

**CHAPTER SIX: ETHNICITY AS A SYMBOL FOR CHANGE,  
MULTICULTURALISM AS IDEOLOGY FOR CHANGE**

Having described in detail the theoretical constitution of this thesis's main postulate, Deep Symbols (Cultural and Structural), in the preceding chapter, it remains to show how this postulate can be applied to the sociology of ethnicity by way of practical example and then to illustrate the concept's value to the theory and policy of Multiculturalism outlined as problematic in Chapters One and Two.

This Chapter thus begins with an analysis of ethnic identity and the diaspora of ethnic Chinese who live outside China and who are known generally in sociological literature as Overseas Chinese (Wang, 1983, 1990; Cushman & Wang, 1988; Esman, 1975; Chen, 1976; Chow, 1978; Lai, 1988; Rin, 1975). Specific reference is made to Overseas Chinese settlement in the Southeast Asia and Pacific Rim, regions identified in Chapters One and Two as crucial to Australia's future economic and cultural relations overseas and thus to its domestic policy of Multiculturalism (see in particular the conclusion to Chapter Two). This analysis confirms the weaknesses of sociological definition of Chinese ethnicity already intimated in theoretical discussion of ethnicity above. In particular it is illustrated that in many cases under more conventional sociological analysis Chinese ethnic

identity overseas has no reason for persistence, in that it has no need to resist acculturation and assimilation.

Specific focus on the phenomenon of the Hong Kong Chinese Business Migrant, as an example of a migrant who bridges Australia's domestic Multicultural and Foreign Trade policy areas, will illustrate the inexplicability of ethnic persistence under conventional sociological analysis in contrast to the explanatory power of Deep Symbol theory. Deep Symbol theory will then be applied to the a recent phenomenon of identity formation in Southeast Asia, the regional assertion of so-called Confucian Values by political leaders like Dr Mahathir of Malaysia and Lee Kwan Yew of Singapore, as an example of Deep Symbol construction in action.

The Chapter then applies Deep Symbol theory to Australian Multicultural theory in order to generate in the latter a theoretical capability to produce policy (domestic and foreign) and, indeed, practice commensurate with the intersubjective concept of ethnicity developed above. Brief examples are then given indicating possible applications of such a theory in the areas of arts practice and education.

The Identity of the Chinese Overseas

Anyone who has ever asked unsophisticated Chinese informants why they follow such and such a custom knows the maddeningly reiterated answer: 'because we are Chinese'. At first one assumes this is simply a stock response to the uncultured foreigner or a way of fobbing off an impertinent outsider; after a time one realizes that most of one's informants do themselves see it as the correct explanation of almost all their own cultural behaviour and social organization. The conscious model of their own social system which they carry in their minds and which they use to explain, predict and justify their actual behaviour is labelled 'Chinese'. It is perhaps unnecessary to add that this insistence upon 'Chinese-ness' is accompanied by an unshakable conviction that all things Chinese are inherently superior.

Ward, 1985:42-3.

British anthropologist Barbara Ward, who based her comments above on several periods of field research in Hong Kong in the 1950s and 60s, is not alone in identifying the seemingly impenetrable, self-ascribed, self-evident and racially superior sense of ethnic identity which reduces itself to the concept of 'Chinese-ness' (Ward, 1985:49) for Chinese at home and abroad alike. Wang Gungwu, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Hong Kong and former Professor of far Eastern History in the research School of Pacific Studies at the Australian National University (1968-1986), described elsewhere as the 'doyen of overseas Chinese scholars' (Pan, 1990:375), also locates Chinese ethnic identity in a sense of 'Chineseness' (Wang, 1988:1; Wang, 1991:198) which is 'inherently superior' to the state of being 'un-Chinese' (Wang, 1988:1; Wang, 1991:198). He writes, for instance,

that while Chinese Overseas share many characteristics with other ethnic minorities, their heritage is distinctive in one of two ways:

Their "mother country" is near Southeast Asia, very large and populous, potentially powerful and *traditionally* contemptuous of the peoples and cultures of the region.

Wang, 1991:302.

Wang does not attribute the persistence of Chinese identity amongst Chinese migrants, however, to this psychological sense of superiority. The People's Republic of China estimates that there are some 20 million people of Chinese descent living outside China (Wang, 1991:233). Of these, 4 million are Chinese nationals - the type of overseas Chinese known in the PRC, and categorised by Wang as *Huaqiao*, the Sojourner (Wang, 1991:7-8), or, more literally, "Overseas Chinese" (Wang, 1991:220). *Huaqiao* represent a tradition of migration by Chinese nationals seeking to spend time overseas 'educating' the world about China and Chinese interests - a tradition which was initiated in the build up to the 1911 Chinese Nationalist revolution, and continued into the 1950s. Today, the bag is more mixed, with overseas Chinese students joining the traditional academics, professionals, teachers and journalists, and allegiance to the PRC sometimes vicissitudinous (as in response of Chinese students around the world to the 1989 massacre of students in Tiananmen Square in Beijing).

Of the remaining 16 million who have either taken on foreign citizenship or who remain 'stateless', Wang estimates that a considerable number of these would no longer regard themselves nor wish to be regarded as ethnically Chinese. The figure he thus proposes is somewhere between 10 and 12 million (Wang, 1991:233), but this still represents one of the largest diasporas of migrants all claiming, if not membership of the same ethnic grouping, then the same ethnic identity - Chineseness. Wang's own review of sociological research reveals considerable change undergone by this ethnic identity, in Southeast Asia in particular.

Studies of the Chinese in Southeast Asia over the past decades have shown that the Chinese have changed and that they are capable of undergoing further change. There have been studies which point to people who are of Chinese descent but who no longer consider themselves Chinese. Others show descendants of Chinese who know little about what being Chinese means but who have re-discovered their Chineseness and have been trying to be re-sinicized. Yet other studies suggest that many Chinese have double identities. They identify with their country of adoption while remaining conscious of being Chinese. The studies suggest that ... [t]hese identities are difficult to define and ... often dependent on nothing more than self-identification.

Wang, 1988:1

Wang also makes the important point that the concept of an ethnic identity for the Chinese overseas is a recent phenomenon, and one introduced by the social scientists who started to study it in the period following World War Two (Wang, 1988:1) examined in

Chapter Three of this thesis. Prior to that, according to Wang, the Chinese had 'only a concept of Chineseness, of being Chinese and of becoming un-Chinese' (Wang, 1988:1), and although 'this implied that there could be differences in degree, that someone could be more Chinese and someone else less Chinese' this did not imply 'a concept of identity'.

This sense of Chineseness is one of the world's most enduring and continuously documented neo-identities, finding its historical reference for ethnic Chinese overseas back in the Han dynasty (220BC-15AD), when the principles of Confucianism by which it is ideologically constituted (Ward, 1985:43-51) were institutionalised by Emperor Wu Ti (Bond & Hwang, 1986:214). It is extensively studied by sociologists and anthropologists, some focussing on the first historical region of settlement for overseas Chinese, Southeast Asia (e.g. Cushman & Wang, 1988; Esman, 1975), others concentrating on the more recent industrialised catchments of Australia and the Americas (e.g. Chow, 1978; Kee, 1988; Lai, 1988; Patterson, 1975; Yee, 1982), and yet others attempting an Asia-Pacific overview (Chen, 1976; Rin, 1975; Wang, 1991). A fourth area of study of the persistence of Chinese identity comes with comparison to other ethnic identities within China or with what the PRC describes as 'External China' (Wang, 1991:220) - the *Tongbao* of Hong Kong and Macao (ethnic Chinese awaiting return to PRC

sovereignty)(Wang, 1991:226), or those PRC citizens who have relatives living overseas or are themselves return-migrants (Wang, 1991:227-8)(e.g. Chiao & Tapp, 1989; Eberhard, 1982; Herberer, 1989; Lemoine, 1989; Lau & Kuan, 1988; Pye, 1975; Wang, 1982; Ward, 1985; Wu, 1989). As such, the study of the 'Chineseness' of the Overseas Chinese provides a useful example of the applicability of the poststructuralist Deep Symbol theory postulated in Chapter Five.

### **The Sociology of Overseas Chinese Ethnicity**

It would be reptitious to present within the constraints of this thesis the arguments presented in preceding chapters in order to demonstrate how precisely an analysis of the ethnicity of overseas Chinese reveals the same sociological problems of knowledge illustrated above, even though this is possible. Patterson (1975), for instance, uses his study of ethnic Chinese in Jamaica to argue that their ethnic persistence and/or the lack of it can be explained in terms of socio-economic variables without recourse to 'culture', while Rin (1975) opts for an analysis of the totalising and synthesizing nature of Chinese subjectivity to explain the sociological patterns of Chinese ethnicity overseas. Esman (1975) looks to a Marxist class-analysis of ethnic pluralism and Chinese identity in Southeast Asia of the sort found in Rex

(1986) and finds it wanting, in that he can find 'no evidence' that 'class solidarities' cross-cut or transcend ethnic identities across the region (Esman, 1975:415).

Meanwhile looking into China and External China itself, Eberhard (1982), Lemoine (1989), Pye (1975) and Wu (1989) all agree upon the centrality of a cultural understanding of the constitution of Chinese identity as a function of social structure, but Lemoine advances cultural identity as epistemologically prior to political mobilisation where Pye asserts political activity as the variable causing the cultural erosion of ethnic identity in China.

Ward (1985:75) concludes from research conducted in the 1950s and 60s that, whilst the British administrative bureaucracy should provide a logical model of authority for Hong Kong Chinese, given its resemblance to the Confucian 'literati' system of the original "mother country", but fails to attract that status. Summarizing comprehensive 1980s sociological research, Lau and Kuan (1988:20) find, to the contrary, an *acceptance* of colonial authority which, they argue, constitutes a natural transfer of the traditional Chinese conception of authority.

For the purposes of this thesis, it is enough to suggest that the same problematic binary opposition of a structuralist consideration of ethnicity, and its undervalued cultural characteristics, as demonstrated in Chapters Two and Three can be found in the extensive sociological literature on the overseas Chinese (e.g. Patterson, 1975; Rin, 1975 and Esman, 1975 above). Similarly, literature demonstrating the interdependence of cultural and structural considerations in analysis of the political mobility of ethnicity and ethnic identity reviewed in Chapter Four can also be found (e.g. Eberhard, 1982; Lemoine, 1989; Pye, 1975 and Wu, 1989 above). The logical positivist approach of conventional sociology can be shown to produce results inconsonant with the phenomenological results of anthropology (e.g. Lau & Kuan, 1988 and Ward, 1985); and so on.

Just as the sociological models examined in preceding chapters failed to produce the required explanatory power to sustain a concept of ethnicity and ethnic identity above, so do they also in application to the overseas Chinese. There are some useful attempts to incorporate the determining influence of ideology into a cultural model of ethnic identity. Ward (1985), for instance, appeals to a historical understanding of the constitution of the Chinese sense of Chinese-ness around

the ideology of Confucianism. An analysis of the opposition between logical positivist and phenomenological methodologies enables Ward to modify the conventional sociological model of a consciousness of ethnic identity by dividing it into *four* distinct and interdependent models (Ward, 1985:74; paraphrased):

1. the immediate model - that apprehensible to the individual as their understanding of their own ethnic identity;
2. the ideological model - the idealised model of Confucian principle handed down through history, incompletely understood but known to exist as an object of aspiration by the individual;
3. the observers' models
  - a. internal observers' model - the individual's assessment and projection of the ethnic legitimacy of others;
  - b. external observers' models - assessments of the ethnic legitimacy of the individual ascribed by others.

While this modification creates a conception of overseas Chinese identity which acknowledges its variations across geographical and social boundaries, and the intersubjectivity of these variations, it depends as much upon the same sort of "dynamic tension" in relation to changes in circumstance in order to explain *change* in ethnic identity as was found in Keyes and Royce above.

Wang (1988) also modifies the unitary model of an ethnic identity in recognition of the capacity of the individual to sustain multiple identities. Adopting more of a conventional sociological approach, in what seems to

be an attempt to resolve what have been termed by this thesis functional structuralist and conflict structuralist principles, he proposes four basic interdependent and intersubjective identities driven by four types of social norm:

- . ethnic identity - determined by Physical Norms which Wang defines institutionally in terms of endogamous marriage, but reduces ideologically to perpetuation of the male descent line (Wang, 1988:11);
- . national identity - determined by Political Norms - which manifests itself in a commitment to nation-building (Wang, 1988:12);
- . class identity - driven by Economic Norms which are potentially class mobile and trans-ethnic (Wang, 1988:13;);
- . cultural identity - determined by Cultural Norms, which include political and economic norms, and indeed all social imperatives which go to the creating and maintenance of a value system (Wang, 1988:14).

As was seen in Chapter Three, however, Wang basically subscribes to the basic conceptual division of the cultural from the structural, the latter including seemingly 'factual' influences such as politics, law (institution) and race to the exclusion of the former, which confines itself to the basic task of transmission of values (Wang, 1988:4,7). Wang's analysis, while eclectic, thus falls to the problem of symbolisation identified at the end of Chapter Four.

Meanwhile, Chen (1976), Wang (1991) and Hirschman (1988) provide admirable demonstration of just how well the behavioural patterns of ethnic Chinese overseas

exemplify Edna Bonacich's Middleman (Hirschman, 1988) or Split-Labour Market (Banton, 1988:94) theory. The Bonacich theory is a version of class analysis which explains, in this instance, how ethnic Chinese overseas attract racial hostility because they enter and occupy an intermediate position in the small business strata of the host society, and do so with great success at the expense of host community competitors. Ethnic solidarity invoked to resist or survive ethnic antagonism leads to strengthened business practice (based on the Confucian binding of family ties in Chinese culture) and heightened competitiveness, which only serves to strengthen host community hostility (see Hirschman, 1988 for a detailed explication of this phenomenon).

Such an analysis is sociologically cogent, and goes a long way towards explaining the predominant endurance (Wang, 1991:11) of ethnic identity amongst what Wang terms the *Huashang* (Wang, 1991:5), the Chinese immigrant trader whose pattern of settlement in Southeast Asia extended to the North Americas and Australia in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries. It fails, however, to explain the manifestation of Chinese ethnic identity as a political entity in the expressive arts, for instance, as noted by Ang, Yue, Castro and Trinh (cited in Gunew, 1994:8-11), and the similar manifestation of ethnicities in general noted by Andreoni (1988), Cope, (1988), Fong (1988), Gunew (1988, 1992, 1994), Grostal

(1988), Grostal and Harrison (1994), and Tsounis (1988); nor in ethnic practices which are seen as by the practitioners as having spiritual value. The Bonacich model's value in explaining the entry of overseas Chinese into open political practice, such as has been seen in Malaysia (Nagata, 1982; Tan, 1988) and Hong Kong (Pan, 1990) in the post-war period, is also dubious.

The Bonacich model also does not explain ethnic persistence amongst what Wang terms the *Huayi* migrants of the post-World War II era. The *Huari* are professionals and entrepreneurs who are accepted as migrants on the strength of their skills and/or capitalisation and do not follow the enclave pattern of settlement of chain migrants in previous eras. In Australia, for instance, they settle in middle and upper middle class suburbs in Sydney and Melbourne and, to a lesser extent, Brisbane, Adelaide and Perth, living alongside their social and occupational equivalents in the host society (based on interviews with Andrew Metcalfe, Regional Migration Director, Australian Consulate, Hong Kong, 9/1/91 and Jon O'Connell, Business Migration Director, DILGEM, Canberra, 11/1/91, plus Bureau of Immigration Research statistics from 1990). They experience various degrees of success, but are in general economically and occupationally successful as a group. Additionally, in the experience of this author based on interviews with two return Hong Kong migrants from Australia who qualified for admission in

the professional category, and with five Hong Kong Chinese business migrants to Canada, such Huayi experience only minimal ethnic hostility from the host community in their own view (see also Lawrance, 1991, 1993b). They are thus not a communal solidarity, do not share in ethnic practices or rituals together or necessarily as individuals, and have no reason to resist acculturative and assimilatory pressures located by sociology in such cultures as Australia and Canada (see Chapters Two and Three).

### The "Deep Symbol Theory" Alternative

While the persistence of a Chinese ethnic identity amongst Huayi observed by Wang (1991) and this author (in the interviews cited above, amongst others) may be attributable to the influence of multicultural policies in both countries (Canada and Australia) which encourage the preservation of ethnic heritage and identity, it also may not. Wang, for instance, sees the Huayi as an augmentation of the Huashang (Wang, 1991:11). And he attributes the ethnic endurance of the Huashang to historical causes that can be described more appropriately as socio-psychological rather than by the Bonacich class analysis.

As Wang writes, it 'is well known' that the ideology of Confucianism 'placed the merchant at the bottom of a four-tier social structure, beneath the literati, the peasant and the artisan' (Wang, 1991:183) - a structural imperative institutionalised in law by the Qin-Han Dynasties over 2,000 years ago (Wang, 1991:183). Despite this stratificatory disdain, official patronage of Chinese trade with Southeast Asia began during the Western Han Dynasty (206BC-25AD) (Wang, 1991:117) and endured until the Fourteenth Century. In 1368 the Ming Dynasty withdrew official support for private overseas trade and, in 1535, withdrew its naval support for any trade in Chinese waters whatsoever (Wang, 1991: 97,189). The result was an effective ban on the activities of the Huashang which virtually outlawed them, until a licensing system was introduced in 1567 (Pan, 1990:6). A stratificatory disposition was thus transformed into an effective 'pariah' class of social outcasts, to liberally use the term coined Esman (1975:401).

Wang generalises the effect this social exclusion had upon the Huashang in Southeast Asia in psychological terms:

Even though that disadvantage could be overcome in practice, its psychological effects, the effect on their self-esteem and on the legitimacy of their values, were exceedingly burdensome. It gave them little pride in their achievements and in the class they were unable to acknowledge since the object of success was to get out of it quickly and the test of true success was to have their descendants join the literati.

Wang, 1991:184

Wang finds, however, 'ample evidence' of an increase in confidence and articulation amongst this merchant class of overseas Chinese in the Twentieth Century. They have, in Wang's view, become 'more self-conscious and professional' about the values by which their entrepreneurship and business skills have contributed to their own success and that of their community (Wang, 1991:195).

Their status is equal to that of any successful professional. They have combined what they have learnt from the West (just as the Japanese, Koreans and others have done) with what they recognized as their cultural heritage. Of the greatest importance to their recent successes has been their realization that they have done better without mandarin leadership.

Wang, 1991:195

This is not to say, Wang continues, that the modern Huashang do not see themselves as Chinese but, on the contrary, that they see themselves as benefiting from their historical marginalisation by the Confucian scholar class. Invoking the common saying that "Heaven is high and the emperor is far away", Wang comments that prior to the nationalist ascension to power in China, 'the

distance from the Confucian centre of the imperial court ... allowed entrepreneurial activities which strict Confucians would discourage or disallow' (Wang, 1991:262). Their success beyond such loci of social sanction has enabled the Huashang to recognize themselves as 'a dynamic part of Chinese culture that has survived the fall of the Chinese empire, the two World Wars and various Chinese civil wars as well as foreign discrimination and other harassments' (Wang, 1991:195). As 'capitalists, financiers and industrialists' integrated into 'an increasingly diversified world economy', the Huashang 'Chinese merchant culture has been ... the most modernizing force among the Chinese living overseas.'

This author's journalistic research (Lawrance, 1991, 1992, 1993b) suggests that these contemporary Huashang are forging the intermediate-level trade links for their various host countries into China. Raymond and Wendy Wong, for instance, migrated to Vancouver in 1992 with the specific aim of setting up a local version of their Hong Kong manufacturing base, **Ardent Manufacturing Limited**. Within 8 months of arrival, **Ardent Sportswear Inc.** of Canada was a C\$180,000 capital investment shipping C\$1.5 million in locally manufactured sportswear to the US, circumlocuting the quota restrictions placed on Ardent by the US out of Hong Kong. Ardent's material supplies and machinery came from Hong Kong. In Hong Kong,

**Ardent Manufacturing Limited's** manufacturing base is in Shenzhen, across the Hong Kong/China border. Raymond spends his time jetting between Vancouver, Hong Kong and Shenzhen, while Wendy runs the shop floor in Vancouver (Lawrance, 1993b). As typical contemporary Huashang, these business migrants are establishing a significant intermediate trade pattern that can only develop after 1997.

Donald Cheung emigrated to Canada in 1989 to be with his girlfriend. He was 24 years old. By the end of that year he was turning over C\$700,000 a month in computer hardware sales and services from the back of a store in Vancouver. By 1992, his **Pal Systems** software and hardware firm was a C\$45 million a year business with outlets in Toronto, Calgary, Edmonton, Victoria, Hong Kong and Singapore. He was sourcing manufacturing material from China, Korea and Japan, and was planning a retail computer chain in Hong Kong (Lawrance, 1993b). With a degree in computing to his name, Cheung is a typical Huayi as much as he is Huashang.

The same could be said of Billy Chan, a computing science graduate whose move to Vancouver followed his parents' retirement there. The company Chan set up in Vancouver, **Imagepro**, deploys an optical digitizing technology developed in Canada. His C\$250,000 turnover

may seem modest by Donald Cheung's standards, but his product goes to NASA in the United States, amongst other clients. And Chan has already established enough capital to be considering considerable investment in China, in association with a Hong Kong-based partner. His family has in-China experience with a US\$20 million printed circuit board facility in Zhunai province during the 1980s, so Chan has a disposition towards China and a cultural familiarity that steers him towards that market (see Lawrance, 1993b). Similar success stories (researched by journalists other than this author) can be adduced from the pool of Australian Business and Professional Skills Migrants (see Lawrance, 1991).

When Wang Gungwu writes that 'in a period when their professional skills appear to be needed in modernizing China, there may be a stimulus for them to re-open contacts with the country of ancestral origin' (Wang, 1991:10), he is referring to the Huayi. But the same could well be said of the Huashang, who have even more to offer the PRC in entrepreneurial and industrialising skills as it continues along its current path of (state-controlled) market-driven economic development. While the case studies noted above are far from academically or scientifically substantiable, they did enable the author to place questions of cultural allegiance and association in a context not connected with sociological research and therefore at least not

subject to the flaw of alerting respondents to an experimental intent/investigative agenda they might associate with the subject under discussion here. This author's findings in such, and other, journalistic ventures has verified Wang's explication of the 'Chineseness' of the Chinese overseas, especially for the 'more cosmopolitan kind of migrant' he locates amongst the Huayi (and, in this author's experience, among contemporary Huashang). Despite their integration into host communities in Australia and Canada, the basic ethnic identification seems to be as Chinese, but with strong affiliations with the host community. Even in the case of two return migrants from Australia this author interviewed in Hong Kong (Lawrance, 1991), one was definitely committed to returning to Australia once his children reached secondary school age (and he had built up entrepreneurial experience unavailable to him in Australia), while the other was Secretary of the Australian Chinese Association of Hong Kong.

Moreover, this author's own research supports Wang's view that, as the Huashang and Huayi renew links with China, it is with a psychological sense no longer of inferiority but of equality and, in terms of personal and communal success and skills base, superiority. This author believes it would not be difficult to construct a longitudinal qualitative study tracking the economic forays of Huashang and Huayi into China over the next 10

years, in comparison to equivalent incursions by non-ethnic Chinese, which would reveal the relative success of the ethnic Chinese from overseas on the basis of their atavistic familiarity with the intricacies of Chinese culture. For the present, however, it is well to remember that Hong Kong Business Migrants are not migrating for reasons of comparative economic impoverishment, political persecution (directly; although the looming influence of Hong Kong's return to Mainland Chinese sovereignty in 1997 is strongly acknowledged), or geographical dislocation through war or some other catastrophe. They are not, like post-war migrants to Australia from Southern Europe, the Slavic and Baltic states, Vietnam and Cambodia, Iran and the South Americas, entering the country as migrants in the diminutive position of supplicants to the benefactor. They are wealthy, highly skilled people whose migration to Australia has, the policy orientation towards entrepreneurial and business skills migration shows, been actively **sought** by Australian immigration authorities and successive governments. There is every sociological and even psychological reason for them to **want** to become "Australians", yet they seem to retain a basic and deep identification with an ethnicity, "Chineseness", for which the "mother" culture no longer exists in the historical country of origin.

This thesis has found no comprehensive sociological explanation for the sheer adaptability and versatility yet virulence of this sense of 'Chineseness', despite the extraordinary vicissitudes of social and geographical change to which it has been subjected over the last 2000 odd years (see Pan, 1990; Wang, 1991), but especially in the last century. Wang Gungwu seeks recourse to a combination of historical and socio-psychological explanations in the end. Deep Symbol theory, on the other hand, enables an explanation which holds that the Chineseness of the Chinese does not need to 'resist' acculturative and assimilatory pressures as such, because it develops in concert with ideological influences.

To explain how this occurs in detail, the process of symbolisation espoused by Deep Symbol theory fixes ideological influence as "value" to the object of symbolisation (the symbol, or sign) through the process of cathexis. The closer a symbol is to an organising principle of personality like identity, the more signifiers it signifies, and thus the more ideological influences it cathects. Such a web of cathexis, signification and ideology is cultural in construction. As such, it is complex, rather than simple. It is also discursive in the poststructuralist sense, in that it constitutes the workings of power rather than represents a symptom or product of it.

It will be remembered from discussions above that the effect of structuralist analysis of ethnic identity has been to reduce the action of the symbol to precisely this marginal or symptomatic role. It is the same sort of structuralist analysis which also produces policies like assimilation, integration and multiculturalism, on the basis of its seeming ability to reduce complex issues to simple causes and effects, with simple explanatory principles. But simplifying as structuralist analysis may seem, poststructuralist critique enables it to be viewed in all the complexity of its constitution because its constitution is cultural and thus discursive. A structural pressure like assimilation thus cannot be expected to have a broad, simple, structural effect. (To give a practical and digressionary example here of the Australian case, the structural effect expected of assimilation by successive governments from the Second World War to the mid-1960s was the reduction of a range of migrants from a diversity of ethnicities to the one ethnicity, that of 'Australianess'.) On the contrary, it has to work its way through the complex of cultural cathexes by which its object of change, ethnic identity, is constituted. It has to work through the symbolic.

Thus until a deep symbol like the Chineseness of the overseas Chinese is sufficiently deconstructed, the

complex valorisation of ideological cogency it represents can only be eroded. The deep symbol will not change until it is in need of change. Indeed, it may endure through what has been framed above as its 'dormant' phase, as Deep Cultural Symbol, whilst the cathected signifiers constituting it are gradually eroded by what Steinberg has called 'cultural atrophy' (Steinberg, 1981:61) without losing the 'evocative power' Steinberg claims they do. On the contrary, the Deep Cultural Symbol may still be lying there in the unconscious banks of memory ready to be activated for ethnic mobilisation in whatever form, and with whatever renewed ideological objects of cathexis, by which it is summonsed.

Thus on 21 May, 1989, this author can witness more than half a million Hong Kong Chinese on the streets of Hong Kong demonstrating their support for the pro-democracy demonstrators camped in Tiananmen Square in Beijing, with the most (traditionally) un-Chinese catchcry of "Democracy" as their organizing ideology. On June 6, those same streets teemed with more than a million, of all ages and from all walks of life, grieving the deaths of those in that same Square in Beijing. This author was amongst the marchers on that day, but he hails from a substantial tradition of democratic ideology. Traditionally, as Lau and Kuan (1988) show through convincing sociological research and, like Wang, historical analysis, the Chinese in Hong Kong reflect the

Confucian disdain for "politics" (see Lau & Kuan, 1988:21, 71, 74, 180). Yet, in that May and June of 1989, as historian and journalist Lyn Pann writes:

At a stroke, it seemed, the people of Hong Kong had found their pride and their sense of community. China with its poverty and tyranny had not been a country worthy of their loyalty, but the idealism, heroism and patriotism of the students in Peking was something they could identify with; and when they took to the streets it was to demonstrate not only their love of liberty, but also their renewed sense of Chineseness.

Pan, 1990:359

The application of Deep Symbol theory to Chinese ethnicity could go much further. An analysis of the complex Chinese system of social sanction and behavioural regulation known as 'face' (see Bond & Hwang, 1986), as a form of discursive practice, may reveal quite a complex process of symbolisation which actively suppresses political expression at the same time as protecting existing and/or legitimated political orders. Such an analysis is not, however, for this thesis to undertake. The above examples have sufficiently demonstrated the manner in which the sociological (structural), psychological (symbolic) and ideological meet in a cultural ethnic identity through the application of deep symbol theory. It remains to be shown that the deep symbol does not need to be systematically deconstructed from the "outside - in" in order for it to be discursively addressed. And perhaps the best way of

showing this is to illustrate a Deep Symbol under construction.

### Deep Symbol Under Construction

As mentioned in Chapter Two, a *Lateline* programme on ABC television towards the end of 1994 (*Lateline*, ABC, 7/11/94) featured Wang Gungwu, Vice Chancellor of the Hong Kong University, and Stephen Fitzgerald, Chair of the 1988 Committee to Advise on Australian Immigration Policy, in Bangkok. The subject presented by compere Kerry O'Brien was the rise of so-called Asian values touted by Malaysia's Prime Minister, Dr Mahathir, and the former Singaporean national leader, Lee Kuan Yew. How significant an obstacle did the difference between Asian values and Western values present to Australia's economic intergration into Southeast Asia? Both Wang and Fitzgerald agreed with an October 26 statement by Australian Prime Minister Paul Keating indicating that economic integration with the APEC countries (see Chapter 2) would also entail some measure of cultural integration. They also agreed that Asian values, as put forward by these two leaders in particular, were more linked to Confucian principles than anything else.

An article in *The Weekend Australian* of December 31 1994/January 1 1995 entitled "Asia's Destiny" examines the claim by these two same leaders to binding Confucian values which distinguish Asian culture and economy from that of the West. Without entering into an analysis of what each leader claims in detail, it is easy to see from the discussion of Chinese culture above that Confucian values are distinctively what characterises the Chineseness of the Chinese, according to both Ward (1985) and Wang (1991) amongst others. As such, then, it seems that a concept characteristic of Chinese ethnic identity is being co-opted as symbolic of Southeast Asian identity.

The ideological incongruence of this co-option is immediately demonstrable. As has been discussed in Chapter Three, Malaysia has a post-independence history of ethnic integration which has specifically attempted to diminish any structural or political power of the economically dominant Chinese Malays in favour of an elevation of Malay power, social status and economic profile (see Nagata, 1982 & Tan, 1988). Tan in particular documents the deepening assertion of a distinctively Malay culture at the expense of ethnic Chinese presence, despite lip-service to ethnic equality, as a feature of post-colonial Malaysian social and economic development. Dr Mahathir himself is of ethnic Malay origin, and a muslim.

timber poaching (*New Straits Times*, 29 July 1991). Singapore withdrew from the Malaysian federation in 1966 (Carstens, 1988) and has pursued a fierce economic independence ever since through a free port policy. The annexation of Sarawak and Sabah from Indonesia by Malaysia remains a subject of contention between the two nations. Ethnic Chinese have sustained consistent discrimination on the basis of their ethnicity and associated economic dominance in Indonesia (Mackie, 1988; Somers Heidhues, 1988; Suryadinata, 1988), Malaysia (Nagata, 1982; Tan, 1988) and the Philippines (Tan, A.S., 1988). There is no indication that the official promulgation of "Asian" and "Confucian Values" by Southeast Asian leaders foreshadows any amelioration in this structural diminution of ethnic Chinese in these countries. It is therefore more logical, in the terms of this thesis, to see the public campaign as an attempt instead to unify all Southeast Asians under the oldest common heritage available to them all - that of the Chinese - without structural reference to its ethnic source - the ethnic Chinese themselves.

Asian Values, or Confucian Values, can thus be seen as being in the process of cultural construction as a Deep Symbol of Asian political and economic unity, just as Malaysian, Singaporean or Indonesian Identities were promulgated as symbolic of national unity in their times of ascension. The construction of this symbol by virtue

of the **difference** it demarcates from the West is clear from the *Weekend Australian* article. Also clear is the fact that the West constitutes a symbol of the alternative form of political and economic unity Malaysia, Singapore and other nations in the region presumably see as threatening: those developed nations of the world which successfully combine the ideology of democracy with the market practice of capitalism, such as the U.S.A., Canada, Australia and Great Britain.

As the symbol of "Confucian Values" is currently under construction, it is very much a Deep Structural Symbol under the terms developed in Chapter Five, and will remain so for the duration of its inscription. Confucian values, however, were characteristic of the relatively dormant symbolic complex of Confucianism about which, nevertheless, the ethnic identity of overseas Chinese everywhere endured (for the centrality of the Confucian literati to Chinese identity, see Ward, 1985:41-78). It is thus a good example of a Deep Cultural Symbol which has been mobilised for structural purposes, a Deep Structural Symbol.

It is not difficult to see that, just as a Deep Cultural Symbol can be mobilised for Deep Structural usage for the purposes of discursive socio-cultural construction, as in the "Confucian Values" example above,

it can also be mobilised for **de**construction. A Deep Cultural Symbol such as the family or education can be drawn upon to overcome Deep Structural problems such as inter-ethnic hostility and prejudice. Similarly, the Deep Cultural origins of Deep Structural Symbols can be drawn upon to deconstruct the Deep Structural claim to legitimacy or power by those seeking social and/or economic realignment, as in the situation of marginalised ethnic minorities dominated by a governing hegemony. The importance of Deep Symbol theory is thus not so much the originality of practices it brings to the inter-cultural process - this thesis well documents both attempts by ethnically different groups to survive or overcome prejudicial hostilities between them, and by ethnic minorities to overcome hegemonic oppression - so much as the consciousness of such processes it brings to them. Deep Symbol theory creates the capacity to name the acts of symbolisation involved in inter-cultural interaction such that the process of cathexis can be separated from, and can separate, the ideology from its objects, such that value-named interaction (no interaction can be value-free) can take place. The temporary deconstruction of symbols, and Deep Symbols, for the purposes of inter-cultural/inter-ethnic interaction could facilitate a measure of communication free of the phallogentric and logocentric imperatives of conventional discourse.

**Conclusions: Some Applications of Deep Symbol Theory to  
Multicultural Policy and Practice in Australia**

This thesis began with the basic postulate that Multiculturalism as government policy in Australia fails because it attempts an unstated, conceptual division between what the thesis has defined as cultural pluralism and what it has defined as structural pluralism. The thesis suggested, and showed in Chapters One and Two, that government perpetuates this division partly out of its own conceptual limitations, but mostly out of an ideological imperative to control and direct social relations so that it retains government; in this instance, it seeks to appease ethnic voters and voters intellectually sympathetic to ethnic concerns (see in particular references to Betts in Chapter Two).

The thesis has argued that this conceptual failure occurs because Multiculturalism as theory inherits the founding tenets of liberal humanism - a Western epistemological orientation that places the autonomous, sovereign individual at its centre as its core value, and the associated notion of human nature as its replacement for an all encompassing universal nature created by God. Structuralist sociology, the thesis has shown, has traditionally depended upon these tenets. The unarticulated nature of the human subject in sociological analysis of ethnicity, Chapters Two, Three and Four

revealed, prevents logical positivist approaches of the functional structuralist and conflict structuralist types from recognising either the value-loading of the researcher/writer or the volitional nature of individual will. By attempting to construct the illusion of an causal social ordering external to the individual, it fails to account for ethnic identity's capacity to initiate and sustain change on an individual as well as communal level. The thesis argued that the false epistemological separation of culture and structure was integral to the problematic nature of the positivist approaches.

The thesis thus set out to contribute to a coherent and cohesive theory of multiculturalism by developing a concept of ethnic identity and ethnicity that sustains analysis, that is capable of sustaining change, and capable of cultural transmission. This, as it emerged through sociological analysis in Chapters Two, Three and Four, involves locating an ethnic identity capable of resolving the influences of ideology and material circumstances with the ineluctability of individual will - the emotional cogency of identity referred to by Gordon (1975:91-92), the capacity to resist change described by Edgar (1980:94), often against self interest (De Vos, 1975:7).

The thesis thus took its lead from sociological approaches which incorporated semiological theory into their analysis of ethnicity - the primordialism of Clifford Geertz and Charles Keyes, and the consocialism of Keesing, Howard and Howard, and Linnekin and Poyer. Whilst these two approaches constructed explanations of ethnic identity which allowed for its volitionality in initiating change as well as its susceptibility to sustaining change, both remained reductionist in their ways. Primordialism could not escape the historical reductionism of its primordial identity, while consocial identity remained dependent on concepts of narrative (after Watson, 1990) or symbol/sign (after Linnekin, 1990) to explain the transmissibility of ethnic identity - concepts it did not substantiate. A working concept of, for the purposes of this thesis, symbol and symbolisation was required<sup>11</sup>.

This thesis thus sought recourse to the poststructuralist analysis of Althusser and Foucault, Lacan and Kristeva, and Jaques Derrida, to establish a

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<sup>11</sup> The complexities of narrative, and the process of 'writing', as an alternative mechanism for explaining the nature of ethnic change has not been brought into this thesis, although it too could be pursued with central reference to Derrida and Kristeva and Foucault. It would draw on literary theory, and the more literary focus of semiotics, which would take this thesis too far beyond the reach of sociology to sustain relevance, especially when the Deep Symbol theory developed seems to meet the epistemological needs found wanting in Multicultural theory.

discursive model of social ordering in which power was integral to all communication and interaction, and through which ideology thus had a pervasive influence from personal levels to the institutional and, indeed, global. The Lacanian collocation of language acquisition, and the language function, with the site of fundamental identity formation (the pre-Oedipal "mirror" phase) was combined with Kristeva's concept of the semiotic chora to produce a cogent explanation of the production of meaning by the individual subject. Integral to this explanation was the notion that language, as vehicle for the production of meaning, could be seen as going hand-in-hand with individual volition. Discourse could be seen as much as a cultural product of the meaningful subject as a construction by social structuring. Culture and structure were inseparable, and located in the volitional subject as site of production as much as in institutional structure. Moreover, Kristeva's chora was seen as having an in-built oppositional capability - it pursued expressions of meanings oppositional to the phallogocentric, logocentric domination of language (see below).

Lacan's notion of the misrecognition of personal unity by the pre-Oedipal subject, the thesis argued, leads poststructural analysis to regard the subject as de-centred, living under the "illusion" of its centrality to the meaningful ordering of its world. Whereas in fact

it is ordered through ideology, which effects the workings of power in part through the arbitrary nature of signification in the construction of meaning. This thesis turned to the theorising of Jaques Derrida to question this position. Derrida's intellectual assault on the logocentric, phallogocentric nature of language questioned the arbitrariness of the sign, and signification, by questioning semiotics' dependence on the spoken word as locus of meaning production. Derrida posits 'writing' as the more 'natural' mode of language production, of signification from the intent to make meaning, and as such differentiated symbol from sign by virtue of the former's capacity to **fix** meaning. The basic philosophical origin of meaning, this thesis found Derrida to propose, was not only the **difference** between meaning and non-meaning but the act of its fixing in and by language (words). (Derrida's renowned process of **deconstruction** has consequently become widely deployed in some academic circles to explore the **unfixing** of symbolic language in pursuit of the disquisition of discursive meaning.)

This thesis applied Derrida's analysis to the arbitrariness of the sign adopted by sociologists like Geertz, Linnekin and Poyer. Instead it proposed that symbols, and the process of symbolisation derived from combining Derridan theory on the nature of meaning production with Kristevan theory on the volitional origin of the intent to mean (the semiotic chora within the

Lacanian identity), differed from signs in that they sustained a sense of fixedness, of permanence. In so doing symbols also "fixed" by process of cathexis the ideological influences by which they were made meaningful with all of the other contributory factors by which they were in the same act made meaningful - these being mostly cultural (that is, of the value-laden quality transmissible through socialisation). Symbols, and the process of symbolisation, fixed ideology in the same act as ideology influenced the fixing of symbols. But such symbols, as they could be fixed, this thesis argued, could also be unfixed. And Deep Symbols, which were theorised to subtend complexes of symbols and, perhaps, entire ideologies, could equally be unfixed.

The thesis finally refuted the decentring of the subject, claiming that other psychological formulations of identity did not see the need to site identity solely at the point of the creation of the unconscious (the Oedipal Phase), but allowed for a gradual construction of identity over the lifetime of the individual. It criticised the Lacan-Kristeva position as itself succumbing to a mythological reductionism in relation to the pre-linguistic child, and opened the Lacan-Kristeva subject to the possibility of ethnic identity (which forms post-Oedipally).

Deep Symbol theory, as this thesis terms the postulates argued above, thus theorises an ethnic identity capable of sustaining change and initiating change in a volitional manner which is as capable of resisting change as much as initiating or accommodating it. This ethnic identity is also capable of responding to ethnic symbols, which this thesis has termed Deep Cultural Symbols, which may have atrophied to the point of vestigiality, or simply remained ideologically intact but dormant. Such Deep Cultural Symbols are nevertheless available for transformation into what the thesis has termed Deep Structural Symbols during the process of political mobilisation. Deep Structural Symbols are what this thesis has framed as the ideologically active form of Deep Cultural Symbols.

Such transformations can involve the re-cathexis of fresh ideological influences, as with the Hong Kong Chinese/Tiananmen Square example above, or they can seek recourse to existing ideological cathexes, as with the "Confucian Values" example above. The value of Deep Symbols as theorised to multicultural or intercultural theory is that, as argued in the section above, their temporary deconstruction and reconstruction can be deployed to facilitate value-named interaction which has direct access to ideological components as well as other cultural and structural elements.

The above are only two, pragmatic examples of the usefulness of Deep Symbol theory to ethnic theory as found in Australian sociology. As has been suggested previously, Australian multicultural policy, with its epistemological dependence on cultural pluralism as a rhetorical means of addressing ethnicity, promotes only ethnic or cultural **tolerance**. Its rhetorical weakness, as a liberal humanist product of post-Enlightenment Western thought, permits the bifurcation of Cultural and Structural Pluralisms. Poststructuralist discourse theory, on the other hand, permits no such artificial hiving off of the cultural from the structural - structure and culture are one in the discursive construction, distribution and construction, distribution social relations.

This thesis does not dispute the efficacy of the existing sociological criticism of government policy on multiculturalism for its dependence on cultural rather than structural pluralism, as summarised in Chapter Two. It does, however, recommend the incorporation of a poststructuralist understanding of ethnicity and ethnic identity as formulated under Deep Symbol theory above into the existing liberal humanist construal. Such an incorporation, as well as proposing a synthetic concept of Democratic Pluralism as Jayasuriya does (see above),

would also necessitate a multicultural practice which recognises that manifestations of ethnicity are constituent symbols of Deep Cultural Symbols - like dress, food and language difference - and as such remain 'peripheral to the exercise of power' (Jupp, 1984b:5) if they are all that the practice addresses. Cultural Symbols need to be addressed as symbols which represent ideology, and which fix ideology as much as they are fixed by ideology. They need also to be addressed with an awareness that they maintain and are part of the constitution of Deep Cultural Symbols, and that in the process of being discursively mobilised - featured in public discourse - they potentially become Structural Symbols and Deep Structural Symbols i.e. symbols of *change*.

This practice thus accepts that *change* is an unavoidable feature of the process of bringing cultural symbols into discursive currency, and as such is as structuring an act as any other (such as passing laws, stipulating education curriculum guidelines, appointing linguists to government bureaucracies and so on). The right to preservation and conservation of cultural heritage is not so much recognised as acknowledged as a necessary feature of the individual's (and ethnic group's) adjustment to **change** - the process of culturally and socially adjusting to changed social circumstances. As such, it is also acknowledged as a vital feature of

intercultural interaction at all social levels, because the ethnic symbolisation process it represents is intrinsically linked with the ideological influences it subtends.

If ideological differences between groups are thus to be addressed - whether between ethnic minorities and dominant hegemony or between ethnic group and ethnic group - the intrinsic involvement of symbolisation in ideological construction must be a feature of the negotiation/interaction: symbols must be addressed as part of the rhetoric, not marginalised as something less important or irrelevant to the "real issues". Similarly, if addressing ethnic conflict on the basis of stereotypical prejudice, such as examined exhaustively by Adorno et al (1969), the symbolic nature of ascribed cause (phenotypic difference) can be named for its ideological constitution: "You are responding here to a phenotype; what does it mean to you? Does it need to mean this? Can't the symbol represent something else? Can't these ideas be addressed more to their real cause e.g. social marginalisation in the employment pool?"

Deep Symbol theory thus not only presents a means of epistemologically substantiating the concept of ethnicity upon which multicultural theory depends, it

also has the potential to augment existing intercultural practices from policy level down.

**Application One: Deep Symbol Theory and Government Practices**

Government policy in relation to multicultural practice thus needs to articulate change desired as much as change under current management. And if the change desired is a more harmonious society with a national purpose, as suggested by the Fitzgerald Report and, more recently, Paul Keating under his One Nation policy, then those implementing policy need to recognise that the logocentric articulation of ideology, ideological debate, and the rhetorical defence of ideological positions in the face of counter-hegemonic mobilisation, cannot alone succeed. For ideology is fixed in a position of volitional resistance to change by the discursive subject, by symbols by which they maintain their value orientations, and thus by the process of symbolisation. And it must be remembered that these symbols are not created in rational intent and consciousness. They are constituted by a meeting of the discursive influence of ideology **and** the individual's own psychic process of cathexis - a process which matches perception, conception and the affective domain of sensibility i.e. emotion. To call solely for rationality, as politicians so often do,

is simply a non-sequitur. The cathexis needs to be addressed as much as its object and subject, symbol and ideology.

The same theory can be applied to intercultural exchanges beyond the domestic context equally as well. While Gareth Evans is depicted in July 1991 by the Australian media as going to the Malaysian government on his knees, begging their forgiveness for the ABC's *Embassy* programme to which Malaysian authorities took offence (reference unavailable at time of submission), he is portrayed in the Malaysian media (*New Striats Times*, 29/7/1991) as making an appropriately apologetic attempt to repair damage done by his country, acknowledging in the process his government's weakness in being unable to "control" its own broadcasting service. The difference in perspective is cultural, but culturally informed by distinctive ideologies - the Australian, liberal democratic; the Malaysian, islamic fundamentalist democratic. In both countries, Evans was reported as saying the same thing:

"I think that by publicly acknowledging the nature of the problems, and acknowledging Australian responsibility for a good measure of it, and having disassociated ourselves as a Government from that aspect of the media programme treatment which has taken to be offensive, it constitutes more than just an acknowledgement of the problem.

"That's part of the solution, I hope. I think there seems to be a willingness to accept that we really had gone as far as we could go."

Gareth Evans, quoted in the *New Straits Times* (29/7/1991) (Australian reference unavailable at time of submission).

Evans goes on to reinforce his intention to explain publicly and privately what could be explained, acknowledge fault where appropriate, and build the basis for better future understanding. His behaviour seems on the page to in fact reveal a skilled diplomacy of significant cultural sensitivity which satisfies both camps. He does not actually **apologise** for the ABC, nor in any way suggest his government should have censored it. He in fact states (elsewhere in the same article) that the ABC has freedom of expression, as does the press, in Australia, thus defending it and the liberal democracy he represents. At the same time, he acknowledges 'responsibility' for a part in an action that 'has been taken to be offensive', thus satisfying the islamic emphasis on consocial group membership - the individual represents the group, and the leader accepts responsibility for the individuals within the group and their actions. Neither group, nor individual, exist outside the overall binding will of islam.

Evans depends, however, on rhetoric - on the rational articulation of ideological position in the placatory form and manner of problem-isolation and resolution - to bridge the conflicting positions of the two cultures he is attempting to bring closer together - Australian and Malaysian. Had he also been able to

discursively name the symbols he was deploying, instead of just rhetorically manipulating them as part of his discourse, his practice might have been more effective in outcome.

Evans speaks, for instance, of ABC political independence as being 'guaranteed by legislation' (Gareth Evans, quoted in the *New Straits Times*, 29/7/1991). and of "'All Hell'" breaking loose (Gareth Evans, quoted in the *New Straits Times*, 29/7/1991) if the government attempted to interfere. This position hides the symbolic and symbolising role of Australian broadcasting, and the freedom of expression central to it, behind more mutually understandable and structural processes like "legislation" and the principle of "social order". In doing so he is subscribing to the discourse of diplomacy - rhetorically seeking the common ground. Within the same discursive practice he could just have easily emphasised the depth and profundity of the **difference** between the Malaysian hegemonic symbolisation of broadcasting and the Australian. This might not have satisfied Dr Mahathir, the Malaysian Prime Minister who took such offense at the time, but the outcome might have been more understandable and acceptable to Malaysian and Australian consumers of Evans' representations to the press alike. In other words, Evans might have more effectively built the cultural bridge he sought.

Similarly, when Paul Keating made his jibe about "some recalcitrants" when questioned, at its conclusion, about those who had not attended the second APEC meeting in Seattle at the end of 1993, his position might have been more effectively expressed had he better understood the symbolic potency of his comment when translated into Bahasa Malay (reference unavailable at time of submission). The value of attacking Malaysia's leader in this manner (Dr Mahathir was the most significant absentee from the Seattle APEC meeting) might also have been better considered had Keating and his advisors taken into account the deep cultural difference between the symbolisations of the leader in islamic, Malay and Chinese Malay cultures (which again fits more into the consocial model than the sovereign individual mode) and those in Australia. Keating's comment does not merely touch on a matter of simple, pragmatic cultural sensitivity and national diplomacy - it taps into the Deep Cultural Symbol of the Man as Leader in both his own and Mahathir's cultures of origin in a way which, once mobilised, brings out the differences between the cultures of origin with fierce ideological opposition. What to Keating might be a throw-away line to the Opposition during Question Time in the House back in Australia had Foreign Affairs ramifications for Australia in this intercultural forum which perhaps exceeded the

political fallout even Keating and his advisers might have anticipated (or, perhaps, desired).

Diplomatic practice and political practice, then, might both benefit from an understanding of Deep Symbol theory, both at home and abroad. This author, however, has a more immediate professional concern in education and the arts, being a practitioner in both fields.

#### **Application Two: Deep Symbol Theory, Education, and the Arts**

In order to effect change in the arena of social relations, the Cultural Symbols fixing the ideological constitution of the relations concerned need to be **unfixed**. This cannot be done ideologically (that is to say, discursively) alone. It needs to occur with due respect for the internal process of cathexis involved in a symbol's constitution; a process bound up with the individual's *identity*. Ironically, then, after a poststructural analysis, this thesis has proposed the re-focussing of the unitary human subject with new analytical tools.

A process which names Cultural and Deep Cultural symbols with respect, offers a non-logocentric and non-phallogocentric interpretation of them, and then proceeds to address the discourse maintaining them, in the same act can lead to a 'discussion' of the discourse(s) they maintain - although not necessarily a discussion in the verbal, rationally conscious sense. In other words, the symbol is deconstructed and its discursive, and therefore ideological, contents "released". In the same act, they are addressed specifically for the *difference* they suggest (and maintain), not to quash or destroy that difference, but to work *through* it.

This process is no better exemplified in models of intercultural practice already in existence than through work done in education and in the arts. Ijaz (1984), for instance, documents what he terms a 'multidimensional' programme conducted in a Canadian school in 1981 (Ijaz, 1984:133-134) in pursuit of educational objectives. The researchers brought a professional dancer/teacher from India into a school classroom to share with students not only the dances in their repertoire but the behaviour patterns and religious significance from everyday life symbolised by various gestures and motifs focussed by the dances. After discussion with the performer/instructor to this effect, and learning some of the dances, students were then introduced to or asked to call upon their own experiences of other cultures in which life events like

births, deaths and marriages were reflected in dance. Students explored such cultural manifestations through role play and drama activities, followed by other expressive activities such as writing and visual representation. Students were thus encouraged to explore the social sources of ritual and symbolic expression across cultures from the 'inside', through 'vicarious experience' (Ijaz, 1984:134). A pretest-posttest design showed that significant changes in participants' openness to other cultures endured for at least 3 months after this one programme (Ijaz, 1984:134).

Such programmes are not unfamiliar in educational circles. This author trained as an English, Speech and Drama teacher at the Tasmanian College of Advanced Education (1974-77) at a time when Drama was an integrated subject in Secondary School curriculum across Tasmania, its teachers graduates of the TCAE course, and the emphasis in their educational training on the cross-curricular value of drama to the learning process. The influence of authors like Robert Witkin (1974), who advocated the importance of affective intelligence as much as its cognitive counterpart, and recommended the intelligence of feeling as equal in importance to the intelligence of empiricism and rationality, was profound.

The value of such cross-curricular approaches, in which expressive curricula which emphasise affective learning are combined with those which depend more upon cognitive skills, cannot be emphasised enough if a multicultural curriculum is to be effective. It is not enough simply to expose students to a performance in schools of folk dancing or puppetry from a single ethnic origin, or to encourage students to bring an item of ethnic clothing from their homes to wear for a day as an isolated activity. Symbols, and Deep Symbols, are constantly placed in non-phallogocentric and non-logocentric opposition by the semiotic chora, if Kristeva is to be followed. Affective expression is the only means of facilitating access to such oppositional intelligence, and disquisition of the same in the face of the logocentric and phallogocentric dominance of language-based discourse. For the educational balance most educationalists prefer to strive for in the classroom, the affective exploration of cultural symbols and Deep Symbols is as important for adequate exploration of the ideological influences they subtend as is the cognitive analysis of the ideology itself. Class discussions about "issues" are not enough.

As the Ijaz example shows, the Arts are a traditional and convenient source of stimuli for such educational programmes. Andreoni (1988) documents a variety of examples whereby arts activities of specific

ethnic origins are brought in to augment multicultural programmes in educational institutions. She also refers, however, to a number of ethnicity-specific arts projects created as important stimuli in the broader community, outside the confines of the educational institution. The Sardinian community funded a visit, for instance, of a famous Sardinian 'canta storie' (ballad singer) to the rural NSW town of Ashford (Andreoni, 1988:60). And the production of *Kin* by Sidetrack Theatre to which she refers also enjoyed successful performances in railway workshops, factory workplaces and at the Adeliade Festival Fringe in South Australia. Sidetrack at that time specialised in performance cross-cultural both in content and in production (i.e. casting, writing and design) in the workplace and broader community.

Similarly, Carmen Grostal (1988) documents her role as Ethnic Arts Field Officer for the Western Suburbs of Melbourne (a working class labour catchment) establishing ethnicity-specific arts and crafts classes, music and dance workshops, and visual arts workshops, and exhibitions, performances and concerts resulting from such activities, all with a view towards community development which incorporated the principle of what she terms 'cultural democracy' (Grostal, 1988: 96). Grostal and Harrison (1994) develop this relationship between community arts and multicultural arts in terms of cultural demoncracy. 'The principles of community arts

have been integral to most of the multicultural arts work carried out in this country' (Grostal and Harrison, 1994:162), principles which advocate the democratisation of access not only to resources for and means of cultural production but also the institutional legitimation of those currently marginalised by the existing hegemony (for more detailed explications of cultural democracy, see Connell, 1983; Hull, 1983; Watts, 1991; Watts & Pitts, 1991).

While this theoretical approach does much to present multicultural arts as an marginalised movement deserving, by right, of legitimation by mainstream hegemonic institutional structure, it generally reduces mechanisms of redress to terms already recognised by Marxist sociology - the individual subject, the class (or, in multicultural terms, the ethnic group), and the means of production (in community arts terms, cultural production). The solution proposed by Grostal and Harrison (Grostal and Harrison, 1994) is thus very much one of (a) putting artists of ethnic origins marginalised by the mainstream hegemony into positions of empowerment whereby they can practise their art in a manner equal to that accorded to artists of legitimated (in Australia's case, Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Celtic) ethnic origin; and (b) providing the structural means by which this can be done, such as funding through Australia's mainstream funding bodies (The Australia

Council, State Arts Ministries etc.) and publication, performance or exhibition of stature and economic support equivalent to the mainstream.

Just as conflict structuralist sociology above reduced ethnic identity to an instrument of the class struggle to redress inequitable material distribution, so the cultural democracy approach to multicultural arts thus reduces the ethnic artsworker to a similar position. What is ignored is the content of their work: its symbols and symbolisations in relation to their role as symbols within their communities and within the mainstream, and the crucial, cathartic relationship these symbolic complexes have to the very ideological influences advocates of cultural democracy are trying to address.

Andreoni proposes education of power-brokers, politicians and the media as one key aim of "Multicultural Arts" (Andreoni, 1988:49). She argues that:

If "Multicultural Arts" are to effect change in the minds of power-brokers, supporters and promoters of "Multicultural Arts" should learn more about how to use the media's desire for colour, movement, variety and difference. They should learn to make powerful political and social statements, to question culturally based assumptions and present challenging and alternative images.

Andreoni, 1988:52

Andreoni points here to a relationship between the ideological influence of the dominant hegemony (power-brokers, politicians and the media) and the ideological constitution of the arts. If Deep Symbol theory is to be followed, this author argues, such 'supporters and promoters' also need to present their art in a manner that defies its homogenisation and museunisation as in some way fixed and unchanging, as the hegemonic emphasis on 'heritage' (see the OMA definition at the beginning of Chapter One) implies. As Bilimoria's contribution to Gunew and Rizvi's recent anthology, *Culture, Difference and the Arts* (1994), shows (Bilimoria, 1994), the value of developing ethnicity-specific arts in a host community for migrants such as Australia may lay specifically in the artistic (and therefore cultural) development it undergoes in isolation from its culture of origin. One of the values of encouraging intercultural exchange through the medium of arts exchange is that it can be as important, in corollary, for culture of origin as it is for ethnic communities in country of settlement. The former may have as much to gain from the cultural (and therefore ideological) developments made by the latter as visa versa.

Deep Symbol theory, then, provides a poststructuralist addition to cultural democracy analysis

which places multicultural arts practice beyond the oppositional. Multicultural arts practice can become an important means, for instance, by which the dominant hegemony can review itself. Kalantzis and Cope (1994) offer a good example of such a reflection in their chapter, 'Vocabularies of excellence: rewording multicultural arts policy', in the Gunew and Rizvi anthology (1994). Kalantzis and Cope nominate 'excellence' as an Anglocentric criterion of arts funding in Australia by which artswokers of ethnic backgrounds other than the Anglo-Celtic are marginalised, both by exclusion from mainstream funding categories and by homogenisation under the aegis of categories 'at best ... on the margins of excellence' (Kalantzis & Cope, 1994:16) such as "community arts" and "multicultural arts". In so doing, they (although not in these words) expose the principle of "excellence" in the arts as a Cultural Symbol, and component of a Deep Cultural Symbol, "The Arts". Thus exposed, both "excellence" and "The Arts" become mobilised as structural symbol and Deep Structural Symbol respectively, and can thus sustain the substantial ideological disquisition to which Kalantzis and Cope consequently subject them.

Deep Symbol theory, then, presents an argument by which mobilising ethnic artswokers, and their communities, can lobby government to develop and implement ethnic and cultural policy not only more

appropriate to its stated aims but also one which recognises the value and necessity of discursive activity on the affective domain - i.e. at the site of cathexis - as much as on the cognitive - i.e. ideological discourse. Community-specific and culturally responsive arts activity can facilitate intercultural discourse at both logocentric and phallogentric and **non**-logocentric and **non**-phallogentric levels. It represents an ongoing and active exploration of the hypothesis that culturo-ideological construction and deconstruction of an intrinsically political nature is present in all levels of social structure, from the day-to-day activities of individuals to the broad, policy-based institutional sweeps of dominant hegemony.

Multicultural arts also have a significant role to play, it can be argued, in mainstream Australian policy formation if Australia is to pursue a cultural as well as economic integration with Southeast Asia and the Pacific, as Paul Keating suggests (see above, Chapter Two). For arts activity represents a key medium by which the complex of symbol and ideology maintained to **separate** cultures can be deconstructed and disquisitioned within well-defined, conventional contexts which entail their (usually) inevitable reconstruction - the performance, the visual artwork, the book. Arts activity and arts exchange between Australia and the APEC region, it can be argued, is not merely the window dressing to economic

trade missions it was in Indonesia in 1994, for instance. It is one of the more effective methods by which Australian power-brokers can overcome cultural, and therefore societal and economic, barriers in the region. The work already undertaken by Australian artists like the choreographer Kai Tai Chan in Indonesia and Hong Kong, by theatre and mime director Bruce Keller in Vietnam, by writer Richard Tulloch in Thailand, by theatre director Chris Johnson in Hong Kong, Malaysia and Canada, and by this author as a writer/storybuilder in Hong Kong, mark the beginnings of a dynamic exchange between contemporary Australian artists and their counterparts in the APEC region. Fuller funding commitment can only benefit such exchanges providing infrastructural and policy support is also made available.

The division of areas of policy responsibility between three government ministries, the Departments of Foreign Affairs, the Arts and the OMA of the Prime Minister's Office, is an immediate impediment to infrastructural decision-making, for instance. Although it should be noted that, at the time of submission, the Department of Foreign Affairs and trade in co-operation with the Myer Foundation is compiling its first guide to artswomen seeking cultural exchanges in Southeast Asia, *Cultural Organisation In Southeast Asia*, while the University of Melbourne's **Asialink** organisation is

actively assembling scholarhsips sponsored by the Australia Council and Department of Foreign Affairs in order to facilitate such exchanges. It should be noted, however, that the focus of both enterprises is on the visual and craft-based arts, where the intercultural exchange is likely to consist in exchange of skills, methods and artistic approaches rather than in the intensity of intercultural disquisition inherent in the educational programmes and performing arts programmes mooted above. The approach is more in line with the objectifying pragmatics of the 'cultural democracy' advocates, whereby cultural understanding and intercultural tolerance is a 'by-product' of skills and artform exchange rather than a direct result of policy focus.

There may be other methods to substantiate the importance of the arts and education to multicultural theory and multicultural policy in Australia. Sneja Gunew has, over successive works, developed a postmodernist critique of cultural hegemony which has served the Multicultural Arts movement well. Janet Wolff, in her post-doctoral work, *Hermeneutic Philosophy and the Sociology of Art* (1975), presents a cogent, if intellectually complex, argument for the importance of analysis of the content of art, its constitutive meaning, at the same time as its functions in the construction of a sociology of art. This author feels, however, that the

approaches of both Gunew and Wolff lack the sociological strengths of the analysis and argument presented above in its ability to bring together the politics of culture on a societal and international scale with the culture of politics on the level of day-to-day individual practice and consciousness. As Gunew writes:

The recognition of 'ethnicity' as a category of difference thus serves as a safeguard against the development of imperialisms or 'nationalisms' in the worst sense. It is reminiscent of the argument that an admission of gender as a factor in human structures keeps us non-patriarchal, or at least makes the patriarchal structures more visible. Or, to put it another way, it is not merely a matter of telling stories but of legitimating them to redefine discourses of nationalism and identity.

Gunew, 1992:40

Deep Symbol theory, with its epistemological reference to the Derridan location of writing as the means of production of meaning, rather than spoken language, allows for the story to be rewritten at the site of production - individual consciousness - at the same time as inscription within the means of production - the structuring forces of ideology.

This thesis has only been able to suggest modifications to current multicultural theory offered by what it has termed Deep Symbol theory above. An entire, substantive Multicultural theory has not been forthcoming. It must be stated, however, that this work has only ever consisted in a review of literature, mostly

secondary sources, on the subject. The subsequent hypotheses can thus make no claim to empirical substantiation. They represent, as they state, a theoretical attempt to resolve an epistemological problem located within multicultural theory. This author feels, however, that the examples used above, along with the longitudinal study also briefly outlined, suggest enough applications of Deep Symbol theory to merit further study.

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