity. As was pointed out above, Australia is still perceived by the nations of South East Asia as racially prejudiced, not ethnically prejudiced. Similarly, the homogenisation of the countries of South East Asia as 'Asians' during the "Asian Debate" of 1984 and 1988 (see above) is also arguably on the basis of racial categorisation rather than ethnic, just as historically Australia's White Australia policy was a policy of racial exclusion rather than simply national or ethnic (see Yuan, 1983).

This desire to reduce analysis to a quantifiable element is understandable. As Harre implies above, it is comforting for the purposes of drawing conclusions, making judgements or, in multiculturalism's case, developing policy, to be able to assume that the linguistic term used does represent directly a simple, factual referent. As has been suggested above, race does not, in fact, represent a simple state of factuality. Nevertheless, historically it has seemed to do so, and
been taken to do so in governmental opinion. To replace the concept of race, for instance, with the concept of ethnicity in Australian legislation would be to open to public scrutiny the epistemological problem of ascription: who is entitled to claim this or that ethnicity? How is this judged: by national origin or pre-national origin - a debate crucial at the moment, for instance, to migrants from the former Yugoslavia? Moreover, who is to do the ascribing? How is this to be achieved? Many sociologists, from boundary theorists like Barth (1969) to American liberals like Glazer and Moynihan (1975), accept that self-ascription is the most legitimate form of ethnic identity. Even the most extreme functional-structuralists, like Patterson (1975), accept that ethnic identity is a combination of self-ascription and external (out-group) ascription. Any government to thus fall down on the side of public determination of ethnic ascription via government agencies would be to fly in the face of just about all theoretical grounds for multicultural policy. Yet to open itself to self-ascription is to also open itself to automatic claims to structural pluralism - a policy entailing a political agenda which poses a strong challenge to the hegemonic control currently exercised by government in Australia.

It is arguable that it is this very confusion, then, between race and ethnicity that steers multicultural policy towards the "safer" ground of
cultural pluralism. It is also inherent to the same argument that the very quest for a logical positivist position on ethnicity and ethnic identity, as explored by sociology above, is dogged by its own inability to locate a strong differentiation between cause and variable. If race is the cause of ethnicity, then logical positive analysis is unable to explain the workings of ethnicity. If race is a variable of ethnicity, then logical positive analysis as explored above has been unable to substantiate ethnicity as a cause; only as a variable of some other mechanism such as the neo-marxist flashpoint for group mobilisation. Again, ethnicity itself is unsubstantiated as a variable. It is usually defined in terms of group membership, which itself is defined in terms of structural considerations such as status and cultural variables such as language, religion and kinship relations, as shown above. And, as has been shown above with the inter-paradigm approaches of Banton and van den Berghe, elements of one logical positivist paradigm such as conflict structuralism can be used to shore up the failings in another, such as functional structuralism, but the epistemological problem of biological reductionism remains. The cultural component of ethnicity, like the ethnic component of culture, remain assumed as stated - Harre's simple referents - rather than substantiated.
Until the concepts of race and ethnicity are separated in the public mind, then, multiculturalism's capacity to formulate ethnicity as distinct from race and its biological reductionism will remain limited. Ethnicity and ethnic identity thus need to be explored outside logical positivist paradigms of sociology. As Levinson (1969) argued as early as 1950, 'the important concepts are not race and heredity but social organization (national, regional, subcultural, communal) and the interaction of social forms and individual personalities' (Levinson, 1969:103; emphasis added); and as he implies, the study of both the cultural and, it seems, the psychological are necessary to uncover the 'internal processes' (Harre, 1981:17) of ethnicity. This thesis will examine the cultural first from the perspective of social anthropology - a discipline which, as a social science, still seems to be accepted by some (e.g. Giddens, 1989; Glazer & Moynihan, 1975; van den Berghe, 1981) under the epistemological umbrella of sociology.
This chapter adopts Glazer and Moynihan's (1975) categories of primordialist and circumstantialist approaches to ethnicity, consigning the conflict and functional structuralist approaches found wanting in previous chapters to the latter. It thus examines the primordialist theorising of the phenomenological approach, specifically as formulated by Clifford Geertz (1973), after first establishing the cultural origins of the concept of the individual upon which phenomenological sociology depends.

Geertz's primordial identity is shown to be well applicable to the political phenomenon of ethnic mobilisation, even though it is cultural in construction. It is found wanting, however, in its dependence on the symbol as its unit of cultural transmission, and the historically reductionist nature of the concept of primordiality.

The chapter then turns to the concept of consocial identity developed by Keesing (1982), Howard and Howard (1977), and Linnekin and Poyer (1990) at the University of Hawaii, Honolulu. Examination of this concept finds it not dependent on reduction to an indeterminate historical
origin, but in fact dependent on a dynamic relationship with historical change. Dispensing with Western sociology's epistemological dependence on the 'sovereign individual', consocial identity comes close to the dynamic concept of ethnic identity sought for Australian multicultural theory. It too, however, is found to be dependent on an unsubstantiated concept of the symbol or sign for its mode of cultural transmission. The chapter thus ends with a determination to examine the symbol, and the process of symbolisation, through disciplines outside the sociological.

Culture, and The Sovereign Individual

Before a proper analysis of the sociological relationship between ethnicity and culture can be more fully explored, it is important to establish what sociology understands by the concept of 'culture', for these are many. Williams (1976) locates the word's entry into the English languages during the Fifteenth Century from the Latin cultura, meaning variously to 'inhabit, cultivate, protect, honour with worship' (Williams, 1976). From a sociological point of view, however, what is generally accepted as the originary anthropological
The definition of culture is by Edward Tylor who in 1871 described it as:

...that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of a society.

quoted by Haviland, 1975:10.

Whilst broad and all-embracing, Tylor's definition does little to suggest how culture works on so many levels - i.e. ideational, psychological, ethical, institutional, ritual, domestic practice and acquisitional. In fact, according to Geertz, it opens up more areas of uncertainty than it answers.

The conceptual morass into which the Tyloorean kind of pot-au-feu theorizing about culture can lead, is evident in what is still one of the better general introductions to anthropology, Clyde Kluckhohn's *Mirror for Man*. In some twenty seven pages of his chapter on the concept, Kluckhohn managed to define culture in turn as: (1) "the total way of life of a people"; (2) "the social legacy the individual acquires from his group"; (3) "a way of thinking, feeling, and believing"; (4) "an abstraction from behaviour"; (5) a theory on the part of the anthropologist about the way in which a group of people in fact behave; (6) a "storehouse [p5] of pooled learning"; (7) "a set of standardized orientations to recurrent problems"; (8) "learned behaviour"; (9) a mechanism for the normative regulation of behaviour; (10) "a set of techniques for adjusting both to the external environment and to other men"; (11) "a precipitate of history"; and turning, perhaps in desperation, to similes, as a map, as a sieve, and as a matrix.

Geertz, 1973:4-5

Kroeber and Kluckhohn in fact came up with 200 definitions of culture in 1952 ranging from knowledge,
belief, art, law, customs and technology to the valorisation of ideas - anything, in short, associated with observable human behaviour (Bullivant, 1984:2). The problem seems to be that, as seen in the previous chapter with the relationship between race and ethnicity, the conception of culture varies not only from social scientist to social scientist, but from era to era and discipline to discipline. For De Vos (1975), for instance, cultural origin is what constitutes the content of ethnic identity - its religious beliefs and practices, language, sense of historical continuity common ancestry, legends and mythology - but does not constitute ethnic identity itself. Ethnic identity differs from the cultural in that it is what maintains ethnic boundaries, and it is this relationship which is the more proper study of sociology, according to De Vos (1975:6). As we saw in Chapter Three, Banton proposes the ascription of meaning to cultural differences as one means of group boundary formation and maintenance as part of his rational choice theory (Banton, 1983:104-105). But again, cultural content is not his concern. Nor does he account for the ascription of meaning itself. The same can be said of Parsons, for whom language, religion and tradition provide 'on the cultural side' three of the five 'reference points' by which ethnicity can be identified as 'a primary focus of group identity' (Parsons, 1975:54-55). Rex distinguishes racial groups from ethnic groups by virtue of the latter's cultural characteristics, rather than the former's physical
diacritica (Rex, 1986:17), but goes on to basically accept culture's role as a variable in the process of socialisation and transmission of values without examining how that process is effected.

The failure of the more logical positivist sociology examined in Chapter Three to resolve its epistemological usage of the concept of culture can in part be seen as a consequence of history. Tylor's study of religion and magic, which set the template for anthropological study for the next one hundred years, had as its central concept, animism. This marked out a fundamentally humanistic concern, based as it is on the Latin anima, or 'personal soul' (Lawrence, 1978:21). It is arguable that this conceptual separation thus of the cultural from either the political or the economic (apart from in Marxist analysis) stems even further back, from the ideational origins of culture in the Enlightenment. As Geertz writes,

... The Enlightenment view of man was ... that he was wholly of a piece with nature and shared in the general uniformity of composition which natural science, under Bacon's urging and Newton's guidance, had discovered there. There is, in brief, a human nature as regularly organized, as thoroughly invariant, and as marvelously simple as Newton's universe. Perhaps some of its laws are different, but there are laws' and 'it is immutable'.

Geertz, 1973:34
In the first half of the Seventeenth Century, French philosopher Rene Descartes displaced the notion that God was the sole source of knowledge and inspiration for the workings of human affairs with his famous dualism of 'mind' and 'matter'. In formulating the ontological notion of the individual subject at the centre of the human 'mind' as the basis of human understanding, Descartes placed the individual at the centre of an understanding of 'being' where once God had provided the sole explanation (Hall, 1992:282). Descartes' classic reduction of the question of being to the statement "I think, therefore I am" mooted the 'rational, cogitative and conscious subject at the centre of knowledge', such that it has been known ever since as 'the Cartesian subject' (Hall, 1992:282). A preference for the rational ordering capacity of the mind as an organizing principle of sociological knowledge is therefore historically understandable.

The superordinate position of rationality in logical positivist sociological thinking, however, requires further historical steps. Descartes used his landmark ontological reduction to prove the existence and superordination of God as the Prime Mover of Creation (Hall, 1992:282). Not so John Locke who, in the second half of the Seventeenth Century, was bold enough to suggest that Man could manage his affairs perfectly well without God (Lawrence, 1987:27). In his Essay Concerning
Human Understanding he defined the individual in terms of "the sameness of being" (Hall, 1991:282); that is to say, a consistent subject, co-extensive with its identity. The human mind was, as Lawrence (1987) understands Locke, 'like a clean sheet of paper, on which experience wrote its messages and so gave man knowledge' (Lawrence, 1987:27). David Hume's theory of cause and effect adds the element of material determinism to the constitution of the mind, given rationality as its organising principle.

There are thus historically three precepts available to a sociological concept of culture: the human mind as the centre for the individual subject capable of understanding and ordering its own affairs; the pre-eminence of reason as that mind's most valued ordering principle (as opposed to, for instance, nature or emotion); and the notion that material circumstances could structure or order reason's understanding of the material world - determinism. These three epistemological strands can be traced independently to the sociological development of a concept of culture.

It is a short conceptual jump for Rousseau, for instance, from the independent ordering capacity of the individual human mind, and it's capacity to be ordered, to the notion of individual freedom in combination with
individual responsibility to the state, and the state's general will (Lawrence, 1987:28). According to Hall (1992), this paves the way for the emergence of the Modernist nation state (Hall, 1992) and Marx's Nineteenth Century analysis of power and social relations.

French philosophers like Condorcet, meanwhile, in the late eighteenth century placed reason at the centre of an understanding of the historical development of humankind. The development and enhancement of man's capacity to reason (the historical development of the human mind) was seen as a yardstick by which progression could be understood, ably 'buttressed by the church and state' (Darcy, 1987:12). According to Darcy, this laid the way for Boas' formalisation of culture as "the expression of the achievements of the mind" and "the cumulative effects of the activities of many minds" (Boas, quote in Darcy, 1987:13) at the beginning of this century.

Boas was also influenced, however, by the German tradition instigated by Immanuel Kant who, as suggested in Chapter Three, took up the baton of reason. Kant proposed the existence of irreducible categories in the mind such as number, space and time which ordered experience by dint of their absoluteness (Darcy, 1987:11). Kant's classical idealism became the
inspiration for Hegel who, paralleling Condorcet's focus on the progress of the human mind as a yardstick for calibrating historical development, actually located the mind as the driving force of history (Darcy, 1987:11). Hegel's dialectal materialism - the notion that the progress of history was towards the negation of the negative inherent in every affirmation towards the attainment of Absolute Knowledge and Absolute Spirituality (Coward & Ellis, 1977:84) - provided the epistemological tool by which Marx was able to formulate his classic analysis, historical materialism.

Meanwhile, it was on the basis of Kant's notion that where there was reason there ought also to be an imperative outside nature that Rickert separated the individual's internal logic of meaning from the external processual action to which meaning was ascribed. The definition of culture Rickert consequently formulated, incorporating individual historical agency, enabled Max Weber to develop his own central thesis of the individual will to meaning; Man, instead of God, as the Prime Mover (Brand, 1987:57-61).

In France, at the same time as Kant was promoting reason to the realm of transcendent arbitration of knowledge, Turgot was lecturing at the Sourbonne on the historical human separation of intellectual and
socioeconomic spheres of existence: 'on the one hand, hunting, pastoralism, and farming; and on the other, religion, ... metaphysics, ... and science' (Lawrence, 1987:28). This interlinkage of the independent human mind with the cause-and-effect realm of material existence, through the technological medium of human practice, was later popularised by Comte (Lawrence, 1987:28). It provided Tylor and, later, Emile Durkheim (Milner, 1991:62) with the epistemological means to develop their generalisations on the collective thinking and value orientations of specific cultures through the observation and analysis of behaviour.

It can be argued, then, that the historical emergence of the concept of culture as a domain of study for the social sciences has a firm grounding in the epistemological prioritisation of four key ideas:

. the autonomy of the 'sovereign individual' (Hall, 1992:282) from the determining power of God,

. the human mind as the key site of understanding and motivation in the individual,

. the ineluctable influence of material circumstances, and

. the notion of human practice as the mediation between the human mind, material circumstances and social relations.
Unlike the logical positivist approaches to sociology examined in the preceding chapter, the phenomenological approach places this sovereign individual at the centre of analysis, rather than on the periphery of it as an instrument of the study of society. And in such a positioning, it is not the superordinate potential of rationality and its capacity to order rules and laws that is valued in the mind, but its capacity to sustain difference and create understanding. From the phenomenological point of view, each individual within a community, each community within a society, and each society should be analysed from its own perspective of itself, rather than from the perspective of some presumably value-free, rationally construable, objective framework of scientific observation such as the logical positivists claim to occupy. It is to this phenomenological approach that this thesis now turns for a concept of ethnic identity capable of sustaining social change and cultural transmission.
Ethnicity and Primordial Identity

One of the post-war sociological schools of thought that does offer a means of categorizing both conflict structuralism and functional structuralism in terms useful to this argument was developed by Glazer and Moynihan, authors of the influential *Beyond The Melting Pot* referred to above. Glazer and Moynihan (1975) propose 'two poles of analysis by which we try to explain the persistence or revival or creation of ethnic identities' (Glazer & Moynihan, 1975:19), the primordialists and the circumstantialists.

According to Glazer and Moynihan, the primordialist position is that 'Men are divided thus' and so 'the reasons for their division are deep in history and experience, and they must in some way be taken into account by those who govern societies' (Glazer & Moynihan, 1975:19). In contrast, the circumstantialist holds that "We are doubtful of any such basic division and look to specific and immediate circumstances to explain why groups maintain their identity, why ethnicity becomes a basis of mobilization, why some situations are peaceful
and others filled with conflict." (Glazer & Moynihan, 1975:19-20).

The more logical positivist approach of the latter describes both the conflict structuralist and the functional structuralist approaches, and their various combinations with biological reductionism, examined above. The former, the primordialist position, is far more concerned with the cultural nature of ethnic identity - the phenomenological approach outlined above. Primordiality, however, takes on a formulation of phenomenology that is particularly useful to this discussion of ethnic identity.

The primordialist approach to ethnicity derives from the anthropological school of Boas and Geertz, which in turn draws its theorising from the phenomenology of Husserl (Austin-Broos, 1987; Grosz, 1989-6; Wolff, 1975), particularly in its hermeneutic form as developed in the Nineteenth Century by Dilthey (Darcy, 1987; Hall, 1990:17). As intimated above, Boas refuted the Kantian paramountcy of rationality, preferring instead to draw on the creative potential of the human mind also to be found in Kant (Darcy, 1987:17). By drawing on the inductive process of thinking developed earlier by Herder and
Humboldt (Darcy, 1987:10), Boaz saw culture as "an expression of the achievements of the mind, and shows the cumulative effects of the activities of many minds" (Boaz, 1911, quoted in Darcy, 1987:5), and the individual identity as shaped more by its cultural environment than any biological imperative or universal law of social structuring. Boaz thus looked to diversity amongst cultures to explain human variations rather than to similarities between them to seek human traits (Darcy, 1987:16).

It is not necessary to detail Boas' theoretical approaches here. It is sufficient to understand that he 'uncoupled biology from culture and made the latter concept stand on its own terms' (Darcy, 1987:16). In so doing, he established the theoretical framework for questioning the validity of the biological basis of racial analysis, thus creating the need for an analytical concept of ethnicity. This approach has been labeled variously as cultural relativism or cultural determinism (Van den Berghe, 1981:2). The approach gains the cogency of category ascribed to primordialism (e.g. Glazer & Moynihan, 1975; Van den Berghe, 1981; Rex, 1986) in the post-war period at the hands of Clifford Geertz.

---

1 Inductive research looks to observable facts for its generalisations where deductive research looks for facts to prove or disprove hypothesised propositions.
Clifford Geertz conducted the bulk of his anthropological research in Java and Bali, Indonesia, in the 1950s and early 1960s (Geertz, 1973; Austin-Broos, 1987a), and as a result went straight to the problem of meaning in his semiotic definition of culture:

The concept of culture I espouse ... is essentially a semiotic one. Believing, with Max Weber, that man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun, I take culture to be those webs, and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning.

Geertz, 1973:5

This problem of meaning has been seen above in Banton, Barth and the discussion of conflict structuralism. If ethnic group membership or exclusion is made on the basis of phenotypic or behavioural diacritica, how are such diacritica determined in the first place such that they can sustain the change necessary for ethnic identity to sustain change? How is the cultural meaning of such diacritica established or constituted?

The same question of meaning could equally be applied to Parsonian functional structuralism: if values and norms are transmitted through symbolic orders via socialisation, how are such symbols determined or made meaningful in the first place? In fact it is in reaction to Parsonian theory that Geertz formulates his
primordialist approach precisely because it overlooks the process of 'symbolic formulation' (Geertz, 1973:207) - a problem he generalises across ethnic theory as it stood at that time:

Aside from a few more venturesome (and largely programmatic) linguists - a Whorf and a Sapir - the question of how symbols symbolise, how they function to mediate meanings has simply been bypassed.

Geertz, 1973:208

Whereas it is easy to see that sociology is inherently dependent upon the process of symbol creation and construal for its theorising of ethnicity. The French anthropologist Durkheim, with Marx one of the founders of sociology, never wrote specifically about culture, but concepts, beliefs, values & morality were central to his work (Gardner, 1987:73). Through his classic analyses of religion and of madness in society, Durkheim coined the formal, seminal functionalist notion of the social fact - concrete, social predispositions of value external to the
individual which constrain and control their\(^2\) ways of acting, thinking and feeling, and which are transmissible through the process of socialisation (Haralambos, 1985:524-5).

These social facts are ordered and maintained as social forces, in Durkheimian theory, by the collective conscious/conscience - a consensual, mass generalisation of the individual consious/conscience. In order to transmit these conscience collectives from generation to generation, or indeed to newcomers to the society, Durkheim (according to Gardner, 1987) combined all of the conscience collectives for a society - not just ideas and beliefs but the concepts through which they were expressed into representations collective. Representations collective are the symbolic expressions of a social environment through which socialisation can take place; the process of socialisation which, as

\(^2\) Throughout this thesis, the author subscribes to the gender protocol advocated by Miller and Swift (1984:33-38) in relation to personal pronouns. Miller and Swift (1984:34) note that prior to an Act of Parliament in Great Britain in 1850 which sanctioned the generic 'he' for general grammatical usage to represent either he or her in any generalised singular pronoun usage where gender is not otherwise specified by the noun referent, 'they' was the singular pronoun which had 'widespread acceptance' (Miller & Swift, 1984:34). As recommended by Miller and Swift (1984:36-39), in order to avoid subscribing to the commonly accepted but sexist usage of the generic 'he' (or 'his'), this author uses 'they' and 'their' as his generic singular pronoun/possessive pronoun rather than the slightly more cumbersome and repetitious 'he or she'/'his or her'. This author respects the historical priority of 'they'/'their'.
described in previous chapters, forms the central theoretical explanatory mechanism for cultural transmission of norms and values in Parsons' functional-structuralist paradigm.

The process of symbolisation is thus essential to functionalist sociology from the outset. Furthermore, we can infer from Gardner (1987:82) that Durkheim's explanatory deployment of this symbolic expression to shore up the causal, coercive nature he wished to ascribe to the social fact also lent a volitionality to symbolic representation. For example, religious symbols have the power to inscribe in the individual the value prescriptions of the religious institution they represent. We see in Durkheim here what could be described as a 'naturalisation' of the symbol - an attempt to view it as a 'given' of social ordering as part of what Lukes (in Gardner, 1987:83) calls Durkheim's metaphysical appeal to the unity of nature. The same sort of laws one might apply to nature are applied to human nature.

According to Clifford Geertz (1973), Talcott Parsons combines this 'naturalised' theorising of Durkheim's social fact and collective conscious/conscience with Freud's theory of individual motivation by a repressive subconscious to produce his
formal theory of functionalism (Geertz, 1973:203). According to Geertz, the symbol systems that constituted the cultural means of value and norm transmission in Parsonian theory perpetuate this Durkheimian volitionality, providing human beings with not only 'a meaningful framework for orienting themselves to one another' but also an 'information source that, to some measurable extent, gives shape, direction, particularity, and point to an ongoing flow of activity' (Geertz, 1973:250).

It is because Parsons attributes to ideology the same sort of role he attributes to symbol systems (that of systems of beliefs which order and determine a collectivity's sense of itself), at the expense of an understanding of the political and dynamic nature of human interaction, that Geertz developed his concept of primordialism:

By a primordial attachment is meant one that stems from the ... assumed "givens" ... of social existence: immediate contiguity and kin connection mainly, but beyond them the givenness that stems from being born into a particular religious community, speaking a particular language, or even a dialect of a language, and following particular social practices. These congruities of blood, speech, custom, and so on, are seen to have an ineffable, and at time overpowering coerciveness in and of themselves.

Geertz, 1973:259

Geertz deploys this concept of primordial attachments to explain the emergence of ethnic
mobilisations in emerging post-colonial nations where what has been called in this thesis conflict-structuralism (e.g. Rex, 1986) fails.

...in modernizing societies, where the tradition of civil politics is weak and where the technical requirements for an effective welfare government are poorly understood, primordial attachments tend ... to be repeatedly, in some cases almost continually, proposed and widely acclaimed as preferred bases for the demarcation of autonomous political units.

Geertz, 1973:260

Primordialism thus offers ethnic identity a means of explaining those 'propensities in human behaviour' which 'fall short' of instinct but which 'predispose the actor to certain kinds of behaviour in a more forceful fashion than the tenets of conventional cultural determinism would allow' theorised by Gordon above (Gordon, 1975:93) - an explanation which does not resort to biological explanations of origin. Indeed, an analysis of the elements that constitute primordial identity - assumed blood ties (kinship), race, language, religion, region and custom (Geertz, 1973:261-262) - reveals the same working concept of ethnic identity as proposed by Bullivant and others above.

As a version of ethnic identity, then, Geertz' primordial identity seems to have a political cogency that exists outside the class analysis of conflict structuralism. 'Primordially based political
solidarities,' writes Geertz, 'have a deeply abiding strength in most of the new states' which are 'not always ... active and immediately apparent' (Geertz, 1973:264).

The symbolic force of primordial identity also places it in a position to effect the transmission of values and norms through socialisation with a motivational strength, a volitionality Parsons' functional structuralism seems unable to provide. Geertz's primordial identity, as an agency of primordial attachment, seems very much to have Harre's 'internal processes' (Harre, 1981:17) for sustaining the effects of ethnicity observed by the sociological paradigms explored above - effects upon group boundaries, effects upon status and status-based social ordering, effects upon the distribution of and competition for material resources, effects upon class relations, and effects upon power relations and the institutional structure. It is thus an ethnic identity capable of active involvement in political change, rather than a passive variable of the same.

Primordial identity thus serves as the pivotal, organising concept in Charles Keyes' (1982) analysis of ethnic change, in which he defines ethnicity after Geertz 'from a cultural int... from a cultural interpretation of de 1982:5). Keyes contrasts Van den Berghe's (1981) grounding of Geertz's primordialism in sociobiological theory with his own interpretation: that 'the underlying motivation that leads human beings to seek solidarity
with those whom they recognise' results from a kin
selection 'predicated upon the cultural construal of what
characteristics indicate that others do or do not belong
to the same people as oneself' (Keyes, 1982:6).

Ethnic descent is thus culturally construed, not
genealogically. Ethnic heritage is learnt, and learnt
socially, through agents of socialisation who ascribe
meaning to 'cultural markers of ethnicity' which
'constitute a system of classification that permits one
to distinguish different categories of difference'
(Keyes, 1982:7). This reference to the concept of
difference, already noted in Gordon above, will again be
returned to in subsequent chapters. Its significance here
is that:

The basis of ethnic classification appears
universally to be predicated upon the
perception of real cultural differences between
peoples who live in proximity to one another.
Keyes, 1982:7

Culture approached in this manner thus attains an
explanatory power in its own right, rather than as a
variable of other structural or biological or functional
explanatory models. Language, religion, and myths and
legends - of history and ancestors - are the three main
cultural markers for Keyes. Of these, language is largely
diagnostic, in that it offers "clues" to ethnic origin.
But for religion, and for myths and legends, symbols are the medium of transmission.

What cultural characteristics are marked as emblematic of ethnic identity depends upon the interpretations of the experiences and actions of mythical ancestors and/or historical forebears. These interpretations are often presented in the form of myths or legends in which historical events have been accorded symbolic significance.

Keyes, 1982:8

It is important to understand that this 'symbolic significance' is not of the simple linguistic referent/experience relationship implied in Harre's (1981) summary of logical positivism above. The process of symbolisation incorporates not just an object or idea, but an argument, a rhetoric, a construal of a historical event that also interprets it as heritage. In such a theorising, then, socialisation involves not just the transmission of values and norms, but the rationale or rhetorical argument behind it - its *ideological* significance.

The formulation of the mythical and legendary charters of ethnic identity can be found in a variety of forms: stories, both oral and written, songs, artistic depictions, dramatizations, and rituals. However formulated and presented, the symbols of ethnic identity must be appropriated and internalized by individuals before they can serve as the basis for orienting people to social action.
An ethnic identity thus becomes a personal identity after an individual appropriates it from a cultural source, that is, from the public display and traffic in symbols.

Keyes, 1982:9/10

Social or structural circumstances do not thus necessarily provoke the inevitable confrontation of ethnic group with dominant minority, as the conflict structuralists would have it. Nor does it simply result in a change in the circumstances - a change in structural relations or a change in values held or values ascribed - as functional structuralists might hold. The placing of what has been termed above the sovereign individual in an active position of *learning and actively acquiring* identity places it in a thoroughly cultural framework and enables it to explain ethnic mobilisation from both conflict structuralist and functional structuralist points of view.

Keyes has no trouble, for instance, outlining the formation of ethnic interest groups in developing a politics of ethnicity, adding the rider that if an ethnic group is getting what it needs in the division of power without formal organisation, then it will not organise (Keyes, 1982:11). In other words, ethnic mobilisation can be construed as being motivated by functional
structuralist need as by conflict structuralist class consciousness.

But by the same account, Keyes argues, individuals may pursue ethnic identification in order to 'overcome the alienation brought about by the increased bureaucratic rationalisation in their lives' (Keyes, 1982:12). Keyes refers here to the incursion of bureaucratic practice and principle, for its own sake, into the lives of the bureaucracy's supposed clients. It is a Weberian argument (Brand, 1987; Pusey, 1987) of the type discussed above under the aegis of functional structuralism. A primordialist position thus enables Keyes to dip into a functionalist position and find an explanation for the problem of alienation in relation to ethnicity that conflict structuralist analysis is unable to theorise from its class perspective. Primordialism also enables Keyes to propose the following explication of the relationship between ethnicity and change based on boundary theory:

...a tension obtains between cultural meanings that people construct to differentiate their primordial identities from those of others and the patterns that emerge in social interactions as individuals and groups seek to pursue their interests ... Such tension between the cultural and social dimensions of ethnicity leads people to assess the applicability of their ethnic identities for orienting themselves towards social action and in determining the social boundaries that, if consistently breached, would threaten their identities.
The important feature of the primordialist identity, as construed here by Keyes, is its flexibility in its causal relationship with social change. It is capable of fomenting passive resistance as religion did in differentiating the Jews in Morocco and the Arabs in Israel as "nonassimilating minorities" after independence in Tunisia (1956) and the creation of Israel (1948) respectively (Keyes, 1982:20). It can also fuel active resistance, as with Welsh ethnic nationalism in the U.K., whereby ethnic symbols historically handed down, such as the Eisteddfod, Celtic language and Protestant Non-conformism, provide the medium for 'the ethnic sentiments which have been ... mobilized by Welsh nationalist leaders' (Keyes, 1982:23).

'Changes in ethnicity', says Keyes in conflict structuralist mode, 'are precipitated by radical changes in the political-economic contexts in which people live' (Keyes, 1982:27). These changes can come in the form of migration, state boundary expansion, government administrative programs to provide benefits or inflict demands, or revolutionary change in the basic structure of social relations. But such changes in ethnic identity are incorporated into its primordiality.
Primordial identities continue to serve as gyroscopes for those buffeted by uncertainties as to the best way to pursue their interests or for those alienated by the dehumanized agencies designed to organize the ordering of social ends in a rational way.

Keyes, 1982:28

This combination of functionalist and conflict structuralist argument upon a primordialist plinth enables Keyes to formulate a dynamic relationship between ethnicity and change that is neither unilateral nor oppositional. The tension between cultural meaning and collective interests can lead to both social action and boundary maintenance which can look both inwards and outwards. The ethnic group may well act upon the social milieu in order to effect change, but at the same time it will need to resist the reciprocal action of the milieu upon its identity. And it could, if the change in the milieu of social interaction is radical enough, choose to change itself, i.e. its construal of its own ethnicity. Keyes' ethnicity, then, is intersubjective.

Similarly, ethnicity viewed as historic cultural construal through myth and legend, rather than as a determining absolute, becomes a dynamic quality, existing in ongoing tension between internal construal and social interaction, and capable not only of authorising outgoing social action but also capable of sustaining internal change i.e. re-construal. In the case of the migrant ethnic group in a host culture, for instance, the racial
discrimination endured during the ancestral struggle for survival in the new culture may become the source of symbols (i.e. the stories themselves as much as symbols emerging from them) for new identities (Keyes, 1982:18). The process of symbolisation can thus determine the attitudes attached to the symbols by which identity is formed. And as identities can be re-construed, so presumably can attitudes thus cathected.

The primordialist identity of social anthropology as deployed by Keyes thus enables a sociological analysis of ethnic identity capable of sustaining change in a way that neither conflict structuralism nor functional structuralism examined above seem able to. It theorises an identity described here as volitional - an ethnic identity capable of motivating itself in and of itself, by virtue of cultural construal - which is thus capable of initiating and resisting change in and of its own ethnic (primordial) constitution. This seems very much to be the sort of ethnic identity 'incorporated into the self' called for by Gordon above (Gordon, 1975:92).

Primordialism is not, however, without certain epistemological problems. Primordial identity, for instance, is theorised without an origin: it simply is. How it comes into being is not explained, in the sense that how the symbols that constitute it become symbols of
such volitional, motivational power is not explained. Primordial identity can thus be seen to serve for social anthropology the same function the concept of race served for conflict and functional structuralisms above: the cause for the observed effects. As De Vos and Romanucci-Ross assert, 'ethnic identity is the unexpressed meaning of anthropology' (De Vos & Romanucci-Ross, 1975b: 389) and as it stands in primordialist theory, it is not substantiated as a concept, just asserted as being so. As the logical positivist paradigms deployed above were thus biologically reductionist, so primordialism is culturally reductionist.

As such, primordialism also lacks an explanatory mechanism for the re-construal of symbols referred to by Keyes above (Keyes, 1982:18), in that it lacks an 'internal process' for primordial identity's primordialism - what makes it volitional and motivational, such that it can motivate the individual to act for change or resist change? Geertz acknowledges this problem himself:

But how this reconstruction of the system of primordial affiliation takes place, the stages through which it passes, the forces that advance or retard it, the transformations in personality structure it involves, all are largely unknown. The comparative sociology (or social psychology) of ethnic change remains to be written.

Geertz, 1973:308-309
This may not be problematic, in the sense that it is possible to state that knowledge of ethnic identity must begin somewhere, with some settled concept which is accepted as substantive, so let it begin with primordial identity. But the purpose of this thesis is to seek a concept of ethnicity and ethnic identity capable of sustaining a theory of multiculturalism that is not caught on an epistemological cleft stick between cultural and structural pluralism, that can explain and accommodate the phenomenon of ethnic mobilisation, and that can substantiate policy which addresses structural inequalities perpetrated within Australian society on the basis of ethnic identity and which is capable of correcting the perception of Australia as a racist country. In order to achieve this, as was stated at the end of Chapter Two, a concept of ethnic identity is required which sustains analysis and which is capable of sustaining and initiating change, and is capable of cultural transmission. In this respect, Geertz’s primordial identity requires explanation of the process of symbol creation - how some symbols are given greater volitional or motivational power than others such that they constitute ethnic identity - and the internal processes of identity: it's socio-psychology. It also requires an alternative explanation of the origins of identity to the historical indeterminateness of 'primordiality'. In pursuit of both of these modifications, this chapter turns to the concept of consociality, and the consocial identity.
There are elements of existing definitions of culture outside the logical positivist paradigms of sociology and social anthropology reviewed above it is useful to draw upon these at this stage. It is important to point out a number of principles upon which the sociological understanding of 'culture' developed thus far depends. The first of these is taken from Steinberg.

Steinberg states that 'culture does not exist in a vacuum; nor is it fixed or unchanging. On the contrary, culture is in constant flux and is integrally a part of a larger social process' (Steinberg, 1981:i_x; emphasis added). It is thus no more a fixed and stable variable than ethnicity or, indeed, race. The logical positivist formulation, or any other formulation, of culture as in some way static or unchanging has proven unsatisfactory above.

Secondly, Bruce Kapferer emphasises culture as 'a major totalising and unifying principle in which community and identity is established' (in Austin-Broos, 1987:xi) places culture in a central, organising role within social organisation, rather than on the periphery.
As such, it is placed in a position where it is what structures structure, rather than being what is structured by central, objectively observable and socially determining structures such as the institutional structure defined after Gamage (1993) in Chapter Two. This thesis suggests that a phenomenological sociology of ethnicity of the type developed by Geertz and Keyes depends upon such a notion of culture.

It is also useful to include thirdly the emphasis on symbolism found in Milner, who defines culture as 'referring to the entire range of institutions, artefacts and practices which make up our symbolic universe', embracing 'art and religion, science and sport, education and leisure, and so on' (Milner, 1991:3). Milner points out that this understanding of culture conventionally 'does not similarly embrace that range of activities normally deemed "economic" or "political"' (Milner, 1991:3). Such a view of culture would be in contrast with the notion of a central, organising and "totalising principle of society proposed by Kapferer", because culture would need in such a position to be capable of organising "political" and "economic" matters in some causal way. The importance of Milner's reference is that he places the process of symbolisation - a process inherent in the constitution of a 'symbolic universe' - in a central role in the constitution of culture - Harre's 'internal processes' (Harre, 1981:17). This is
also a central principle of Geertz's semiotic approach to ethnicity.

Howard and Howard (1977:166) also support these three views of culture as a tool of ethnic analysis when they discuss ethnic identity as (a) a state differentiated by diacritica and evaluations from other ethnic identities (Howard & Howard, 1977:164-165), and (b) being constituted in itself by a combination of ideology (which, as has been shown above, is a cultural manifestation of structure) and symbols. Alan Howard (of Howard & Howard, 1977) in particular is also one amongst a number of ethnographers, including Roger Keesing (1982), to have influenced the ethnographic work of Jocelyn Linnekin and Lin Poyer in the Pacific Islands they combine under the general epithet of Oceania, and which consist in the archipelagic federal groupings of Melanesia, Micronesia and Polynesia (Linnekin & Poyer, 1990:5). Linnekin and Poyer, in their 1990 anthology Cultural Identity and Ethnicity in the Pacific, seem to develop a concept of culture capable of theorising ethnicity as a symbolising agency beyond the need for the primordial reduction perpetrated by Geertz and Keyes above.

Just as this thesis challenged, in the preceding chapter, the notion of 'Asians' as being the racially
homogeneous group the "Asian Debate" in Australia characterises them as, so Linnekin and Poyer begin by refuting the Western ethnographic view of Pacific Island societies as 'geographically isolated and culturally homogeneous, with self-evident and unproblematic group boundaries' (Linnekin & Poyer, 1990:1). They attribute this homogenisation to the problematic nature of Western ethnography, which theorises ethnicity variously 'based on the proposition that people can be classified into mutually exclusive bounded groups according to physical and behavioural differences' (Linnekin & Poyer, 1990:2), but which in so doing does 'not consistently [distinguish] ethnicity as a Western ethnotheory from ethnicity as an analytic tool' (Linnekin & Poyer, 1990:2).

This is because, it is suggested, it fails to make the distinction between a concept of ethnicity dependent on biological reduction and a cultural concept of ethnicity arrived at the end of Chapter Three of this thesis. Linnekin and Poyer point out that few authors even define ethnicity, and that since Boas 'it has been an anthropological truism' that while 'culture does not reside in the genes ... the assumption that an ethnic group is a "biologically self-perpetuating" unit was and to some extent still is entrenched in the social-scientific view of ethnicity' (Linnekin & Poyer, 1990:2). They cite, as this thesis does, Barth (1969), De Vos
(1975), Issacs (1975) and Keyes (1981) amongst others as examples of this biological reductionist position, and similarly acknowledge Glazer and Moynihan's circumstantialist and primordialist categories as opposing approaches to this problem. And they reject, on the same basis that this thesis does in Chapter Three, attempts by Keyes to resolve the two - the parity between reductionist nature of primordiality and biological reductionism:

... although Keyes states that ethnicity "derives from a cultural interpretation of descent" (emphasis added), the premise is still that objectively given cultural and ancestral differences are at the root of identity ascriptions: certain "givens" at birth are "subject to cultural elaboration... sex, locality and time of birth, physiological features that are recognized as marks of biological inheritance, and social descent or links with forebears" (1981, 5).

Linnekin & Poyer, 1990:3-4

Similarly, just as this thesis criticises the conflict structuralist formulation of ethnic identity under the aegis of a materialist analysis of colonial and post-colonial societies, so Linnekin and Poyer formulate a second approach to ethnic identity which they categorise as the 'colonialist economy' (Linnekin & Poyer, 1990:3,4). Like Castles et al (1990) in Chapter Two, Linnekin and Poyer profess particular interest in the influence of "tribal" groupings and the role of world-system expansion in the formation of group boundaries', whereby 'regional and global historical
processes have been and continue to be significant in shaping Pacific Island identities' (Linnekin & Poyer, 1990:4). Linnekin in particular points to what she terms an 'objectification of culture' (Linnekin, 1990:164) in post-colonial Oceania following the politicisation of ethnic groupings under the 'Western model of ethnic politics' (Linnekin, 1990:166). This, she claims, 'is so internationalized at this point that shared goals are widely presumed to imply cultural units, however broadly these are defined' (Linnekin, 1990:166).

Linnekin challenges the 'unitary, unambiguous quality of cultural identity', which this thesis has drawn from Kapferer's 'totalising and unifying principle' (Kapferer, 1987:xi) view of culture above, because it implies 'the premise that only one enduring affiliation constitutes ethnicity' (Linnekin, 1990:166). Such an approach, according to Linnekin, is epitomised by the primordialist approach (Linnekin, 1990:166). Linnekin and Poyer thus prefer a third approach, which they term 'semiotic ethnography' (Linnekin & Poyer, 1990:4).

Semiotic ethnography is 'the application of semiotic theory to ethnographic cases in which emblems of differentiation appear to be at least as important as competition for scarce economic resources in the creation and reproduction of cultural units' (Linnekin & Poyer,
1990:4). It is thus a theoretical approach capable of evaluating the role of symbolisation in the constitution of ethnic identity as much as the role of structural effects and agencies. 'Recognition of identity as symbolically constituted', Linnekin and Poyer polemicise, has 'forced students of ethnicity to see cultural representations as more than epiphenomena of pragmatic political pursuits' (Linnekin & Poyer, 1990:4).

In their semiotic ethnography of Oceania, Linnekin and Poyer 'propose an Oceanic theory of cultural identity that privileges environment, behaviour, and situational flexibility over descent, innate characteristics, and unchanging boundaries' (Linnekin & Poyer, 1990:6). They claim that, whilst colonisation has brought a new, globalizing culture of politics and economy to the region which has redrawn many ethnic boundaries and drawn others into existence, 'epistemological differences about what constitutes a person' and 'a distinctive theory of ontogeny' are what fundamentally distinguish Pacific theories of cultural identity and the Western ethnicity paradigm. Where 'Western paradigms of group identity rely both on a biological theory of inheritance and on a psychological model of a discrete, bounded individual', in the Pacific personal identity 'is constructed of different cultural materials'; namely an 'understanding of communal identity' based on a distinctive cultural

Consocial personhood, as described by Lieber (1990) in *Cultural Identity and Ethnicity in the Pacific* (Linnekin & Poyer, 1990), is derived from a Lamarckian ontogeny which assumes that community identity is logically prior to and hierarchically structures the individual identity:

... community identity delineates a category of persons to which definitive attributes are ascribed. Community identity is thus a logical implication of a community's conception of the meaning of personhood. This assertion of a causal relationship between communities' stereotypes and ideas of personhood implies a hierarchical ordering of categories of persons.

Lieber, 1990:71

This analysis, it seems, could equally be precursor to a description of the functional structuralist process of socialisation, except for the crucial differentiation that 'What it is to be a person is structured by people's ideas of how one becomes a person' (Lieber, 1990:71; emphasis added). This is a theory of being (ontology) which does not depend on the individual or the primordiality of their identity, but on the community and the

---

3 'ontogeny' is defined by the *Macquarie Dictionary* (1992) as 'the development of an individual organism' and its application here is drawn from what Watson (1990) describes in the same volume as Lamarck's model of 'inheritance of acquired traits as distinct from a genetically regulated inheritance' (Watson, 1990:18).
its environment into which the individual is born (or comes). As such, Lieber maintains, in Oceania it is 'common' to find 'consonantal personhood linked with ontogenetic theories of environmental determinism' (Lieber, 1990:72).

The person is not an individual in our Western sense of the term. The person is instead a locus of shared biographies: personal histories of people's relationships with other people and with things. The relationship defines the person, not visa versa

Lieber, 1990:72

This is a marked departure from the Western concept of the 'sovereign individual' outlined at the beginning of this chapter. The locus of analysis shifts radically from the individual to the milieu in which the individual finds expression and meaning through relationship and interaction, its culture. Lamarckian ontogeny thus, in Lieber's words, 'assumes a plasticity of inherited substance' (Lieber, 1990:73) not found in the biological reductionism of sociological frameworks examined above.

It is this plasticity that confounds the sort of neat drawing of racial boundaries one sees attempted in the West. Racial theories require units of inherited substance that do not change with environment - Jews are supposed to continue to be greedy in New York or Jerusalem, or Poles to be stupid in Chicago as well as Warsaw.

Lieber, 1990:73
The consocial identity enables Leiber, and other contributors to Linnekin and Poyer (1990), to theorise processes of kinship relations and kinship selection, and the relationship between institutional structure and political mobilisation required of a concept of ethnicity, without Van den Berghe's (1981) recourse to biological reductionism (see Chapter Three above). The epistemological problem of symbolisation remains, however, and is posed within the consocial framework inadvertently by Watson (1990):

What is cultural identity among many-neighbored groups, living in close proximity and nearly identical to one another in the main features of their daily activity, organization, and exchange relationships? ... centrally, how are these ethnic differences or diacritics thought to arise and characterize each group? Even if primordially given, these differences are somehow perpetuated or reproduced through time. In comparing themselves to peers, in short, who do members of these groups think they are, and what do they think makes them so?

Watson, 1990:17; emphasis added

Watson goes to the notion of 'story', a narrative construction of consocial identity (its history, its values, its symbols) that pervades the cultural expression of the consocial group, which is evident to those who come in contact with it even at its boundaries (Watson's neighbouring groups) and which contains and thus constitutes ethnically differentiating characteristics as diacritica. Such an explanation is in keeping with Geertz' (1973) and Keyes' (1981) myths and legends, in that it can provide a motivational resource to consocial identity for political mobilisation or other
sorts of social action. And the placing of diacritica in
the public domain of culture for definition and
interpretation will be referred to again below. In the
current context, however, diacritica do not have the
motivational or volitional power primordialism was able
to ascribe to symbols. For the diacritica in Watson's
analysis serve to validate the 'story' - give it
relevance to the contemporary milieu - rather than the
other way around. They are not endowed by the story with
the motivational, volitional power in and of themselves,
as symbols, that has been observed above.

Linnekin (1990) does focus more upon the process of
symbolisation, to the extent of discussing, after Keesing
(1982), the objectification of culture itself as a symbol
(Linnekin, 1990:150). Like Watson's 'story', Linnekin
appeals to tradition as the fashioning, diacritical force
of cultural identity. Unlike Watson, she further
hypothesises tradition as cultural identity as the
structuring force in politics (Linnekin, 1990:151). This
cultural identity, in Linnekin's view, is inextricable
from its symbolic constitution:
My assertion that tradition is the contemporary interpretation of the past, rather than something passively received, is a crucial element in a theory of culture change. If we do not allow for the efficacy of interpretation and "invention in the present ..." we are left to conclude that culture is static and change necessarily originates from outside. My point is that like culture, cultural identity must be understood as creative, dynamic, and processual, and such an understanding is only possible with a doggedly symbolic concept of culture.

Linnekin, 1990:151

As seen at the outset of this section, Linnekin is not alone in viewing culture as dynamic and 'in constant flux', as Steinberg put it (Steinberg, 1981:ix). Linnekin goes to lengths to attempt to find what Harre calls an 'internal process' (Harre, 1981:17) for the creation of symbols which sustains the diacritical nature of consocial identity, and which at the same time produces "political symbols" in the manner theorised by Keesing (1982). She turns to Sherry Ortner's concept of key symbols (Ortner, 1993) for an explication of the primacy of some symbols over others in cultural motivation of thought and action. Ortner, in turn acknowledging the influences of David Schneider ("core symbols"), Victor Turner ("dominant symbols") and Ruth Benedict, divides her key symbols into two modes. Summarizing symbols are those which are 'seen as summing up, expressing, representing for participants in an emotionally powerful and relatively undifferentiated way, what the [cultural] system [they represent] means to them' (Ortner, 1973:1339).
This sort of symbol is what perhaps most closely describes what is found in what might be termed the "symbolic expression" school of sociology, which views ethnicity as constituted by and/or expressive of symbols but which never substantiates what a symbol is (e.g. Allport, 1954; Baker, 1983; van den Berghe, 1981; Bullivant, 1983; De Vos & Romanucci-Ross, 1975; Cohen, 1982; Horowitz, 1975; Issacs, 1975; Keyes, 1981; Nagata, 1981; Parsons, 1975; Steinberg, 1981). Like Allport's (Allport, 1954; and in Horowitz, 1975) seminal notion of the symbol's power to "condense" meaning on behalf of identity, Ortner's summarizing symbols 'synthesize or "collapse" complex experience' and 'relate the respondent to the grounds of the system' (Ortner, 1973:1344).

**Elaborating symbols**, on the other hand, are 'accorded central status' in the cultural construction of meaning 'on the basis of their capacity to order experience', to 'provide vehicles for sorting out complex and undifferentiated feelings and ideas' such that they are 'comprehensible', 'communicable' and 'translatable into orderly action'(Ortner, 1973:1340). They are thus 'essentially analytic' (Ortner, 1973:1340), connecting 'root metaphors' already existing in the cultural narrative of meaning with 'key scenarios' which might be able to 'provide strategies for organizing
action'(Ortner, 1973:1342) to cope with unfamiliar experience.

As such, the concept of the elaborating symbol should be far more useful to Linnekin, in that it has a conceptual flexibility that enables it to negotiate the crossing (or redistribution or reconstitution) of so-called ethnic 'boundaries', as well as being able to enable the ongoing reconstrual of an ethnic identity in a confluence of socio-cultural change (Steinberg's 'flux'). In other words, it enables theorisation of a consocial/ethnic identity capable of sustaining change in a cultural world in which change is perpetual and ongoing. Applied to consocial theory, Ortner's elaborating symbol succeeds where Royce (1982:7-10, 145-156), for instance, fails in creating a symbol that can be produced from interaction - the dynamic of social
relationships - as much as from individual construal. It is very much a symbol of change.

4 Anya Royce (1982), in her book *Ethnic Identity: Strategies of Diversity*, begins like Keyes, with a promising identification of signs and symbols, along with their underlying values, by which an ethnic group 'can maintain a believable' and 'distinctive identity' as being 'the products of interaction with other groups' (Royce, 1982:7). Symbols and signs are thus the means of facilitating the 'comprehensibility of ... ethnic content ... across boundaries' upon which the viability of ethnic boundaries in part depends (Royce, 1981:7). This combination of symbols, signs and underlying values Royce calls ethnic style (Royce, 1982:147). Her problems begin when she differentiates such signs and symbols from 'ideological positions' around which 'subjective definitions [of ethnic identity] revolve' (Royce, 1982:8), constraining the political (or motivational) possibilities of the symbol this thesis has elsewhere demonstrated as in fact crucial to ethnic identity. Further, Royce subscribes to Barth's (1969) theory of ethnic boundaries in describing the workings of these symbols and signs. 'How much change is allowable in the signs and symbols of a group identity,' she asks, 'before we must speak of the group as something else?' (Royce, 1982:9) - in other words, before the ethnic boundary is redefined. Such symbols are thus capable of sustaining change at the same time as facilitating change in ethnic identity. But, Royce goes on to theorise, they are also crucial in ethnic revival by virtue of the capacity to remain the same i.e. be retrieved from the past in some historically valorised form for renewal or recreation of ethnic identity (Royce, 1982:10). Royce does differentiate symbols from signs by virtue of the former's capacity to "evoke sentiments and emotions, and impel men [sic] to action" (Cohen, quoted by Royce, 1982:146), but this sets Royce off on a determinist formulation of symbols as having appeal to 'strong universal implications' if not 'forged in the interaction, however minimal, between groups' (Royce, 1982:148). Such 'powerful symbols' can be of both cultural and institutional proportions - the Culture Hero (Royce, 1982:149) or language-as-boundary-marker (Royce, 1982:149). An analysis which thus has the capacity to explain the collective generation of ethnic symbols through interaction - a capacity not well developed by the primordialists, although hinted at by Keyes (1981:9,14,27-28) - falls into two epistemological holes: one, the historical reductionism of the primordialists already discussed, and two, the linguistic determinism of Sapir and Whorf (Royce, 1982:156). The volitionary possibilities of individual construal seem quite lost in Royce's otherwise persuasive and extensive attempt to establish a causal relationship between ethnic change and
Linnekin, however, prefers to co-opt Ortner's summarizing symbol, it seems, because of its capacity to condense and function as "a crystallization of commitment" (Ortner, 1973:1342, in Linnkein, 1990:158). The ideological cogency of Ortner's summarizing symbol thus seems to be what Linnekin finds useful in it; its significance as an icon of collective identity (Ortner, 1973:1342, in Linnkein, 1990:158) and its ability 'draw on the cultural past but acquire new meaning and become emotionally weighty in the present' (Linnkein, 1990:159). Linnekin quotes Keesing in declaring that "such symbols do not carry meanings: they evoke them" (Linnkein, 1990:159). In her own explication of them, Ortner's summarizing symbols are not thus volitional, nor do they sustain the kind of change entailed in translating the past into new contexts and acquiring new meaning. As indicated above, they are relatively stable, and reflect stable concepts and values.

Linnekin's analysis thus seems to suffer from the same epistemological confusion that Geertz's symbols and, ethnic symbols. This seems to be due to, on one hand, a strong recognition of the need for a volitional strain to individual construal of the symbol (i.e. the individual's subjective capacity to bring motivating emotion to one symbol more than another) and, on the other hand, a dependence upon the structuralist analysis of semiology and linguistics - the arbitrariness of the sign and the determining power of the spoken word. The difference between symbol and sign is discussed in more detail in Chapter Five.
indeed, the symbols of Royce referred to above, sustain a confusion of the symbol with the semiotic concept of the sign, to which all three of these theorists commit themselves (Geertz, 1973:7,14,89,91 etc.; Linnekin, 1990:151; Royce, 1982:7, 148). It is thus important to establish the contribution this semiotic concept of the sign can make to the process of symbolisation required for the sustainable concept of ethnic identity sought herein. This will be the work of the next chapter.