

CHAPTER THREE

THE SCHOOL AS AN ORGANISATION *Whose Dream Is This Anyway?*

INTRODUCTION

As stated in Chapter 1 this thesis centres on Machiavelli's (1958[1513]) comments concerning the traumas, difficulties and perils of change and the conflicting dramas that ensue as vested interests establish and exploit their power bases in order to attain their respective goals. Machiavellian rationalistic extremes are not quite so prevalent today as they were five hundred years ago in Florentine Italy, at least not in the secondary school environment. However, the desire to unravel the paradoxes of human nature and its effect on change within society and institutions still remain. The philosophical standpoint of any proposed solutions, as to how society or organisations function, is the starting point for this research into the processes of change. How do individuals view the world in which they work and how do these perceptions of reality affect their visions of truth and subsequent behaviour?

Even though Machiavelli's overall conclusions and dilemmas may appear raw and brutal, the problems he tries to unravel still reflect our present philosophical conflicts. *Necessità*, the humanistic dilemma, *fortuna*, that things rarely remain fixed for long, and *virtù*, personal strength and wisdom, are the precepts of Machiavellian philosophy by which human actions are guided. These concepts will likewise emerge as important issues which will need to be addressed in this present research into the management of change.

Machiavelli in his *Discourses* (1970[1519]) is unable to resolve the dilemma of how an individual must act. Does the person act out of *necessità* or *virtù*, do the 'ends' justify the 'means' or are the 'means' the most important consideration? As Crick (1985: 63) points out, Machiavelli ducks the issue and 'never calls right wrong or wrong right'. It is in this key philosophical area that most theories on organisations also fail to address satisfactorily or even to address at all. Behind social theories concerned with the functions and roles of individuals

within organisational structures, the dilemma still remains as to the equation relating the 'ends' and the 'means', the conflict of moral considerations against expediency. Why do people act as they do? Humankind, to Machiavelli, is free to choose both the means and the ends to any action. However, *fortuna* demands that it is almost impossible to predict the price of these choices and that sometimes the price of achieving one set of values is, in terms of another set, disastrous. Machiavelli suggests no solutions or guidance on *virtù* or morality. However, the strength and importance of his writings stem from his descriptions of the actions of people and the framework in which they act.

The foundation of any organisational theory centres on the philosophical standpoint on which the basic premises of that theory are built. The assumptions which are made concerning the behaviour of individuals acting alone or in groups, the viability and validity of divorcing an organisational structure from human relations and the impact of human frailties and behaviours affect the ability of the theorist to make meaningful generalisations concerning the actual operation and predicability of the organisation, if indeed this is possible, to determine the validity of any proposed theory.

The processes of change are interwoven with this *modus operandi* of the institution or collective. How people interact and achieve personal, professional and community goals and objectives determine how change is managed and reflect the degree of success likely to be achieved. No understanding of curriculum change within this School can be understood without the nature of the culture of the organisation and the people in it also being interpreted and analysed. With this in mind this chapter deals with the theory of organisations and how the staff at this School perceive their place within its fabric. The questions posed will relate to views of reality and the nature and essence of things, the acquisition of knowledge, human nature, perception and thought. Lastly, a workable, theoretical framework for this research will be outlined. This framework will create the foundation for the interpretation of the data which will facilitate an understanding of how staff see the organisation and the driving forces which affect them and their actions.

What was recorded and observed over the three years of the study will be set against the spectrum of organisational theories to present a framework within which the concepts of power, politics, conflict, order, human interaction and the processes of change can be set. It will be left to the next chapters to unravel the actions of the School community and the underlying culture and dynamics which drive it.

THE NATURE AND ESSENCE OF THINGS: organisational reality

The ontological basis of any particular theory of how organisations can be conceptualised and subsequently analysed and researched form the main divide between differing perspectives on organisational reality. This has given rise to the, so called, Greenfield-Griffith debate (Herda 1978, quoted in Gronn 1985: 55) which centres on the apparent dichotomy between theorists who perceive that structures of organisations exist independently of the observer and those who propose a subjective, necessarily individualistic interpretation of reality. Greenfield (1975: 76) expresses the problem thus:

... the crux of the issue is whether social reality is based upon naturally existing systems or upon human invention of social forms. Social reality is usually construed as a natural and necessary order which, as it unfolds, permits human society to exist and people within it to meet their basic needs. Alternative social reality may be construed as images in the mind of man having no necessary or inevitable forms except as man creates them and endows them with reality and authority.

From one perspective organisations are naturally occurring structures which can be discovered by the same methodologies that physicists use to formulate, for example, the law of thermodynamics. On the other hand, Greenfield (*ibid.*) contends that organisations are invented social realities which reflect cultural artefacts which do not exist independently of the observer. The Parsonian (1963,64,69) or Harvard functionalists, supported by Hills (1980) and Willower (1980,81), on the one hand and adherents of the concept of organisations being conceived as socially invented reality proposed by Greenfield (1977,78,80,81a) and Hodgkinson (1981) have engaged in a sometimes acrimonious debate. The discussion centres on the rejection by Greenfield to the idea of 'group mind', thought to be beyond individual control, and the will, intentions and actions of the individual. As Johnson (1990: 32) outlines:

Greenfield questions not only the natural perspective's capacity for controlling behaviour but the morality of such manipulative - even overtly coercive - strategies. He criticises the natural perspective's adherence to a pattern or structure as a myth, a convenient creation of those who amorally strive to wield power over others.

The debate has its roots in the philosophies on the nature of existence in which the ability of people to think and process data by anything other than from a purely subjective viewpoint is discussed. From the Kantian (1956[1787]: 72) subjective standpoint the world is viewed from the perspective of the individual and that ultimate reality does not extend beyond the boundaries of human perception.

For we cannot judge in regard to the intuitions of other thinking beings, whether they are bound by the same conditions as those which limit our intuition and which for us are universally valid.

This is the source of Husserl's (1931[1913]) phenomenological view of reality which focuses on the experiences of the individual from an existential and transcendental source. The philosophy extends to the idea of solipsism and the notion that only the 'self' and nothing else can be proven.

These ideas are set against the thoughts of Durkheim (1953) and Parsons (1969) who attempt to relate perceptions, 'on the outside', disassociated from the individual's personal psyche. This represents an opposing philosophy which aims to interpret reality on a wider social base in order to seek those patterns and constants which regulate and determine the world around us. This construction of reality is functional and structured, a reflection of order rather than chaos. It is a philosophy which seeks to unravel the commonality and regulation of life around us rather than the introspection and analysis of the individual.

However, these concepts which gave birth to a plethora of sociological theories fail to give a coherent view of the thoughts of individuals within communities. They spawn ideological hegemony and paradigm diversity but not a working methodology with which to explore the world around us. Walker and Evers (1988) suggest a 'unity thesis' to dispense with the, perhaps ultimately rather unhelpful, discussions on the nature of empirical reality to a more pragmatic stance with which to research the operations of organisations. As Hodgkinson (1981: 143) points out:

It simply constrains us and dictates that social science (and administration) must stop short at the penultimate level of **motivation**. For, with the emergence of will there begins **philosophy**. (original emphasis)

Schein (1985: 91) summarises the problem of paradigm diversity and this aspect of the reality of nature and truth. He suggests that any theory needs to meld the 'external physical reality empirically determined by objective tests', the social reality which are 'matters of consensus and not externally testable' with the reality of the individual 'learned from experience and have a quality of absolute truth for that person'. Schein's suggestions tailor with Sartre's (1976, summarised by Connell 1983: 67-8) when he proposes that there is a fundamental distinction between the three levels or structures of practice, namely 'individual practice, the collective but passive activity, which he [Sartre] calls the "practico-inert" and the developed phenomena of groups'.

The functionalist paradigm which has been the dominant force within the field of organisational research is felt by Greenfield (1975), Hodgkinson (1981) and Meek (1984) to be too constricting. The scope of inquiry, they feel, needs to be extended to delve more extensively into the province of existential behaviour and to record the actions of people in real situations. This significant conceptual shift in organisational thinking is undoubtedly the most significant contribution that Greenfield makes to the debate. He re-focuses the philosophical discussions to consider the individual as a major focus of research analysing the actions and interactions of people within organisations. As Greenfield (1975: 80) explains:

The phenomenological view of reality contrasts sharply with that of systems theory. This [former] view has its origins in the distinction Kant drew between the noumenal world (the world as it is) and the phenomenal world (the world as we see it). For Kant a world of reality does indeed exist, but man can never perceive it directly, reality is always glossed over with human interpretations which themselves become the realities to which man responds. And man is always learning, always interpreting, always inventing the 'reality' which he sees about him.

However, Greenfield's initial views as to the importance of the individual's place within an organisation and his use of the concept of phenomenology, an approach which denies the possibility of mutually observable reality, leads others, notably Hills and Willower (1980,81) to assume that Greenfield is following a purely existential path, which is not evident, or even relevant, in Greenfield's later works. Greenfield (1981a: 16) simply remarks that reality does not fit into a box and that 'this non-fit says it all'. The functionalist approach, he suggests, tries to do just that.

Counterposed against Greenfield's emphasis on the individual's perception of reality is the collectivist viewpoint. This concept regards truth as being 'true' or 'valid' only if it survives a consensus process that allows everyone to examine the implications for the society as a whole. Belle Wallace's (pers. comm. 1993) account of educational life with Zulus in South Africa and Van der Post's journeys (1955,1968) with the Bushmen of the Kalahari outline this more pragmatic perspective to the understanding of cultural reality. Truth in these societies is determined as that which is acceptable to the group; if the group agrees that black is white then, indeed, that would be the accepted truth.

The ontology of this research rests between the collectivist and the Kantian philosophy. It is proposed in this study that ultimate reality cannot be defined and that the experiences and perceptions of the individual form the foundations to the operations of an organisation. There is a 'collective imagery' (Paoletti 1990) which represents the multiple realities that constitute

human interaction, behaviour and social practices. These can be represented as Paoletti (ibid.: 170) suggests:

... as historically layered, contradictory multiplicities. The concept of social structures produces, and is the product of, a vision of society, or of a setting, as a coherent unity, a describable totality.

Ontologically this is similar to Simmel's (1955) views that life is, as Burrell and Morgan (1979: 70) remark, 'characterised by a continuous conflict between the individual and his social world'. Likewise the ideas of Silverman (1970) place the individual at the centre of the social stage whilst suggesting that this perspective still requires some structure and generalisations to the study of organisations. In this study the social systems and structural-functional approaches have not been totally rejected, and, indeed, there is no need to do so, rather that the perspective of the individual needs to have a more prominent role within the conceptual framework. However, this research rejects the notion of Hills (1980: 27) that:

... the standard of 'reality' generally accepted in scientific circles is 'empirical verifiability' by independent observers.

This philosophical base has implications for this research and its interpretation owing to the fact that the operational truths of the School will be those perceived to be so by the people in the School. If one image of the school by those involved is that the School's leadership is hierarchical, dictatorial and oppressive then, for these people, that is their reality. If on the other hand a section of the School perceives that the Headmaster is a kind, compassionate person who is considerate to both the needs of the individuals in the School and the goals of the institution, then that is also their picture of reality. These differing perceptions of life at the School are **all** valid and their description portrays the School as a **describable totality** related to their insights. To believe it is possible to present an empirical truth concerning the behaviour or nature of a person is ontological nonsense.

Relative truths relating to the actions of that person can be assessed, as they are tangible results of that person's thoughts, however, very little can be said concerning the underlying cause of these actions. Such pronouncements must be subjective and postulates only. To go further, as Hodgkinson (op.cit.) notes above is to enter the realm of the philosophy of the subconscious mind.

The issue remains, however, as to what implications this schema of multiple, perceived social realities has on this study's analysis of the operations of the School and for the processes of change in particular. The theoretical dilemma is that of Griffiths (1979) in that he appreciates

the need to incorporate an individual, phenomenological methodology but also to develop the theory from a more functionalist, structured position to comprehend the structures that do indeed exist. As Gronn (1985: 56-7) points out, 'the "turmoil" he [Griffiths] ascribes to educational administration is very much evident in his own thinking'. But at least Griffiths is honest in his personal assessment of his ontological 'turmoil' as he tries to grapple with the need to accommodate both the personal, subjective experience of social reality and external organisational structures.

These structures, as will be discussed later, are certainly in evidence, but not in the anthropomorphic style of the functionalist. Gronn (1983: 31) suggests that Griffiths' observations imply an 'irreconcilable duality of thinking' and that in dealing with the phenomenological and the rationalistic paradigms together, these opposing stances reflect conflicting ontologies. In this respect Herda (1978) and Gronn (1983) are correct, but the argument of this research is that even though, philosophically, the boundaries of reality do not extend beyond the individual, there is a collective imagery which is common to individuals which overlaps these multiple personal realities. Such a collective imagery, typified by routines, rituals, traditions and philosophy, creates the foundation of organisational culture and forms the structures by which people operate and behave within the community.

The theoretical perspective, therefore, will not be ideological in the sense that a functionalist, Marxist or phenomenological paradigm will be followed, but rather, its philosophical base will centre on Greenfield's main thrust which postulates that individuals and their perspectives cannot be ignored. Their visions of reality and truth form an integral part of the operations of an organisation. What will be important in this research is not the merits or otherwise of existentialist philosophies or positivistic rationalities, but that there exists multiple interpretations of reality and that they form what is commonly called the **culture** or **ethos** of a school. This collective imagery, this culture, creates the framework within which people live and work.

THE ACQUISITION OF KNOWLEDGE: Human Nature, Perception and Thought

Over the three years of this study, after many hours of watching, talking, writing and recording conversations, common threads emerge as to the teachers' opinions and perceptions of the organisational realities of the School. All are slightly different, as one would expect, but existential themes prevail which can be summarised as follows:

A. Multiple realities

There are a variety of interpretations of one event, at any particular point in time. People interpret the same scenario differently. The resulting perceptions as to how the organisation 'works' are, accordingly, very different.

B. Collective imagery (after Paoletti 1990)

Even though people would view the same situation differently there is an overlap between the images portrayed. A commonality exists between these multiple realities. This commonality could best be described by the concept of culture or ethos of the School. Within this culture a linkage exists which the teachers refer to as the 'structure' of the School, certain 'systems' and ways of doing things. It is perceived that people have 'roles' to play and 'functions' to perform.¹

Multiple Realities

Extending Sartre's (1948,1976) and Schein's (1985) thoughts on the images of an individual's reality the concept of multiple realities stems from this individual-orientated perspective of an organisation. When discussing staff's thoughts on the School there are conflicts of opinion as to what is occurring and differing interpretations to the actions of others. This is not a collective imagery but a very egocentric one stemming from personal experiences and philosophies.

An individual's knowledge, interpretation and understanding of the School, and his or her involvement within its framework, originates from various sources. Knowledge, as Becher (1989: 7) suggests, 'has many metaphors', and:

would appear more closely comparable with a badly made patchwork quilt, some of whose constituent scraps of material are only loosely tacked together, while others untidily overlap, and yet others seem inadvertently to have been omitted, leaving large and shapeless gaps in the fabric of the whole.

However, there appears in conversations with staff three main sources from which knowledge is derived and woven. Firstly, there is **specific knowledge** which relates to specific, often personal, experiences which have a significant influence on that person's views of either certain people or how 'things work here' Secondly, there is **formulated knowledge**, which is

¹ It can be seen from the words, 'system', 'structure', 'function', etc. that a functionalist perspective is implicitly used by the staff at this school. However, it must be stated that even though these words are used by the members of the School community it does not imply an acceptance of this paradigm by the researcher. To the contrary staff invariably use these terms to describe, in essence, the practice of people and not an inanimate organisation. There is implicit recognition that the staff are responsible for what happens not the 'system'.

gathered from gossip, hearsay and secondary experiences and other people relating their stories of historical, traditional or personal significance. Lastly, there exists what is termed **contemplative knowledge**, born from 'filling in the spaces', a desire to rationalise what is going on and to explain what seems illogical and unsettling. This knowledge fuses information which is gained from a variety of sources to create a more complete picture of organisational reality.

Specific knowledge

Every member of staff has experiences which form the focus and an integral underpinning to their thoughts of their place within the School. These could be positive experiences but it is observed that the majority are negative episodes. Such very personal experiences have a great impact on the individual's faith and trust that their work will provide for them the necessary emotional security and goal satisfaction. The following experience by one teacher (staff 1: 12/1994) highlights this position. In the following quotation the staff member relates an event that happens to him which significantly affects his view of not only the Headmaster but also his 'place' within the School.

I died when I asked for permission to not go to chapel. I was his golden-haired boy until then. He [the Headmaster] came into the morning meeting one morning and said there were a number of staff not going to chapel [and that] if you have any problem with that please come and talk to me. The 'open door' policy we all hear about.

I was stupid, I did not realise what he was talking about was the 'Christians', who disapproved of the kind of service in High Church of England. So I said to [staff 36], we are both atheists, we both support the ethos of the School, because they pay us the money, this is an offer, let us go and take it up. We will go and see the boss and say that if you want us to go to chapel, we will go to chapel, but we do not want to live a lie. If you can see your way clear to allowing us not to go, so that we do not have to live this lie, we would be very grateful.

My god, it ended up with letters to the Bishop and the rest. He could not even deal with a matter like that. Eventually we got official permission to not go to chapel, on the understanding that this permission could be revoked at any time and all the rest ... from that point we were dead people. [Staff 36] left, it seems obligatory that he was worrying himself to death, people like [staff 17] and [staff 5] and all the others, and left. We cannot afford to lose quality people like that, so I do not know.

Another classroom teacher (staff 21: 10/1994) has a similar experience which modifies his

views and perceptions on how the organisation is run. He comments that:

... when you are caught up [in the process of questioning the Headmaster's operations] you have to be extremely circumspect. The Headmaster responds to letters with a very aggressive style and if you are writing to him, on any issue, it could only be a small issue, he comes back very, very vigorously. In fact so vigorously there that [my wife] was horrified [on reading the letter] at how aggressive he was. If I was to respond in kind which at times I have been very close to responding as vigorously and as nastily as the letter I got ... I heard he does not believe he is doing that. I have spoken to other people who have had letters of similar vein. This particular person, wrote one [back] just as badly and aggressively and he [the Headmaster] was extremely agitated that someone could respond [like this].²

These and other highly individual experiences form an integral part in the formation of an individual's perceptions as to how those 'in control' operate. People who have the power to affect staff's daily and future lives also influences how staff perceive the processes of change or no-change and the part that they might play within it.

Formulated knowledge

This concept deals with those ideas and knowledge gleaned through daily conversation and gossip in the common room, over lunch or at other social gatherings which generate a kaleidoscope of opinions on the characters of people and how they operate. For example, the following quotes cite staff's opinions on one teacher which were given during the private interviewing stage of the data collection (in other words in a similar time frame). They vary considerably and demonstrate the particular vagaries of differing personal interpretations of other's actions, personalities, roles within the School or positions of power and influence:

... he is a bureaucrat and a functionary. (staff 12: 9/1994)

... he simply speaking is an assistant to the Headmaster, he just does the Headmaster's bidding... he does a good job as far as discipline is concerned. (staff 5: 11/1994)

... he is obviously a power-broker. He has a lot of influence in the school, he wields a lot of influence with the Headmaster and his circle. Whatever he touched he had control over (staff 10: 11/1994)

² These first quotes concern the Headmaster. This reflects not only his importance within the School, but also his power to affect the culture of the School and the teachers' actions.

... he will always support the power that is. He was not strongly vocal against [the previous Headmaster], he gets in and does those jobs that virtually no one else wants to do. He counts the chairs in the assembly hall, he makes sure the buses leave at the end of the term. I liken him to Mussolini keeping the trains running on time. (staff 22: 1 /1994)

... he is great because he is black and white and if he does not agree with you he will tell you ... he does not have the gift of oration but his actions speak louder than words. (staff 26: 10/1994)

[the Headmaster] has got him to delegate to, but he gets sadly so carried away with the office that he loses perspective. (staff 11: 11/1994)

There is a thread running through the above comments but also a great discrepancy concerning the influence and power this person wields. The comments emphasise the importance of recognising that different staff have distinct and dissimilar interpretations and formulations of their surroundings. Multiple realities exist and their cognisance must be appreciated if the actions of the staff were to be understood and appreciated. The processes of change are dependent on staff's formulated and specific knowledge of the human dynamics of the organisation. The comments and disparate opinions can be applied to perceptions of all staff. The following comments about a senior member of staff relate to his power and influence which again reflect a diversity of opinion:

... they call him around the traps, still I gather, the defacto Headmaster. (staff 24: 9/1994)

... I would have said he was more of a worker behind the scenes than he is now, he had more to work towards ten years ago. (staff 14: 1/1995)

... where does he fit into the power structure? He has the ear of the old boys and in an institution like this the old boys seem to have some sway ... that word of mouth support. (staff 8: 10/1994)

... I would say he is probably the most experienced hand in the place, in terms of knowing about the school, over a long period of time. Well, if I was the Headmaster I could probably sound him out regularly, without necessarily being too informal, his opinion would be something I would listen to, regularly. (staff 15: 10/1994)

... I really thought that he was the power behind the throne, he manipulated the Headmaster and everyone else. I do not think that any longer. (staff 20: 10/1994)

... in the boss' disarming of the staff, he was the main weapon, of course, because he had so much power before and he has come down whenever there

was any issue on and he has said the right words. (staff 1: 12/1994)

... he seems to have a bit of a peerage really, I think he does have some power but it's more consultative, not, rather than authoritarian. (staff 7: 12/1994)

Again there is a distinctive theme passing through these comments concerning the relative power of this person ranging from absolute to marginal. These examples of formulated knowledge become very important in the individual's decision-making processes. How that individual perceives the situation will affect him or her or how another person is likely to act governs the course of action that that individual, or group, is likely to follow. This type of knowledge has a significant bearing as to the course of actions that people embark upon. This affects the processes and mechanisms of the curriculum change as anticipated responses are considered and likely reactions to proposals weighed before action is taken.

Contemplative knowledge

When there is a gap in the common knowledge base this void is bridged and interpreted with input from specific experiences and formulated knowledge, together with input from the individual's own philosophy, feelings and cultural background. Staff form their own opinions and interpretations as to why things happen as they do in their search for some rationality behind what they perceive as irrational events that occur. One classroom teacher (staff 4: 9/1994), pondering on the personality of a senior member of staff, remarks:

... I have termed the phrase ICONIC. Initially I thought that an icon was a statue or something people looked at and respected, but did not really know much about. So initially I could see that is why he was chosen, because he was the 'icon', the figurehead, and the person looks like that so the School must be okay. Then I thought about the word 'iconic' meaning that it can also be a stage of intellectual development by which you say, 'do you like this room, why do you like this room?' 'I like this room because it has got pink walls'. You cannot explain it, you cannot go to a deeper level of thought and that seems to be too his level of thinking - seems to be rather shallow and not quick and yet he can deliver the lines on the day and then people think, 'gosh'. It gets back to the 'iconic', the icon stage.

It is through contemplation of events and actions that staff assess the cultural environment and personalities of the leaders of the School. As staff 14 (1/1995) comments concerning his opinions on the School's culture and its importance to his understanding of how the School operates:

... so I think you are looking at something a lot deeper, something psychological too. I think it's quite apparent [that] the boarders see the School as their 'alma mater', their home and if you are not involved in that it is hard to understand, impossible to understand.

Such observations and musings by staff are widespread and form the basis of their judgements on how 'things' operate, their assessment as to the behaviour of the hierarchy and clues to the values and goals that drive them. In this respect the comments of the following staff member (staff 6: 11/1994) outline his confusion in being unable to comprehend the actions of one senior member of staff:

I cannot mark him. I cannot pin-point him and I never have been able to. As a person I feel he is a Christian, he is working in a Christian environment; he would like it to be a Christian environment, a giving environment. I believe he conducts himself in a Christian manner to boys and that of course attracts a great deal of criticism from boys and staff. I admire him in that he is willing to stick to his guns and treat each one as an individual, turning the other cheek. But going beyond that Christian ethos, feeling ... I am not sure what direction I should go, I just do not know.

It is important to staff to understand why people, especially the leaders of the School, do what they do. If a particular teacher is not able to adequately rationalise the actions of a leader this leads to insecurity and a hesitancy as to the expectations required. The above quote is but one example of the influences on staff motivation and security within this School.

The concept of multiple realities and how people formulate their ideas and opinions are critical to an understanding of the processes of change. All staff view the culture of the School slightly differently and acquire knowledge from differing perspectives and sources. These opinions vary from teacher to teacher and a recognition of this fact is a basic tenet of this research. If it is possible to comprehend why and how staff form their opinions and how these opinions affect their behaviour an appreciation of the processes of change may be forthcoming. Change cannot be treated independently of these multiple visions of reality and culture that constitute this organisation. How the individuals within this School act and why they act as they do is analysed from their standpoint in order to form a picture of how they perceive organisational reality and, therefore, the processes of change.

COLLECTIVE IMAGERY AND ORGANISATIONAL THEORY

The concept of collective imagery will be used to represent the constant characteristics of the organisation. The perceptions of individuals share some common threads and ways of doing

things. Such commonality, as the data will show, does exist in the minds of those involved. As Becher (op.cit.: 5) remarks concerning our understanding of the external world:

... any claim that our understanding of the natural or the human world had advanced over time, must presumably be attributed to no more than an intersubjective strengthening of our confidence in our current criteria of intelligibility.

The contradictory nature of multiple individual realities will be set against this collective imagery in an attempt to portray the School 'as it is'; a recognisable entity, recognisable that is to those who live and work within its walls. These concepts need, however, to be framed within our present understandings and theories on organisations. The following review of the literature will be juxtaposed with observations and conversations of staff at the School in order that statements can be made concerning the structure of the research data and their ultimate interpretation.

In general, organisational theories polarise along ideological lines and relate to the perspectives of those in power and control, rather than reflecting the experiences of individuals. For example, in the realms of classroom research and the issue of an 'effective' class size the debate has often raged independent of the thoughts of the teachers themselves and their opinions are often ignored.³ This is but one example that has led to the present dichotomies between the positivist versus phenomenologist debate, the subjective against an objective frame of reference, informal versus formal structures and the regulatory against anarchic systems of order and conflict.

The purpose of this section is to outline what staff at the School think about the structures and systems that affect their daily lives in order to relate this to the organisational theories which best fit their perceptions and actions. To talk to the staff at the School and suggest that there are no external structures or organisational systems, à la Greenfield, would be greeted with derision. However, this does not imply that the functionalist viewpoint should form the basis for this research. Rather, that even though this paradigm focuses on external, impersonal processes, with which ontologically this research disagrees, it cannot be excluded from evaluation. There is no intention of throwing the 'baby out with the bath water'. It is important to note that even though staff may talk of 'structure' and 'systems' they associate these features with people, often with specific people, and not in isolation from these individuals or groups.

The 'system' is not animate but simply nomenclature which is used to label the routine actions

³ See Lafleur's (1975) survey of class sizes, Jackson's (1968) ethnographic account of life in classrooms, Barker's and Gump's (1964) study of big and small schools, Glass' analysis of class size and Ryan's and Greenfield's (1975) discussions on class size. These reflect the divergence of data that the phenomenological versus rationalistic research methodologies produce.

and behaviours of people. Staff talk of 'the system' and the School's 'structure' but it is recognised in this study that it is the staff of the School who create, manage and perpetuate them.

It will be left to further discussion to see if this system is logical, ordered, formal and rational or irrational, chaotic, or informal and the consequences, thereof, for the proposed curriculum changes, but that there is such a thing in the eyes of the staff is evident from the following quotes.

... I do not think it is possible in the sort of management structure we've got at the moment for anything to be achieved that directly confronts the system as it stands. (staff 20: 10/1994)

... the problem was not the rules, even though you could better them, it is the structure that enforces and implements it all. (staff 1: 12/1994)

Staff perceive a hierarchy, an ordered, structured line of control and decision-making which the following comments illustrate. Staff 20 (10/1994) refers to a 'pecking order, a more hierarchical system' and staff 5 (11/1994) that the Headmaster is a 'centralist, he must make every decision and so there is no delegation. Even those staff who have senior positions in the School realise that their power is relative and as staff 26 (10/1994) remarks, 'I am in a senior position so I have some power, but when it comes down to when I want action it really is at the whim of the people above me'. Staff 6 (11/1994), even though he sees the structure as less linear, appreciates that one indeed exists when he observes:

... there are other members of staff who are seen to have a inroad into the senior area. People perceive circles within circles. If I may extend that analogy, there are inner circles and there are outer circles and if you belong to one it is more difficult to get into another, out going in, but it is easy in going out. If you put a foot out of line you know it.

Other members of staff clearly see this structure and, even though they might not fully understand how it works, recognise its existence. Staff 9 (9/1994) explains in this regard:

... it is hierarchical, executive management, middle management, staff, students. I am not sure how it should function; it is the only school I have worked in which has that structure clearly defined and understood.

And as staff 15 (10/1994) concurs:

... there are levels of influence, I would be considered junior executive material. Basically the [position] does not have a role to play in the day-to-day executive matters.

The above comments emphasise the importance of the concept of conflicting multiple realities which is further emphasised by staff 7's (12/1994) opinions. He believes through his experiences that the hierarchical structure does not necessarily mean that decisions cannot be made by anyone other than the Headmaster:

... [the structure] has become flatter. Not because of any generic policy, it has become flatter because it has become flatter. I find the boss works that way a lot; he does not like to make decisions in lots of ways, you make the decision for him. It is one less decision he has to make.

Staff 7 (12/1994) concludes that, 'whilst it has the patina of being highly structured, there is no structure at all, it is amazing'. That the School has **one** structure is illusory. Each individual has his or her own views on how the School is structured, gathered from their perceptions and experiences. But, as stated before, there is commonality, a collective imagery which is varying discerned by staff. There is a 'system', but to some of the teachers it is not obvious what is the purpose or meaning behind the structure. The usage of the word varies slightly in each case. Staff 5 (11/1994) is baffled as to the rationality of this 'system', he comments that:

... it is fairly closed. It is hard to comprehend the rationality behind [it]. It does not seem to be very obvious at all.

An absence of knowledge to the workings of the School confuses new arrivals who are not culturally aware. This is referred to by staff 9 (9/1994) when he comments that:

... my first impressions of the School [are that] the executive have barriers between us, the academics, and the School structure proper. It is a School of secrets. We have arrangements and agreements and we know this, [but] do not tell anyone else or everyone else will share in the information. It took a long time to try and come to terms with that when I first got here.

The nebulous and ill-defined nature of the structure is apparent in this statement by staff 1 (12/1994) when he refers to the fact that the structure is a human construction and not something which maintains its integrity separate from human interaction and behaviour:

The support structures have fallen apart and they [the teachers] do not even know why they have fallen apart. They do not even know what structures should be there or were there. Not many can sit there and build it back up again

[even] if you gave them the lego to do it ... A lack of ability to look at the system, see how it is working and understand how it works and therefore understand the perturbations which are stirring the system.

Staff 10 (11/1994) sees the 'system as basically anarchic and implicitly refers to one group's response to, and knowledge of the 'system', to act accordingly. He asserts that the Housemasters are:

... given the responsibility without any of the authority. Which pushes [the Housemasters] into the position where all of a sudden [they] make [their] own rules.

The above are an eclectic sample of staff's opinions concerning their thoughts on the systems and structures of the School. The variety of answers indicates that the concept of a unified, identifiable model, which is recognised by all, is not apparent. However, commonality does exist, all staff recognise that there is a 'system or a 'structure', a collective imagery or culture of how the School operates and works but the images are many, overlap and ill-defined. It must be acknowledged that any change contemplated is not simply about changing the 'system', because, not only is the 'system' not a single entity, but that human perception is contradictory and conflicting as to what the 'system' or 'structure' actually is.

Before proceeding with the significance of the concepts of multiple realities and collective imagery it is necessary to examine the literature on organisational theory to see what bearing these ideas and concepts have on this research data. An analysis of the relative usefulness and relevance of current paradigms will be undertaken which will be related to the theories that emerge from the data.

The reification of organisations is evident in much of the literature. Taylor (1967[1911]) thinks of organisations in terms of efficacy and time management, Barnard (1938) discusses equilibrium and structural effectiveness, Durkheim (1953[1924]) sees the institution as a set of inter-dependent parts, similar to that of the physiological parts of the body, all working in harmony to allow the organism to function, and Katz and Kahn (1966) talk of homeostasis and boundaries of processual, 'open' systems. These concepts are independent, rational analyses of organisations based on a 'system', a 'function' or 'structure', which exists outside of and separate from the individual. As previously stated, Greenfield (1981a: 1) firmly rejects this rationale and writes of an anarchistic theory of organisations which essentially denies the existence of an 'overarching social reality thought to lie beyond human control and outside the will, intention and action of the individual'. Greenfield is opposed to the idea of an independent organisation separate from individuals who live and act within it. He (ibid.: 5) suggests that,

when commenting on the functional-structural approach, 'the organisation is not only reified but also deified'.

Greenfield (1991: 204) rejects any simplistic analyses of organisational theory with the statement that:

In the field of administrative and organisational studies, the concept of paradigm has been given some currency by Burrell and Morgan (1979), but their understanding of the concept is inserted with Procrustean force into the familiar 2x2 table of orthogonal Cartesian dimensions. The result places new and disturbing ideas within a framework congenial to empiricists who may thereby take comfort in the familiar form.

Burrell and Morgan's (1979) analysis of sociological paradigms, referred to by Greenfield above, whilst thorough and constructive, still tries to order the various theories into frameworks which are often presented as mutually exclusive when applied to organisations. Unless there is a closer similarity between how researchers analyse their data and the realities as perceived by those researched there will continue to be a separation between what is seen in practice and the theories which try to represent it.

Jean Hills' (1980) asserts that Greenfield has not understood the functionalist view and quotes from Parsons (1953: 52-53, quoted by Hills *ibid.*: 30), saying that:

... the collectivity as object is not independent, but it is created and sustained **solely** by the attitudes of its members.... are constructed out of the attitudes of their members. (original emphasis)

However Hills misses Greenfield's (1980: 29) point in that the difficulty is simply with 'finding "empirical facts" that would objectively and incontrovertibly support or deny the theory'. Hills (*op.cit.*: 24) also laments that Greenfield's critique is 'not directed against abstract ideas and generalisations as such', and presents only a methodology to uncover reality rather than a knowledge of organisations themselves. With this I agree although it seems from reading Greenfield's later articles (1980, 81a,b,91) that much effort went into explaining his epistemology and research methodologies rather than suggesting any specific models which might represent the operation of particular organisations. I can understand Greenfield's (1980) pre-occupation with methodology when he has to respond to Hills' (*op.cit.*: 24) sarcasm that it is only possible to understand concrete reality from the personal perspective and that:

... the understanding of organisations such as schools can be acquired **only** through the acquisition of understanding of what people in those organisations

think and believe about what is and what should be. The **sole** path to an understanding of organisations is through knowledge of how people in those organisation construe their situations. (original emphasis)

Hills does not seem to understand Greenfield's point about the illusory nature of **concrete** reality or perhaps the issue is simply semantic and in the use of the word 'concrete'. Hills certainly, however, finds it 'novel' that Greenfield (1975: 82) asserts that there is a need to understand social reality as different people see it and how their 'views shape the actions they take within that reality'. There is certainly a philosophical impasse here and Greenfield's response (1980) concerning the way forward does little to counter Hills' concerns and only reiterates and summarises what he has said already. To Hills, Greenfield has not explained how organisations work, only a methodology as to how they might be uncovered. In other words Hills is arguing to Greenfield, 'put up, or shut up'.

Unfortunately, Greenfield (1991: 2.5) does not have time to go further except to outline in one of the last articles that he wrote that with organisations 'it is a matter of will and power; of bending others to one's will and of being bent in turn by others', and that whatever the system irrational values need to be incorporated. Greenfield (loc.cit.) gives clues as to his ideal model when he comments that 'a hierarchy of the good is therefore inevitable, as is the demand to ground it in authority and to further it through leadership'. This gives some indication as to the direction that Greenfield might have pursued, if he had written more. I, for one, would have read his ideas eagerly as the man offered a vision, an alternative, not just a paradigm.

Greenfield's ideas (taken from 1980: 39-47) on organisations can best be summarised as being centred on individuals' points of view within a community. Their intentions, wills and values constitute the culture and operation of that institution and that organisations are essentially arbitrary definitions of reality and are expressed by symbols and through language. Perhaps, most importantly, as far as giving some definitive way forward, that organisations can be expressed in terms of human action which are focused on meaning, moral order and power.

This research finds nothing by which to disagree in the essential message that Greenfield proposes, but that, although he implicitly proposes the idea of multiple realities, he has little to say concerning the commonality that is evident between these realities. As witnessed in the sample of quotes of conversations above, even though each person's reality is different, there is a cultural and existential linkage between these perceptions. Even though Greenfield rejects the idea of structures, functions and systems, from an ontological platform, the evidence is to the contrary. As Willower (1980: 152) rightly suggests Greenfield 'eschews the very theoretical framework that explore the topics of his concern - order and control, conformity and deviance'.

Greenfield (1980: 32) outlines how knowledge of an organisation might be attained but even though this philosophy necessarily rejects the functionalist perspective, it is not as Hills (1980: 19) would have us think that:

... the only alternative beyond deterministic and probabilistic relationships among variables, or states, is chaos, a state in which absolutely no valid generalisations can be stated

So where does this leave the functional-structural perspective with regards to this research? This study's theoretical framework needs to incorporate the concept of structures and systems, but within the framework of Greenfield's 'individual' perspective.

A look at the functionalist's approach is, however, necessary to glean their ideas and assess their ontology and methodology. Functionalism stems from a desire to dissect rationally the structures of increasingly complex, unmanageable organisations. It is a quest for the invariants of organisational life as opposed to the, supposedly, superficial differences. Levi-Strauss (1978: 12) identifies the problem as:

... trying to find out if there is some kind of order behind this apparent disorder
... it is, I think, absolutely impossible to conceive of meaning without order.

The objective, he continues (ibid.:14) is to:

increase very slowly the number and the quality of the answers we are able to give, and this, I think, we can only do through science.

Schein (1985: 85) continues the argument by proposing that there are three factors relating to organisational order. He outlines firstly, a rational, normative code elevating those with ability; secondly those with traditionally a high status within society; and lastly those leaders who display qualities of stamina, charisma and character. Weberian legitimate authority is the centre of this 'locus of control' (Schein loc.cit.) with a limited group of people running the organisation who dominate operational procedures and define structures and ordered hierarchies.

Moral integration, Machiavellian *virtù*, based on an accepted ethical code, is not integrated into this bureaucratic model which emphasises empirical outcomes rather than the personal freedom and aspirations of the individual. As Katz and Kahn (1966: 76) remark:

The size, complexity ... of organisations makes the meaningful involvement of the rank and file in decision-making increasingly difficult at the same time that it becomes increasingly urgent.

Weberian bureaucratic theory is largely a mechanistic conception of the world which strives for completeness, closure and certainty before action or decisions are taken. A *conscience collective* (Durkheim 1953[1924]) is left to the age of simpler societies with little role differentiation and, as Lukes (1973: 440) remarks in this regard, '[Durkheim] drew from this idea the invalid inference that there was a causal relation between social order and the conceptual order'. The way forward, it is proposed in this paradigm, is a positivistic *aufklärung* (Kelly 1968: 22) based on the premise that humankind's 'inherent reason was capable of liberating him [sic] from disorder' (loc.cit.). The underlying philosophy of the structured, bureaucratic concept separates the idea of administration and the systems of organisation from those who are administered, the individual is divorced from the processes of control: the 'system' takes over.

This practice of administration, therefore, develops along the paths of a rationalistic view of organisations, an approach which tries to circumvent the unpredictability of human behaviour in increasingly complex and large institutions. However, Weber (1964) recognises the limitations of the bureaucratic concept as it separates the individual from the processes of order and control. Even though Weber's epistemology is positivistic he deals with the social world on the level of the individual and suggests that the way forward is to harmonise both.

Barnard's (1938) treatment of informal organisations, leadership, inculcation of a moral order and other factors, central to the 'natural systems' tradition of Selznick (1948), gives a radically different perspective. He sees the organisation as a whole and complete entity rather than as a mechanistic science of administration. This distinctly Gestalt outlook demands that internal forces and dictates be harmonised with the external market in a unified way. This suggests that although organisations are formally rational in actual practice they are greatly influenced by informal social systems. With this Beteille (1977: 17) agrees, recognising also that 'the very things which give order and coherence to society are also responsible for maintaining inequalities among its members'.

Scott (1990: 90) summarises Barnard's (1938) ideas and the shift in perception from the rational, Weberian approach to organisations with the statement that:

Barnard observed that the main concern of organisations was that of adaptation to changing circumstances, the reason being that problems of organisation in a steady state are comparatively trivial.

The emergence in the 1950s of a human-relations, naturalistic, 'organic' (Bennis 1969: 15) theory of organisational dynamics emphasises the importance of the relationships between groups and individuals and the development of mutual trust and confidence. The principles of shared responsibilities and control, bargaining and a more problem-solving approach to the dynamics of the organisation develop instead of 'line and staff' (Gulick and Urwick 1937), unity of command and authority-obedience structures. It is recognised that organisations are continually changing and that people within them rarely do exactly what they are told. Change is seen as an ever-present reflection of simple responses to demographic, economic, social and political forces. March (1981: 564) echoes these sentiments when he states that 'prosaic processes sometimes have surprising outcomes'.

However, Beteille (1977) recognises that organisations were, and still are, often characterised by the fact that goals are attained by force, power and domination. Effective management strategies are endorsed through traditional, authoritarian, disciplined and classical methods of running organisations. The ideas of Bennis (1968,69,79) on effective management techniques incorporating the wants of the employees are not universally adopted and the 'fight or flight' responses by individuals, noted by Bion (1961: 63), are characteristic of the rigidity of decision-making in some organisations.

The science of administration which focuses on hierarchical structure, internal incentives and controls, ascribed goals and time and motion studies is in conflict with theories which demand that all external and internal forces be considered in a unified way. Thus although the classical theories on organisations are still part of the culture of many institutions, the human-relations approach heralds further research into the impact of the group and the individual in the dynamics of an organisation. Kets de Vries and Miller (1985: 17) summarise this paradigm shift suggesting that there are three new schools of organisational theory:

1. Human-relations theories, treating workers with consideration.
2. Trait or attribute theories, focusing on psychological traits and cognitive styles of decision-making.
3. Cognitive constraint theories, citing the general psychological limitations of managers, goals and decision-making.

These ideas all reflect the importance of linking the behaviour of the individual to the operation of the organisation. As Kets de Vries and Miller (1985), Meek (1984) and Giddens

(1979,1982a) recognise, the problems and orientations of organisations seem so often to be mirrored not only by individual employees but especially by the personalities of the top executives.

Silverman (1970) amplifies this approach by regarding behaviour as a reflection of the characteristics of a social system and the series of impersonal processes which impose external constraints on the individual. Thus, Silverman (1970: 216-8) proposes, extends into a 'structural-functional' analysis of the organisation to explain why the social order persists despite internal and external pressures for change. Likewise, any political model of an organisation must take 'sufficient account of normative behaviour, the occurrence of conflict through normative opposition and the fact that conflict may, under certain circumstances, be dysfunctional and tend to polarise the organisation' (Meek 1984: 263).

Silverman recognises the part played by the individual in the organisational dynamics, however, any approach which tends to regard behaviour as a reflection of the characteristics of the external, impersonal constraints fails to meet Kets de Vries and Miller's (1985) and Mitroff's (1983) assertions that the manifestations of human psychology and the behaviour of organisations are also inexorably interwoven. Kets de Vries and Miller (*ibid.*: iv) comment:

... the predominant fantasies, beliefs and aspirations of the key decision makers seem so pervasively to influence the nature of the organisations.

It is not surprising that Greenfield's address at the international visitation conference in Bristol, England in 1974 had such an impact when it is set against the domination of functionalist and systems theorists at the time. As Cronn (1985: 56) remarks, 'after T.B.Greenfield, whither educational administration? Greenfield's is an intellectual pilgrimage in which he is clear where he has come from, but less clear about his destination and the precise route he would follow'.

So how is the functionalist versus interpretivist dilemma to be resolved with respect to this study of the School? The latter perspective contests that reality is socially invented and the former maintaining that there are indeed structures and functions which operate independently of the participants. The answer is based on two tenets; firstly, that whatever theory is countenanced in this research it must rest with those in the organisation themselves, the people in the School, how they view the different structures and how they act within them. Secondly, the organisational theory must combine Greenfield's views on the role of the individual in the organisation and the realisation that structures and systems do indeed exist but not independently of the human dimension.

School culture is seen by Bates (1985: 283) as 'a gigantic agency of social control ... a political activity' in which, agrees MacDonald (1991: 27), 'we have generally underestimated the power of the existing culture ... to absorb or expel innovations that are at odds with the dominant structures and values that hold habit in place'. Schools operations are seen by Wise (1977: 43-44) as being almost 'hyper-rational', functional systems which exhibit bureaucratic, hierarchical structures reflecting a culture which works to assure that 'tomorrow will be like yesterday'.

Even though schools might reflect a systems-management model of an organisation 'based on the belief that organisational effectiveness and efficiency depend more than anything else on the quality of inter-personal relations in work groups ... it suffers from its systematic avoidance of the problem of power, or the politics of change' (Holt 1987: 65). As McLoughlin and March (1978, quoted in Holt *ibid.*: 4) further remark, concurring with the thoughts of Greenfield, 'we have learnt that the problem of reform or change is more a function of people and organisations than of technology'.

The final section of this chapter will resolve the issues discussed above in order to present a coherent picture of how organisations will be viewed in this study.

A WORKABLE, THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR THIS RESEARCH

The works of Greenfield (1991), Hodgkinson (1981) and, Kets de Vries and Miller (1985) highlight the importance of the perspective and perceptions of the individual in organisational analysis. However, this research looks to the writings of Giddens (1984) and his theory of 'structuration'⁴ to help resolve the dilemmas concerning the problems of structure and culture of this School. Cohen (1989: 41) in his commentary on Giddens' social theory of structuration defines this term as:

... the reproduction of social relations across time and space as transacted in the duality of structure.

Giddens (1979: 2) uses the idea of 'duality of structure' to explain the concept of organisational structure as being 'both medium and outcome of the reproduction of practices', thereby providing a context for social conduct and actions within a structural framework. The power of Giddens' thinking lies in his belief that social praxis, that is the actions of the

⁴ It should perhaps be noted that it is not until the later stages of the research that it was suggested to me that I read the works of Giddens. By this time the majority of the data had been collected and the main ideas and theories had emerged but it was intuitively felt that something was missing from the analysis. On reading Giddens the 'light was switched on'; the theory of Structuration verbalised what I had been grappling. It was quite an enlightening moment.

individuals or groups, creates both the mechanisms for the perpetuation and for the change of an organisation. The paradox is that the structure which binds, maintains and sustains the culture and dynamics of the organisation is also the foundation for its instability. As Cohen (1989: 201) further remarks:

... structural properties in social systems may not reproduce systems, but they shape, channel and facilitate system reproduction whenever it occurs by providing agents with the practical awareness of the practices, relations and spacio-temporal settings they require in order to participate in the reproduction process.

Giddens (1984: 281) summarises his ideas as to the part played by the individuals who constitute society with the notion that:

... the knowledgeability of human actors is always bounded on the one hand by the unconscious and on the other by unacknowledged conditions and unintended consequences of actions.

And importantly, for the nature of the structural properties of an institution, Giddens (ibid.: 26) comments that:

In reproducing structural properties ... agents also reproduce the conditions that make such action possible. Structure has no existence independent of the knowledge that agents have about what they do in their everyday activities.

This is also a key conceptual premise of this study in that structure does indeed exist as a perceptual reality, as staff at this School would readily contest, but that this structure has no substance outside the perceptions and knowledge of staff; that is, they embody it. It is they who maintain, perpetuate and change it. I also agree with Giddens' (1984: 281) suggestion that 'the study of day-to-day life is integral to analysis of the reproduction of institutional practices'. It is also believed here that it is only through continued observation and participation in the organisation itself that the cultural norms and structures of the institution can be fully understood.

As has been emphasised already, this research is guided by the assumption that there is no one ultimate, objective reality: any organisation is a product of many visions and pictures of multiple realities conceived and perceived by those within the community, as well as a collective imagery associated with the organisational culture. There are no 'facts' beyond those which are external and impersonal and bear no relation to human emotion, feelings or ambiguous meaning. This research proposes that the structures and systems which operate are

inextricably linked to individuals or groups and dismisses notions of an anthropomorphic approach to organisational descriptors. When staff are talking of the 'system', as they frequently do, they are referring to individual's actions and practices within the School and ways of doing things which are a product, historically or otherwise, of individuals or groups.

This research is of the view that action (and by action, inaction is also implied) is meaningful and defines social reality. It is by studying actions that the operations of the School and its culture can be discovered. As Silverman (1970: 127) outlines:

... explanations of human actions must take account of the meanings which those concerned assign to their acts; the manner in which the everyday world is socially constructed yet perceived as real and routine becomes a crucial concern of sociological analysis.

The research is not functionalist in approach as it has been argued that any 'structure' or 'system' does not exist independently of the individual or groups and that the organisation can only be researched to a superficial level if the motivations, intentions and meanings of the actors are not reviewed. There is no wish to dismiss the positivistic perspective, but rather to use the issues that it raises into power, conflict and authority to help frame an analysis more relevant to this particular research into the processes of change and more in keeping with the data that emerge.

One over-riding concept which emerges repeatedly through the data is the concept of power and its place within the culture of the School. In order to make sense of the social dynamics of this School, the individual's or group's actions and values, the School's culture and the change process, an understanding of its over-riding dominance must be recognised and assessed. As Griffiths (1985: 6) highlights:

... if one, then, is to study a school, one would have to describe culture; the actions, thoughts, expectations and ideology of the participants ... what was central, the formal organisations, becomes peripheral, what was peripheral, culture, now becomes central.

As Brown (1978: 371) further remarks, 'the study of reality creation is a study of power'. Likewise, Crozier (1964: 145) identifies power as 'the central problem of the theory of organisations'. How power is used and the values that underpin its use form the essential dilemma of Machiavelli's thoughts on how people should act. These factors significantly feature in Greenfield's (see Greenfield and Ribbins 1993: 229-271) last works. This concept of power regards actions as a manifestation of its presence and that talk is a secondary, although

important, part of the process. Power speaks through actions and non-actions more than through words. As Clegg (1975: 21) states, 'something has to be seen to have happened for us to say that something **has** happened' (original emphasis).

It will be seen, from the findings reported in the next four chapters, that the concept of power has a significant role to play in the understanding of the culture of the organisation coupled with an analysis of the role of the leaders of the School, their fantasies, values, intentions and beliefs. As Mitroff (1983: 94) suggests:

when we are dealing with a phenomenon as complex as a human being we are not dealing with an entity that is free from contradiction. Contradiction **is** one of the essential characteristic properties of people, groups, organisations and institutions. (original emphasis)

Giddens' (1984: 292) theory of 'unintended consequences', Machiavelli's *fortuna*, grasps and accepts the fact that the outcome of actions can never be fully appreciated, thereby acknowledging the unpredictability of human action and the probability of conflict. One of the implications of accepting that reality has multiple images is the fact that conflict is an intrinsic part of the organisational culture. People resolve these conflicts of opinions, views on reality and personal values through the medium of power, their authority establishing the normative reality. Giddens, comments Cohen (1989: 267), qualifies his ideas on conflict with the observation that:

... while the existence of contradictions in no way guarantees that conflict must occur, and while conflicts may occur which are not immediately associated with contradictions, structural contradictions and outbreaks of conflict do tend to coincide.

It is to Giddens' thoughts on power that this study will always return because that the thoughts and opinions of the staff, focus again and again on how power is used and how the teachers have been affected by it. Giddens (1984: 282) unequivocally states that:

The study of power cannot be regarded as a second order consideration in the social sciences. There is no more elemental concept than that of power. Power is one of several primary concepts of social science, all clustered around the relations of action and structure.

The 'dialectic of control', the 'structure of domination' (Giddens 1984: 16), the social interaction between those 'with power' and those subordinate to the activities of their superiors, with regard to the case of attempted curriculum change, will now be the focus of

this research. Power, like culture, is intangible and likewise has its material manifestations. The unequal distribution of resources, the control over and access to the decision-making process, and the degrees of autonomy or dependence that constitute the power interactions between the staff at this School will be analysed through the data and through the ideas, perceptions and opinions of the staff.

In order to outline the cultural and structural settings of this School, it is necessary to present vignettes, pictures and portrayals of significant incidents which have affected the staff. The study indicates that cultural norms of the daily life of the School help set the social context in which the actions of the staff take place and thus the importance of their description.

In the following chapter five aspects or 'faces of power' will be presented which explore notions of power, how staff at the School perceive its use and how they regard the organisational realities of the School's operation. What follows is the staff's life, their culture and their dreams. Whose else is it anyway?

CHAPTER FOUR

FIVE FACES OF POWER

INTRODUCTION

There are many crucial periods during the cycle of change before the concept of change becomes an accepted part of the culture of an organisation, none more so than the initial stages of such developments. The starting point, the casting of the ideas and theoretical proposals into the concrete reality of actions to be taken are pivotal. Prior to the implementation of the curriculum changes, the social dynamics of the organisation, the interplay between interested parties and the use of power that impinge on these changes must be examined in order to comprehend why any scheme fails to proceed to the preliminary planning phase. It is at this initial stage of the cycle that so often failure occurs.

It is argued in this study that processes of change are inextricably linked to the culture of the organisation and how staff within the School act in, or react to, their environment is fundamental to an appreciation of why changes are or are not made. This study, therefore, proposes, that there needs to be a greater understanding of social behaviour, psychological factors and group interactions than that implied in much of the change literature. At the heart of this thesis on change is an analysis of the actions and non-actions of people and the organisational structures they create, embody and perpetuate. The primary indicators underpinning this research point to the fact that the processes of power, personal and cultural norms and values and political expediency must take centre stage.

It is again important to note that the above concepts were not the main initial parameters that were to be researched. The initial objective, as has been stated, was to follow the curriculum changes from their inception to completion, be they successful or unsuccessful. However, it became increasingly apparent that a descriptive catalogue of what happened would be of little value unless the documentary incorporated possible explanations as to why staff acted as they did. A discernment of, and an insight into, the contrary events and seemingly illogical

behaviours of staff coupled with an understanding of the importance of routines and traditions were realised early on in the research to be fundamental to an understanding of the process of change itself.

Thus the initial parameters changed rapidly. It was necessary to probe the strange sequences of actions which were seemingly 'out of character' for a group of people who were highly educated and dedicated to their task. There had to be reasons why they behaved and acted as they did. At the heart of this problem lies possible answers to the questions posed in this research with regard to a real understanding of the processes of change.

What follows in this chapter are five contrasting vignettes in the life of the School seen from the teachers' perspective. The objective is to create pictures of the culture of the School from the viewpoint of staff to give insights into how they think, act and respond to those personalities who have power and control. This cultural analysis is a key focus, and finding, of this thesis in that any organisational change must acknowledge the importance of power and politics in the cultural domain.

These five episodes shed light on the workings of the School, the idiosyncrasies which are so important in creating the boundaries and framework of the prevailing culture. They all relate to differing dimensions and facets of power which feature so prominently in the lives, actions, conversations and thoughts of staff. Power is treated here as a sociological and political phenomenon whereby the actions or inactions of people are influenced by internal or external processes. Externally, power is exerted by the collective imagery of the organisation, the political or cultural structures, the rules and cultural parameters which govern staff's positions within that organisation and the coercion, constraints and conflicts that emerge to maintain the status quo. Internally, power is exercised by the teachers' own perceptions of reality, their personal goals, values, philosophy and cultural understanding which affect their actions or precipitate inaction. Power can be strategic, structural or personal, aspects will be discussed later in Chapters 5, 6 and 7, but it is anything other than benign.

It was from the following and other similar incidents that a nucleus of ideas and themes was built and upon which the set of questions that were asked during the final stages of private interviewing of staff were framed. The answers came from staff themselves. The hard part was to ask the 'right' questions. The presentation of the following material is critical in developing insights into what it is like to live and work within this institution. Once this is established, it will then be possible to draw the pieces together to present the processes of change within the context of the cultural setting and the actors' places within it.

STUDY 1: *Power of Action, Inaction and Anticipated Reaction*

Staff meetings are an integral part of the School organisational life and are used to disseminate information by the executive, allow other members of staff to contribute to the meeting's objectives and to assist in decision-making procedures. At this School, as with most schools, these occasions are calendared events and all teaching staff are obliged to attend, any dispensations for non-attendance being sought directly from the Headmaster.

The frequency of these meetings is determined by senior executive staff and the agenda is posted on the staffroom noticeboard for additional items from the staff. The teachers have no control over the numbers of items on the agenda, nor the order in which they are discussed. If they submit a motion or topic, through the Deputy Headmaster, such items are vetted and questioned, by a senior staff member, prior to their general discussion in the staff meeting. The final draft of agenda items being discussed at executive meetings. These meetings are not formally minuted nor is there an official role taken; it is usual for a least one person to read a newspaper or fall asleep during these meetings.

A significant feature of these staff meetings is the lack of verbal interaction and absence of productive discussions between staff. It is not uncommon for there to be no questions asked from the floor or, if there are any, they are inconsequentially routine. The meetings are invariably short and held during the lunchtime when some staff are unable to attend due to other commitments.

In these meetings, almost without exception, the executive staff speak for the majority of the time unless a guest speaker is present. The teachers have very little to say. Little discussion or argument takes place as the cultural demands of the gathering do not permit open and frank exchange on the issues of the day. One member of staff (staff 3: 10/1994) expresses frustration at the lack of active participation by the teachers and comments that she would love to have a staff meeting 'where you can take the gloves off and fight like alley cats'.

Staff often expressed to me the desire to have open forums where educational and procedural topics could be presented for discussion. The teachers are frustrated at their inability to express their ideas without reproach or repercussions. One member of staff (staff 5: 11/1994) illustrates the problem and general feeling of the teachers by saying:

... I wanted [the matter] discussed. That is the sort of person I am, out on the table, in the open and a free discussion. That is my style if you like. Now that style is very forcefully opposed ... I will never be a diplomat because I cannot stand the double speak ... and the second-guessing that goes on. You cannot be

open and honest.

Without open dialogue and argument new ideas are not voiced, or even encouraged. Staff are afraid of 'stepping out of line' and of incurring the displeasure of the Headmaster. As another teacher (staff 6: 11/1994) remarks in this respect:

... the staff I am in contact with feel their ideas are not really worth voicing and after a certain time they do not voice anything at all, which could be interpreted as being passively resistant. But it could be apathy too. People simply do not do anything special, extra. It will not be recognised and it will not be accepted in the way in which it is intended. That to me is very, very sad because there are a lot of people around here who have excellent ideas.

The collective wisdom of staff is that a staff meeting is not the venue for confronting sensitive issues nor for an open airing of views. This situation is understood by staff through not only the structure of the meeting being very tightly controlled and usually not of a nature to encourage staff to participate but also through the observed experiences of others when they question decisions made or executive actions taken. Staff 2 (11/1994) highlights this point dramatically when he says that:

... the staff cannot ask questions without getting their heads bitten off. So the staff will not bother, because you get shat-on [sic] in front of your peers.

This unwillingness to speak out is very frustrating for those staff who wish others would support them when they do in fact make a stand and express their point of view. One more active and vocal member of staff bemoans the fact that staff never voice their concerns and simply just talk behind the scenes. This teacher (staff 8: 10/1994) comments:

... yesterday was a good example. How many people wanted to say, 'why did not this happening, why did not this happen sooner, or why does not this happen about this most recent discipline problem with the boys? And not one person spoke. They do not speak in an open forum, nor do they speak to him [the Headmaster] directly.

The problem is stated quite openly by staff 14 (1/1995) who remarks that staff feel powerless:

... if you start standing up you are blackballed. You are [seen as] not towing the Headmaster's line.

This intimidation of staff is quite prevalent and keenly felt by the teachers. Even in Staff

Association meetings at which the Headmaster is not present there is still a reluctance to discuss matters of note. Staff feel that even in this closed forum their opinions are repeated to the Headmaster and they would subsequently be called by him to account for their statements. These incidents soon enter the cultural folklore and are subject to common gossip. Other staff take heed of the consequences of inappropriate discussions and opinions based on the experiences of their colleagues. Such instances, as the following illustrate, create a situation where staff do not speak their minds. Staff 1 (12/1994) outlines the situation thus:

... [a teacher] moves a motion at a Staff Association meeting. The motion lost, does not even get a seconder and yet the boss calls him up to his office later on and castigates him for even moving it. [With] that sort of thing, bang, the whole thing locks up.

The prevailing attitude of the teaching staff is reflected in the statement by staff 2 (11/1994) when he notes:

... a lot of staff will not open their mouths at the Staff Association [meetings] because they are frightened of their comments being taken back by certain people, who are there for the Headmaster, and then getting victimised for it.

The lack of encouragement by members of the executive to promote the discussion of ideas debilitates the teachers to such an extent that circumstances develop to a point where nobody opens their mouths in an open forum. As staff 1 (12/1994) again explains, teachers are afraid to discuss freely their thoughts and opinions:

... no one opens their mouths, it is bizarre. I have never seen a school where people are so afraid to air their views. Adults, trained communicators, and yet you would think they are dummies.

That such forceful curtailing of the expression of the individual's ideas and feelings exists is beyond doubt. However, the puzzling question remains as to why staff feel so impotent.

The teachers' responses to questions on this matter reflect their views on their perceptions of the situation based on personal observation or experience gleaned through the common room gossip and daily conversations with other staff. One staff member (staff 3: 10/1994) attributes this passivity to the 'system':

A lot of the appointments seem to be 'ad hoc' decisions. They [the executive] do not seem to learn by their mistakes. You wonder at the competency of the system of employment when getting in depends on that personal rapport [with

the Headmaster]. You cannot then step back and expect them [the staff] to be objective professionals who can be philosophically diametrically opposed and argue their heads off.

Another member of staff agrees with this perception as to the compliance of staff. He views it as an outcome of a deliberate policy of recruiting staff who are not likely to be vocal. This teacher (staff 4: 9/1994) comments:

... of course the staff have been picked for reasons which are [that] they will not rock the boat. So they will be forever humble; they will be thankful; not the sort of person who gets in and stirs because if they are the sort of person who gets in and stirs they do not get a job here. And if they are the sort of person who stirs they realise that stirring cannot do anything and so they get out or subliminate.

Others put the silence in the staff meetings and the general unresponsive nature of the staff to fear. On this point staff 5 (11/1994) suggests:

... a lot of members of staff are fearful of the way others have been treated, myself included. They are not prepared to put them[selves] through that sort of emotional wringer and to do whatever. They pull their heads in, do what they have got to do and that is it.

A significant proportion of staff explain the problem in terms of the inability of the Headmaster to communicate effectively in meetings and 'think on his feet' when responding to thorny questions. They see the problem not in terms of direct, authoritarian power but from a behavioural perspective. It is believed that the Headmaster structures the meetings so that he will not be faced with the possibility of being unable to respond adequately and effectively to provocative questioning. The Headmaster, they think, would prefer to have no discussion at all rather than be subjected to the situation where he is either compromised, caught off guard or put in the position of being unable to give the matter a thoughtful and insightful response.

One teacher states that the Headmaster's shy and unsettled manner when confronting groups prohibits interaction and conversation. Explaining the Headmaster's communication skills, staff 6 (11/1994) reflects:

... [he is] a very private person. I think he is misinterpreted, his manner is misinterpreted. There is an aloofness there that a lot of people perceive and I guess I do too, but I see [it] as shyness. I would like to give him the benefit of the doubt.

This opinion is in accord with another teacher (staff 7: 12/1994) who remarks that:

... it is just the way he works. It is not deliberate, he just does not like to talk to people. He likes to think slowly, he is meticulous. Even when you are one on one you will sometimes see his eyes defocus and all of a sudden he is off somewhere. You think he has gone to sleep but in fact he is thinking things through. You cannot do that with three or four people.

Others are not quite so forgiving of the Headmaster's inability to control effectively a lively meeting, to fend off questions with passionate argument or to enter the verbal cut and thrust of disaffected or concerned staff members. Even a greeting could pose problems, according to staff 1 (12/1994):

Saying good morning to him [the Headmaster] would be seen as a challenge!

The Headmaster (2/1995) cites the following reasons for not condoning or promoting open forums:

We had a lot of meetings earlier which were unstructured and came to be industrial, rather than educational. I love educational discussions, they are fantastic, but if its going to be about other issues and complaints and moans ... you do not achieve very much by that. We did have a bit of that for a while. There was some difficulty. If they [the teachers] are honest, and you look at it carefully, the resentment does not come from the fact that they are not allowed to express their ideas, it is when their ideas are not accepted. I think that is where you find the difficulties.

The Headmaster makes no reference to his communication skills but has made it plain, on many other occasions, that he has no wish to encourage meetings which allow an unfettered voicing of opinion. He sees this as damaging to staff morale and unproductive, concluding that it is far better to operate a tight agenda over which he has control than to allow anarchy to roam.

Whatever may be the perceived multiple realities as to why the meetings are run as they are, **all** teaching staff agree that open expression of ideas is not encouraged. This is important to acknowledge. Even though the reasons for the teachers' reticence to express ideas in staff meetings are varied, the consequences of these actions are not. People do not articulate their thoughts during these gatherings and the collective culture of the School states that to speak out in a staff meeting is to invite trouble and thus unwise. The cultural agenda is that if you express your ideas, beware of the consequences.

The staff comply with the Headmaster's authority and control over the meetings, influencing what is and is not said. The staff perceive that outspoken ideas might prejudice adversely their cause and position and are thus reluctant to provoke open argument on sensitive issues. Such a situation reflects the structural power, discussed in Chapter 5, that is inherent in a hierarchical institution and the financial and professional uncertainty of being 'out on a limb' when not conforming to 'accepted behaviour'.

Power and its ancillary effects are both covert and overt in their manifestation - overt, in the sense that staff are openly discouraged from highlighting problem areas and covert, by the fact that teachers anticipate rebuke and thus keep silent for fear of the consequences of articulating their views.

The Headmaster has implicitly decided that no discussion is preferable to the chance of 'unproductive' dialogue. Political expediency dictates to the Headmaster that owing to his leadership style greater control can be extended over the decision-making process and educational issues if he permits only formal and controlled mechanisms of communication - for example the committee system. The unintended consequences of such a policy - the frustrations of staff and the dearth of new ideas - are less important than the goal of harmonious and non-confrontational staff meetings. The Headmaster's ends justify his means and control is maintained. This leadership style has implications for the processes of change and a significant impact on staff's perceptions of their ability to instigate and formulate such change.

STUDY 2: The Butterfly Effect: The Regulatory Culture Versus Personal Power

One of the teachers (staff 23) has always, since his arrival at the School, dressed differently from the conventional dress code which stipulates the usual shirt and tie regime. He wears clothes which reflect his own personality and set of rules, usually flamboyant, highly visual and coloured, an individual approach to the dress standards with a disregard for the accepted standards. This causes comment amongst a large proportion of staff which is evident from the continual facetious comments and stinging. Comments are of the vein that there is a dress code which all staff should follow with no exceptions (even though there are many occasions when various members of staff ridicule parts of the accepted standards). Staff 23 should be spoken to by the 'hierarchy' and pulled into line.

Staff 23 is totally unconcerned by the reception of other staff to his clothes and the often hostile and adverse feelings that wearing them generates. In fact he treats the whole saga as

being insignificant and of little consequence. He wears bow-ties that are usually self-made from pieces of wood or card and highly coloured and exotic. They are cheap, colourful and highly individualistic. Nothing is said to him by the executive concerning his eccentric dress, with respect to the norms of the school, and he continues to arrive blithely each day to the morning meetings with a fresh new 'butterfly' around his neck.

However, after a particularly colourful week of bow-ties another teacher (staff 1) also wears one, crudely fashioned, but effective. For a few days he ostentatiously wears the bow-tie hoping that the 'hierarchy' will make a comment and thereby precipitate a decision concerning the other's dress code. Staff 1 feels he is on 'safe ground' (in other words safe from the Headmaster's comments) as he can counter any arguments by citing the precedent set by the other member of staff. No such reaction is forthcoming, however, but the point he thinks has been made. Certainly his exhibitionism has been noted in the morning meetings by the executive.

Nothing happens for a week until one day almost every male member of staff with the exception of the executive arrive at the morning meeting wearing a bow-tie, most of which were made by staff 23 the night before. Somehow word had spread during the previous afternoon, or that morning, that people should wear a bow-tie. Staff 23, not to be upstaged, wears a bow-tie with flashing lights, but the staff member who originally copied the wearing of the bow-ties decides not to wear one saying afterwards that, 'I do not want to be one of the sheep' (staff 1: 3/1994).

The morning meeting sees an amazing collection of brightly coloured bow-ties and everyone is smiling and behaving as if something extraordinary has happened. The Headmaster walks in and immediately notices the bow-ties and the mood of the staff. He stands in his usual spot and begins to stroke his chin and right cheek, his usual behavioural response when something is not going quite right. The atmosphere of the room is one of liberation, a feeling that staff have won a minor victory.

No comment is made by the executive, however, and on the following day most staff revert to their normal dress. Since that day a few people now and again wear bow-ties but there has been no repeat of that particular event. When staff 23 (3/1994) is questioned about the way he dresses he responds:

... if I had been told to wear a conventional tie I would have done so. I want to be an individual and it says nothing in the dress code that I cannot wear a bow-tie. If the Headmaster thinks it is inappropriate then he should tell me, but to date he has said nothing. All I am doing is defining the boundaries. It is not

with an ulterior, subversive motive. Teachers are a dull lot and they take themselves too seriously - they need brightening up. If I had been told to wear a tie or told too often that my work or standards were not good enough, I would leave. My independence and individuality are too important for me.

Staff 23's attitude to his attire reflects the limited and transitory nature of the Headmaster's power. The main disciplinary threat of dismissal, (which will be seen later is the foremost sanction), holds no particular fear for this member of staff. The Headmaster is thus in the position of having to weigh this teacher's worth to the School against the cost of extending the unwritten, cultural rules. The fact that this member of staff remains reflects the desire to keep him at the cost of upsetting other members of staff who feel the caution of redundancy or alienation more acutely.

The Headmaster's passivity is perceived by some staff to reflect the difficulties he has in dealing with staff in a manner which is non-confrontational or likely not to cause further conflict. Of course it may simply be that the Headmaster is quite liberal in his dealings with staff 23, but as nothing has been said openly his actions are subject to differing interpretations.

Staff 1 who mimics staff 23's dress makes a small demonstration of his desire to see the rules of the School, as he perceives them, adhered to without favour. He is unsuccessful in his attempts to have the teacher brought into line and he sees that as a failing of the executive staff in not upholding the stated rules of the dress code. The traditional culture of the school is sought by staff 1 to be reaffirmed, regulated and perpetuated. It is not a question of changing policies but an attempt to uphold well-established and entrenched values. Such is the regulatory culture of this School, perpetuated by staff, that there is an expectation by the teachers to 'stick to the rules'. However, they envy those with power to control, to a certain extent, part of the normative agenda, as is the case here.

However, the purpose of the demonstration described above is not to flout the system, but the reverse - to ensure an ordered and 'fair' School where the regulations are strictly adhered to. Staff 1 (12/1994) comments afterwards:

... the problem is not the rules, even though you could better them. It is the structure that enforces and implements it all. We suffer ourselves in that respect.

Because their individuality is suppressed and their opinions rarely sought the teachers have a need to 'score points' off the executive, to win a few pyrrhic victories and to demonstrate their independence. The episode is a rare glimpse of solidarity and group action from the teachers.

In the absence of any formalised or institutionalised process staff have a need to express their feelings through unconventional channels and towards actions which are not in themselves a threat to the institution or might be seen as overtly confrontational by the Headmaster.

The Headmaster's decision not to exercise his authority reflects again the importance of expediency in the decision-making process. However, as Machiavelli (1958[1513]) remarks, it is unlikely that the strategies which underpin expedient decisions can contemplate all the probable outcomes. By not reacting to the dress sense of staff 23 the Headmaster is not upholding staff's expected standards and thereby partially loses their respect for his leadership skills and the customary regulations. The Headmaster is seen not to treat all staff equally which causes resentment and conflict. Staff do not question so much the legalistic and autocratic style of leadership of the Headmaster and the rules themselves rather the manner and fairness of its execution. In other words the dress code in itself is immaterial here, it is simply used as a vehicle to purvey the feelings and values of staff. What is more important is the maintenance of the regulatory culture coupled with ability of the Headmaster to maintain the structure, rituals, customs and standards of the School.

The episode reveals another glimpse of the Headmaster as a person who does not cope comfortably with changes to the daily life of the School. In the meeting he is unable to react in a manner likely to defuse or make light of the situation. As in other meetings he does not feel comfortable in an uncontrolled environment which allows open expression of views and ideas. The unintended consequences of this are that staff seek other means of expression, however unconventional.

As a final comment to this episode, a similar event happened about one year later, again with staff 1 pushing the regulatory culture. This time the focus was earrings, although on this occasion not all staff joined the bandwagon. The demand for the regulatory culture is ever present and until staff's needs are satisfied such events will reappear at odd intervals whenever someone else flouts the accepted code.

STUDY 3: *The Power of Routine*

One of the more intriguing and perennial issues at the School, which are raised on a regular basis, are the topics of the suitability of the students' haircuts, the standard of their dress and the chaotic state of the staff tearoom and kitchen. Either at the daily morning briefings or at the weekly Housemasters' meeting; these issues are mentioned by staff 32. Particular boys' hair would be too long, dyed, too short or too something, or the boys' shirts are not ironed,

scrappy or torn, incorrect articles of clothing worn or shoes not sufficiently polished. It is implied also from the comments made, that staff are too disorganised or lazy to wash their cups after they have their morning tea and that the kitchen is always a disgrace.

On a purely logical, rational basis, one would presume that after scores of years of the School's operation there would exist policies or courses of action which could meet any eventuality in this respect. Routines could have been introduced to minimise the time spent voicing these concerns and their effectiveness monitored. There is always a group sigh when these topics are raised. The consequences and reactions of the teachers are typified by staff 7's (12/1994) views on the matter:

... people can argue whether cups are washed up in the sink [in the staff commonroom]. I am not really interested. This is what I think should be achieved so let us go ahead and do it.

These issues are never solved and staff's attitude to the mess in the kitchen is basically, 'not my problem', reflecting a form of passive resistance.

Why these hoary chestnuts are continually a source of contention and need continual reinforcement have like other scenarios multiple interpretations, **all** of which are valid and depend on the particular teacher's or group's perspectives and perceptions. Firstly, it could be perceived that these issues have symbolic significance to reinforce on a regular basis the traditions and standards of the School. The continual reminders to staff to maintain standards are exercises in power and control which need regular reinforcement to remind covertly the staff of their position in the hierarchical status quo. It is usually a member of the executive who raises concerns on these issues and their discussion re-emphasises their position and seniority with respect to both the students and staff. In reply staff continually ignore these requests to keep a closer check on students' performance, and thereby display passive resistance to the manner and delivery of this power. The leaders are telling others lower down the hierarchy about problems which they must fix. Passive resistance is a quiet, comforting and non-confrontational response which gives staff a sense of control, independence and individuality, however minor and inconsequential.

Secondly, these actions could be indicative of the more important goals of the School as the time given to these matters is disproportionately high. It could be perceived that in fact these issues are not mundane but important objectives of the School and are more significant than the lesser mentioned topics of curriculum development, staff professionalism and other educative goals. Thirdly, these actions could simply reflect poor management skills with the non-resolution of the issues a reflection of an inability of the executive to find adequate

solutions to recurring issues.

As well as any of the above, there could be other less conspicuous motives which reveal other dimensions and forces at play. Like nature abhorring a vacuum, senior administrators will have a folio of actions with which to keep themselves busy and the 'pot boiling'. The continual discussion and raising of student standards might give middle management something to do and on topics which are usually not contentious. Very few members of staff at the School would openly voice their disagreement with the motives of keeping students' personal appearances high. If everything is running smoothly would those in authority have to tackle more difficult and thorny educational issues like teacher competence, the failure of many students to achieve satisfactory literacy competencies and other contentious topics? If the administrators are successful in solving issues of the 'uniform' type their work load could be drastically reduced. The failure to solve these problems could suggest that finding solutions to recurrent problems are not primary objectives as their resolution might precipitate discussion on other educationally more fundamental topics. In other words the underlying reasons for continual attention being given to seemingly a-political and educationally trivial issues would be due to the fact that the failure to address these issues is important. Is what is being witnessed an organisational phenomenon which says, why fix a problem when its non-resolution can be used for a multitude of other purposes?

Any theory which may be proposed concerning the operation of the School must take into account this multi-level interpretation of routine acts. The reasons certain issues are continually raised have no, one, simplistic answer. Such seemingly irrational behaviour (why the problems are not fixed) may not be so illogical when the reasons are more fully understood.

The above, and other similar issues, must be viewed in their cultural context if meaning can be attached to the actions or non-actions taken by staff involved. The operation of this institution and the processes of power, political manoeuvring and the maintenance of the traditional culture require continual reaffirmation of positions held and values espoused. Their maintenance demands continual reinforcement through a variety of issues and have significant impact on the change process.

STUDY 4: *The Power of Cultural Legacies*

The School has a low staff turnover and many of the teachers have been employed there for lengthy periods of time, 55% of staff have been employed for more than ten years, while five

years is considered a short stay. This is quite a significant feature of the School which results in the cultural memory of staff being extended beyond that of many other schools. Normally, over a period of a decade a significant proportion of staff would have left and although memories of significant cultural milestones would enter the folklore very few members of staff would have been there at the time and be able to give first hand information and thereby perpetuate these cultural legacies.

Owing to the longevity of employment at this School, important past incidents are still part of the cultural landscape and discussed by those who were present at the time. This information naturally circulates amongst staff and although the facts of any particular issue may have faded with time the main outcomes are still sharp, and to a lesser or greater extent, affect the actions of the teachers.

The most notable cultural legacy which is very much part of both the individual and collective reality of this School, features the premature departure of the previous Headmaster. Even though the event took place some ten years ago the episode still affects the actions of all staff, even those who were employed afterwards. As staff 8 (10/1994) remarks in this respect:

I think the legacy of the previous Headmaster's dismissal is still hanging around and I think the legacy of that [episode] may have [affected the] way in which this Headmaster deals with some problems. It seems to have some sort of aura around the place because of the longevity of the staff.

Another teacher (staff 6: 11/1994) agrees that this episode 'is still very much at the forefront'. The issue is perpetuated and communicated to new staff it remains a feature of commonroom gossip. As a recently employed member of staff (staff 9: 9/1994) explains:

I came at the backwash of that [the previous dismissal of the Headmaster]. The school was still buzzing about it and that was two to three years down the track.

The details of this event are culturally significant because the move to undermine the position of the former Headmaster was largely directed by the teaching staff. Staff 10 (11/1994) who was a teacher at that time, comments:

I think those people who were interested in removing him got together. It was a band of mates who got together and created enough disturbance. Common interests, those who had strong differences ... I think they got together on that one with other members of staff and old boys and created this huge division and it got to the crisis point. The Headmaster did not see it coming which

meant that ... that was part of the problem as well, he had this pretty arrogant sort of attitude which often can be quite advantageous ... it just meant he was blind to what was going on. All of a sudden it exploded into this huge division and there was an immediate crisis, a crisis in a way of his own making.

There are still contentions as to the rights or wrongs of that 'bloodbath' (staff 3: 10/1994). It is uncertain whether it occurred because some staff felt threatened by the changes that were in the process of being implemented, because the former Headmaster was seen as simply very undiplomatic and alienating in his dealings with all members of the community, or because the Old-Boys did not like their traditional image of the School undermined.

However, the cultural significance of this episode is reflected by the continued discussion amongst staff of these historical events. The myths and troubles of that time are still perpetuated through gossip and common room conversations. The event has entered the collective imagery of this institution and is used as a focal point amongst the teachers to demonstrate 'teacher power'. The strong issues and values that were disturbed by the past incumbent had resulted in unified action by the teachers which successfully re-established the status quo.

There is disagreement though as to this episode's effect on the present administration. Some staff feel that this event plays an important part in administrative thinking and planning. As staff 1 (12/1994) observes:

... coming into a school which has just sacked its Headmaster, and the staff have obviously been very involved in that, he [the present Headmaster] saw straight away [that] what he had to do was disarm the staff. Of course, taking that tack he created the 'them and us'. The staff [were] so easy to knock over because they were not being aggressive. That is the way he saw it.

This sentiment of subsequent teacher passivity is also suggested by another staff member (staff 6: 11/1994) that:

... there were no victors there, not really, not after all the fights. Everyone lost somehow, something, and they were very careful after that time. I noticed it, they were very careful not to rock the boat. I do not think it disappeared entirely because the present incumbent is the person who replaced [the last Headmaster]. People are willing to accept a great deal more than they would have otherwise have accepted.

There is certainly a feeling that the present inaction and lack of vocal participation are a reflection of this turbulent episode. Staff 6 (11/1994) agrees that this period still affects

teachers' behaviour and responses to the administrative practices of the present Headmaster:

I think it has had a very sobering effect on all people involved in it. [There was] real factionalisation during that time and as a new member of staff I noticed it acutely, as a new man. Except that he [the last Headmaster] was very kind to me as a new teacher.

Another key member of staff (staff 13: 12/1994) puts the matter more forcefully:

I feel sorry for the Headmaster because he is terrified of creating the situation again, but he is doing it without realising it. He is isolating himself.

There is certainly general agreement in that, 'the era does have an impact ... there must be a lot of guilt' (staff 14: 1/1995) and that the present Headmaster 'still has that monkey on his back' (staff 7: 12/1994). However, a few senior staff disagree with these statements, including the Headmaster (2/1995) who remarks that:

... obviously I am conscious of the fact that there was a very divided community, everyone was fighting everyone else. I said that at the very beginning when I came, my task is to try and heal wounds. So that is the first step and that means being patient and not necessarily wanting to push my own ideas. I have to ... listen. [The last Headmaster] had said that conflict was good, he relished it, he thought good came out of that kind of conflict and it was good to have that battle

Other senior staff members are in agreement with the Headmaster's motives on his arrival at the School. One (staff 15: 10/1994) illustrates this point by saying:

I think the Headmaster came here believing that the community had been divided and I think he felt that it was part of his portfolio to try and reunite, unite the community. He said that when he arrived.

Another staff member (staff 16: 3/1995) concurs:

... he would have looked at it, I am quite sure, [as] a healing of wounds. He would not have been afraid of the power of the staff nor would he have changed the way that he did things because he thought that the staff were too big a power block.

It is important to note again the divergence of opinion as to the effects this event has had subsequently on staff. However, even though the responses vary, the significant issue here is

that it does have an affect. Staff respond differently as one might expect, but actions of the majority of the teachers are modified by these incidents. These and other past events must be understood if the present culture and actions of the teachers are to be placed in context.

The conflict of this period in the School's history is seen to be due to the former Headmaster's inability to communicate effectively his ideas in a manner which minimised conflict. His technique of encouraging staff to think about their responsibilities through argumentative dialogue upset the status-quo and the various interest groups of the School. One teacher states (staff 12: 9/1994) that communication became so poor that at one stage:

... because of his manner ... [the Headmaster] would get up and say something and everybody would say 'what shit'. And I would be thinking, why? What is he saying? And they would interpret what he said in a particular way ... people at this stage were not prepared to give him the benefit of the doubt ... and that was it.

Possibly owing to a lack of political sensitivity, the former Headmaster failed to either pacify or weaken the influence of the powerful interest groups within the School. He did not anticipate the reaction or conflict that his strategies to implement changes to the cultural norms and institutional values might precipitate. Once staff thought that the institutional traditions and features of the School were being compromised, or under threat, they fought united and with venom to restore what they felt were fundamental ideals of the School. The social dynamics of regulatory culture were seen in action again. The power had radically shifted from the 'natural' hierarchy of a ruling elite to a ground swell of active militants who felt the institution and its educational goals were threatened. As staff 22 (10/1994) who was embroiled in the saga explains:

I think the staff are [present y] basically a gutless bunch of wonders and I am one of them. But that has not always been the case with the staff. In fact, as I have said before they were quite fearless in the face of [the last Headmaster].

Then, as now, the proficiency of the present Headmaster's communication skills have a direct and pivotal impact on the harmony of staff. An analysis of the Headmaster's personal motives are again to a certain extent irrelevant here, it is how these actions are perceived by staff that is important.

In this respect some of the teachers see the present Headmaster's actions as an attempt to destroy the solidarity of staff and remove their power base through the principle of 'divide and rule'. Acting as a group, staff in the era of the last Headmaster had demonstrated great power.

Present divisions amongst staff reduce their ability to control collectively their goals and this is perceived by some as a deliberate tactic by the present Headmaster to maintain control and authority.

Others see the Headmaster's position as a reflection of a concerned leader who needs to 'heal the wounds' (staff 16: 3/1994). However, the tight control of the agenda and non-participatory style of staff meetings are interpreted by the majority as an attempt to muzzle staff and not as a positive management strategy to eradicate restlessness and complaints in order to produce stability.

The present Headmaster is aware of the discord that the departure of the last Headmaster caused and tailors his actions accordingly. Even though he personally denies that the circumstances surrounding the departure of the last Headmaster affect his present leadership style, some of his close associates deny that this is the case. These members of staff attribute the perceived Headmaster's 'divide and rule' tactics of control as being directly or partly attributable to the Headmaster's recognition of the fact that it was largely the teachers who precipitated the former Headmaster's early departure.

This might be considered a sensible, Machiavellian-like, tactic of the present Headmaster to ensure that staff are never again permitted to wield such power and for the stability and success of this School it is necessary to exercise tighter control. However, the unintended consequences of these actions are that staff are not content and are frustrated by their inability to vocalise opinions and goals. In Machiavellian terms, the leader of a School who needs to keep tight control on the affairs of state fears insurrection and his power is weak. The leader who has the ability to live with diversity and manage effectively conflict of opinion, ideas and change is more secure and hence more powerful.

A significant reason why the organisational culture still nurtures this episode is due not only to the importance of the event but the longevity of employment of staff, the majority being present during the events leading up to the departure of the last Headmaster. Whilst almost all the present staff's memories of those politically and culturally important events are very similar there is a great deal of discrepancy as to the cultural significance of these events. For some the consequences are minimal, but the majority believe that those past events have an important impact on present administrative styles and rationales. These latter members of staff are of the opinion that the Headmaster's present actions ensure that what happened to the last Headmaster does not happen to him.

It must be stressed that there is no 'correct' or definitive answer to the cultural significance of

this episode, but instead the interpretation reflects multiple realities. What is important for this research is that an explanation of teachers' actions can only be interpreted and understood in the light of these multiple views of organisational reality. There may be no one collective culture but many fractal images of what constitute the normative base. There are no necessarily rights and wrongs here.

STUDY 5: *Overt Power in Action*

Power in action, overt and visible power, is a frequent occurrence in everyday School life. Small signals are often given, a sentence here, a word there which indicates the use of power. These aspects of power will be highlighted later, but the open display of the executive power, the exhibition of its dramatic effect are constant reminders to teachers of the status quo and the perpetuation of established power structures. The episode described below gives an example of one such event and the consequences for those who observe or are affected by its display.

The event takes place at a Subject Coordinators' meeting (such meetings are held on a weekly basis). One member of this committee suggested that the enthusiasm of his staff was at a low ebb and that the problem would, and should, be addressed as it was a matter of concern. An agenda item was submitted to the other members of the committee for discussion at the next meeting.

The incident is explained by staff 5 (11/1994) who tabled the motion:

Morale at [the School] of the staff was critically low ... As a Coordinator, a few years back, I had some concerns. I was fairly cheesed off with the whole situation and wanted the matters to be addressed. Part of my downfall would have been the way I expressed myself in that agenda paper which was all it was ... The Headmaster saw that [the agenda proposal] at 8.30am, called an emergency executive meeting and got answers from his executive. No, none of these issues was a problem.

He stormed, literally stormed, you could hear him coming down the hallway [to the meeting]. He was obviously very angry about the whole situation. He had all morning to ask me what it was all about but did not. [He] stormed into the room [where the Coordinator's meeting was being held]. I objected to his hijacking the meeting and he ignored me totally for about half an hour and then he put his position. [He] told me how unprofessional I was, how disappointed he was in me, but I could not respond. I interjected but they were only half sentences, phrase type interjections and he then grilled each member around the

table in turn.

He then proceeded to ask the question of each person [if] the staff under their supervision [had] critically low [morale] and it had to be critically low. And so lots of people read the signs of the meeting and clamped up. There was only one or two people who supported me 100% [staff 17] and ... [staff 9]. But the others just ducked for cover. So that was how he ran the meeting, he just shut the matter down. He just shut [the meeting] down right at the beginning of my discussion.

The incident had an obviously sobering effect on those present. Such naked aggression and the demonstration of power had the desired result of not allowing the supposedly contentious matter to be even discussed, thereby removing the issue from the public debate.

The eventual response of this particular member of staff was to resign from his position of responsibility and abdicate from input into matters outside his immediate frame of personal responsibility. His comments (11/1994) as to the consequences of this incident are indicative of the lasting effects of such dramatic events:

I think that a lot of members of staff are fearful [of] the way others have been treated, myself included ... People do not want to go through what others have gone through, it would mean being subjected to the extreme pressure, orally ... intimidation.

This particular member of staff is at a loss for an explanation as to why this action by the Headmaster was taken and why so extreme a response was forthcoming. He (staff 5: 11/1994) concludes:

I do not know what his agenda is. I think power and that he has got to be seen to be in control, needs to be in control. He is an autocrat through and through, even though there is a pretence of participatory management when it is convenient. But as far as a wide ranging management practice, it is just not on.

This and other events quickly circulate through the staff commonroom and people learn what actions are deemed appropriate and that if one wishes to highlight certain issues it is necessary to think through the consequences of such actions and consider the likely outcomes. The collective imagery of the culture of the School becomes, for a significant proportion of staff, one of fear and a feeling of vindictive management. Irrespective of any justification for the reasons for the actions taken by the Headmaster, the collective perception, the evolving culture understood by staff, is to keep silent and exhibit minimal involvement in controversial issues.

This open display of power, coupled with other similar events, will be interpreted differently by other members of staff but a dominant composite picture of organisational reality prevails and becomes the collective imagery or culture. Another teacher (staff 20: 10/1994) highlights the acceptance by the staff of this culture of silence:

I do not think I have had time or the energy to feel strongly enough about something to stand up. But I can think of the half a dozen people who have tried and have really suffered quite a lot psychologically as a consequence of that. [They] have not gained anything.

A teacher who sees another side of the Headmaster's character interprets the incident at the Coordinators' meeting differently when he (staff 16: 3/1995) suggests that:

... [staff 5] was an accident waiting to happen ... mid-life crisis whatever, and I do not think it would matter where he was, he would have done a similar sort of thing [eventually resigned his position].

Staff 13 has a low opinion of teachers' ability to grapple with issues in the real world alludes to the insular and intellectually narrow nature of staff when she (12/1994) remarks:

... teachers are basically unhappy people. They have never done anything other than teaching. They have no idea what it is like to take instructions from an employer and carrying them out ... a spoilt mob of people [who] look at everything from their very narrow point of view.

It is also further suggested by the same staff member that:

... anything they [the staff] hear they will twist. They are not listening to him. They have to be a little more tolerant than they have been because they are really self-centred and they are concerned only with themselves. There are very few people on staff who have bothered to try to get to know him ... it is a huge shame.

This alternative view of the Headmaster as a person who is basically compassionate and has the welfare of staff at heart is also echoed by a more senior member (staff 8: 10/1994) who, on reflecting the character of the Headmaster, reiterates this differing viewpoint:

What makes him tick is like most people his past experiences and his underlying value system, his interpretation of Christian living in the real world. That is the way he tends to justify his decision-making or lack of decision-

making and justify his final decision ... I think he deals with the staff very much in that way too, although I do not know if the staff recognise that.

Most staff would concede staff 8's point but with the proviso that even though the intentions of the Headmaster may be given a more compassionate overview personal experiences and the backdrop of the commonroom gossip create what they perceive as the real and describable reality of the situation. Staff 21 (10/1994) can see the alternative personality of the Headmaster but gives it little practical consideration:

I think that if he has compassion and if it is [given] to students it certainly is not to members of staff ... some times he is compassionate, I suppose. I feel he does not communicate very well and perhaps he is more compassionate than what he [exhibits] ... He cannot communicate with people ... he does not seem to be able to put people at ease. He probably tries, he knows he is got this problem but he just cannot seem to [deal with it].

However staff 14 (1/1995) is not so forgiving. Concerning management practices of the Headmaster he remarks:

... it is not leadership. How does he operate?. He operates by fear. He obviously is very, very vindictive; from personal experience. Basically anyone who has had to oppose him It is not 'live and let live', it is total vindictiveness from then on. As a [boarding house staff member] I was expected to be [at the School] seven days a week and very early on I said that I was not prepared to do that as I have a young family. And that was basically it. It is more or less a process of being blacklisted. There is a dozen or so of the staff who seem to be blacklisted. When [staff 18] was absent I was made acting Coordinator. After I had a run in with him [the Headmaster], when [staff 18] was away again I did not get a look in and [staff 19] was appointed Coordinator.

In the eyes of this person there is a link between his 'blacklisting', owing to his opposition to boarding house duties, and the Headmaster's decision not to appoint him acting Coordinator. The two events are connected by the member of staff, even though no such connection may have existed if the events were seen from the Headmaster's perspective. The key point here is that irrespective of the Headmaster's real reasons for not appointing this teacher to the position of responsibility the member of staff draws conclusions between the two events in the absence of any other information, notably from the Headmaster, as to why he was not given the position when on the previous occasion he had been.

Such events help to create or reinforce the cultural divide within the institution. They develop and enter the collective operational reality through these episodes, in the absence of other

information to contradict them. It is such communication breakdown that serves as a precursor to conflict.

In the first example of the use of personal power at the Coordinator's meeting the Headmaster dominates the agenda to prevent certain sensitive topics from being raised. The following four motives could be attributed to this cause of action. Firstly, that the Headmaster is very concerned that the topic of staff morale should not be discussed as this could be a reflection of possible flaws in his managerial skills and his inability to foster a happy and productive working environment. Secondly, that the Headmaster wishes to 'head-off' a disillusioned staff member from creating an atmosphere of low morale simply through the airing of such a topic. He sees the discussion as being self-fulfilling in this respect. The Headmaster could have been acting under the assumption that even if the staff do have low morale there would be nothing to be gained by its discussion and that given time the issue would dissipate. The Headmaster uses his institutional power to curtail instantly all discussion on the matter.

Thirdly, that the Headmaster does not want issues to be discussed over which he has no personal control or influence. Lastly, a disillusioned staff with low morale could precipitate a similar scenario to that which occurred with the previous Headmaster. The Headmaster takes every necessary action to make sure that these events are not repeated. The consequences of his actions would be considered secondary to the strategic necessity of stifling all negativity before it has a chance to spread. In this respect the action has been successful as the fear of a repeat of such actions by the Headmaster curtails any recurrence of the issue of staff morale, at least in the short term.

Whatever the motives, whatever are the rights and wrongs of the issue, this demonstration of power has a significant, intended or unintended, negative effect and antithetic reverberation through the organisational culture. Staff see such tactics as intimidatory and retreat from future confrontation not knowing how any ensuing delicate topics would be received. Staff have not developed the political skills to deal with such overt displays of power and simply retreat from the situation. There is no discussion from staff 5 as to how he would handle the matter next time nor consideration of better strategies to be employed: there simply is no next time. Formal teacher discussion on these and other issues are consequently reduced and matters under appraisal in such meetings become focused on more routine matters. This creates a situation which gives the appearance to some staff of 'fiddling whilst Rome burns' (staff 4: 9/1994).

Displays of overt power quickly enter the collective cultural reality of the organisation and affect the behaviour of those individuals who feel such intimidation could happen to them if

they are not circumspect or are unable to deal with such confrontations. The aftermath of this demonstration of power is that the teachers' attitudes become involute; the person 'does not want hassles, he does his job' (staff 22: 10/1994). The philosophy becomes one of symbolic separation, an attitude typified by the statement, 'leave me alone and let me do my job' (staff 22: 10/1994).

The Headmaster's actions may be 'out-of-character', personal values may have played a subordinate role to political expediency and his motives justified but the actions themselves demonstrate to staff that debate will be monitored and the agenda modified, by the use of power, if necessary, in order to keep control and stifle 'unhelpful' debate.

POWER IN THE ORGANISATION: *Concluding Comments*

The above five episodes feature some of the events which are recollected and re-told by staff; episodes which affect their opinions, actions and behaviour. Importantly, these and other similar events become part of the cultural mythology of the School and significantly affect the behaviour of the teachers, particularly if they do not possess the interpersonal skills to deal with them. All incorporate some aspect of power which reflect its importance and overriding significance in this study of change.

Motives of individuals or groups can be probed and dissected but it is essentially the outcomes of actual events which offer the frames of reference on which conclusions as to the teachers' actions can be built. If staff are all but silent during staff meetings the reasons may have been manifold, but the fact remains that their reticence to participate actively is an organisational reality. This as will be seen has a significant impact on the processes of change. The Headmaster might be a compassionate and kind man but if his use of authoritarian power is wielded to the detriment of the individual, individuals will interpret his actions as they are experienced or evoked by the organisational collective imagery. That is, as the deeds of a man who is oppressive, divisive and intimidatory. Again it must be stressed that the actual motivations of certain staff are secondary to how these actions or non-actions are perceived by others. It is this 'reality' that is being studied as for the majority of the teachers this is their only reality.

The concept of conflict which results from the differing goals and values of the individual, groups and those people into whose hands the traditions of the organisation are vested will be examined in the following chapters within the framework of power. The degree of expression of conflict is seen as a reflection of the differing goals of the members of the School. The

greater the disparity of the objectives of the members of the School, the greater the likelihood that a display of power would be used. This does not mean to say that a harmonious organisation is an example of a body which is powerless but rather that the goals of the individuals and those 'in power' are similar. An institution may be structurally powerful, extremely authoritarian and require great loyalty from its members but be relatively free from conflict. The difference here is that individuals and interest groups have agreed to the organisational order and structure and accepted the goals and values of those in control as their own. Individual or group freedom has been voluntarily relinquished to serve the objectives of the institution which are perceived to be more important than their own. If these collective ideals are threatened then staff will take control and remove the impediment to the attainment of the organisational, collective and professional values (as was the case with the last Headmaster). Or, simply, there may be no conflict because staff are 'saving their own skins!

In the following three chapters power will be seen as a **temporal** phenomenon, that is, power which implements the past, present and future values and goals of an institution. In the light of the data collected, three main categories will be explored.

1. Historical Power

This comprises the values, goals and traditions which are perpetuated through and vested in the Headmaster and other executive staff. It deals with the structures of power, hierarchies and prescribed rules and regulations which are maintained and sustained by those 'in power' to perpetuate the status quo and traditional structures of domination and control. They represent the legacies of past events which affect the collective culture of the school and influence the behaviour and actions of the present staff.

2. The power in the present

This aspect of power considers why people act as they do, the consequences of future expediencies and past legacies on present actions and motivations. It incorporates conflict, goal setting, decision-making and leadership.

3. Future expediency:

These represent actions which perpetuate the 'status quo' and maintenance of external order and structure. It considers politically expedient actions and sanctions which

affect the staff and their ability to control the mechanisms of change and the decision-making process.

The theme of power dominates this study because its use, by various members of the School community, dominates the lives of staff. The political manoeuvring and awareness by some staff are in evidence daily and about which staff talk endlessly. What has been done to whom and why and whether this is fair or just are the most common contexts of the many conversations that take place between staff. Power is important in this School because its use features daily and affects the lives, morale and effectiveness of staff. But more importantly it affects the culture of the School. why the status quo is maintained or allowed to be transformed and therefore the processes of change.