EPISTEMIC LEARNING AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT: AN AUTOETHNOGRAPHY OF SYSTEMIC PARTICIPATION WITH PEASANTS, SELF AND SOCIETY

Harold F. Mattner

Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

2006

University of Western Sydney

© Harold Mattner 2006
DEDICATION

For the rural peasants in the Majority World, and those who support their cause.
Photo 1: A woman returning home after working on her machamba in the Limpopo Valley, Julius Nyerere Village, Mozambique
Photo 2: Children cultivating corn in the Limpopo Valley, Mozambique
Photo 3: Old man returning with part of his corn harvest, Limpopo Valley, Mozambique
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge the exceptional support I have had from supervisors, research and overseas colleagues (peasants, extensionists, and administrators), and my family, whose support has made this research both possible and enjoyable.

Both Visiting Distinguished Professor Richard Bawden at the Michigan State University, and Associate Professor Roger Packham, recently retired from the University of Western Sydney, have both had the role, at different times, of being Supervising Chair for my research. Even through overseas shifts and retirement respectively, they have both provided continuity, support, and challenging insights to the development of this research that has occurred over a period of more than ten years part-time. Without this support it is unlikely this research would have been completed in its current state. For their Virgil-like role I salute them.

While my overseas colleagues are numerous I would like to make some special thanks. In my first overseas project in the Solomon Islands I would like to thank Titus Rore, Betikama High School Headmaster; Forres Gilbert an Agricultural Teacher who is still a close friend; and Leslie Galo, and other Farm Managers. In my second overseas project in the Solomon Islands I must thank Eddie Iamae, Chief Field Officer of the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands; Abraham Baenasia, Director of the Solomon Islands Development Trust; Sister Paul, a Women’s Field Officer with the Friends of the South Pacific; Dick Boisi, the SIDT Village Food Garden Resource Person; and Eddie and Carol who were my hosts for four months in their house in Kakambona Village. Lastly, in Mozambique, I would like to thank Roberto Lumbela, Director of the Provincial Department of Agriculture, Gaza Province; Geremias Mondlane, Assistant Project Coordinator; Zeferino Massicame
the Project Head Extensionist; Vincente Mucache, President of the Casa Agraria in Julius Nyerere Village; and Alberto Alface, Logistics Officer with Save the Children (US). In addition I do not forget the many peasants and extensionists who I have had the pleasure to share life and work with, and who have provided continual inspiration of this work.

In Australia I thank my fellow research colleagues, particularly the intellectual sparing of Agbenyega Amezah in the early parts of my research; and the Thesis Writing Circle, provided by Claire Aitchinson, that assisted me in seeing myself as a writer. However, my wife Filomena and two boys, Harold and David, deserve a special mention for the support they have provided; along with their acceptance of a simpler lifestyle that results from a husband and father who is researching instead of earning an income. They are the de facto sponsors of this research. Lastly, I would like to acknowledge the continual personal support shown by my father, mother, and brother Peter over the course of my research.
STATEMENT OF AUTHENTICATION

The work presented in this thesis is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, original except as acknowledged in the text. I hereby declare that I have not submitted this material (excepting Appendix 1), either in full or in part, for a degree at this or any other institution.

........................................

H.F. Mattner
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Dedication ................................................................................................................................. i
Acknowledgements .................................................................................................................. v
Statement of authentication ..................................................................................................... vii
Table of contents ..................................................................................................................... viii
List of tables ............................................................................................................................. xv
List of diagrams ....................................................................................................................... xvi
List of photographs .................................................................................................................. xvii
Abbreviations ........................................................................................................................... xviii
Abstract ..................................................................................................................................... xx

## Chapter 1: What is epistemic learning and how can it assist rural development through working with peasants? ................................................................. 1

- **Timeframe of research** ........................................................................................................ 1
- **Learning and epistemic learning** ........................................................................................ 4
  - Balancing different elements of learning ........................................................................... 4
  - Levels of learning ............................................................................................................... 6
  - Competing contexts and reasons for learning ..................................................................... 8
- **Epistemic domain of paradigms, frameworks and worldviews (Weltanschauungen)** .................................................................................................................. 10
  - Paradigm ........................................................................................................................... 11
  - Framework ......................................................................................................................... 13
  - Worldview (Weltanschauung) ........................................................................................... 15
- **A tale of two frameworks** ................................................................................................ 16
  - The different frameworks of classical and quantum physics ............................................. 17
  - Examples of epistemic change towards a participative framework .................................. 21
- **From systemic framework towards a systemic paradigm in development with peasants** ................................................................................................................. 25
  - What do I mean by Majority World peasants? .................................................................. 25
  - How bad is the problem of chronic unnecessary hunger? .................................................. 27
  - The need for fundamental change ..................................................................................... 29
  - Epistemic learning as a response to the demand for fundamental change ......................... 31
Chapter 2: A starting point for epistemic learning in development theory, practice, and in research on theory and practice .................................................................35

Introduction ........................................................................................................35
Epistemic change and a praxis of development at Hawkesbury - refraiming theory ........................................................................................................37
   Coming home to a place I had never been ................................................................38
   The problematic of contemporary Australian agricultural training - a Hawkesbury perspective .................................................................................................39
   Reframing agricultural education ........................................................................40
   Re-structuring agricultural education ..................................................................41
   Soft systems thinking .........................................................................................44
   Framework politics .............................................................................................45
Re-framing development practice and the development practitioner - my first overseas position in the Solomon Islands ..........................................................46
   Regressing to the contemporary development paradigm .......................................46
   My encounter with contemporary development in the Solomon Islands ...... 48
Reframing my research of theory and practice in development ..............................56
   A similar framework with a human twist ............................................................58
   A genealogy of autoethnography .......................................................................59
   What is autoethnography? ................................................................................60

Chapter 3: From systemic reframing to an emerging practice of easy development ........................................................................................................71

Introduction ........................................................................................................71
   A generic characterisation of epistemic learning .................................................72
   Focus of Chapter 3 ............................................................................................72
Village Food Garden Rehabilitation and Improvement Project, Solomon Islands (1987 - 1989) ..........................................................................................73
   Background to the project ...................................................................................73
   From expat-centric development towards inter-subjective development .......... 75
   Participation .......................................................................................................85
   Process and structure .........................................................................................86
Experience in dialogue with my characterisation of epistemic learning ................94
My experiences of resistance to easy development .............................................95
   Sexual misconduct .............................................................................................97
Towards majority world development practitioners and authors: Fanon and Freire .......................................................................................................... 157

Fanon’s fury - a Majority World voice speaking to the Majority World ........... 158
Freire’s process of conscientização ............................................................... 159
Conclusion: An emerging paradigm of systemic participation ...................... 166

Chapter 6: Reconstructing a genealogy of hunger - a history of justifying the necessity of unnecessary hunger ............................................. 168

Introduction ................................................................................................. 168
A Foucauldian turn in my development ....................................................... 169
A “Western” genealogy of unnecessary hunger and “parasitic development” ......................................................................................... 173
The problem of inequality ........................................................................... 174
Colonisation ..................................................................................................... 177
“Framing” the other as foreign ...................................................................... 177
The “other” as “fit for plunder” ...................................................................... 179
Compliant labour .......................................................................................... 180
Social and personal costs of the colonised .................................................. 181
Industrialisation ............................................................................................. 182
Industrialisation and colonisation ................................................................. 182
From machine to industrialisation and a market society - conflating human values with pecuniary values ..................................................... 183
From commons to factory - from labour providing self-satisfaction to labouring for the satisfaction of others ............................................. 185
Social control of the machine? ..................................................................... 188
Globalisation ................................................................................................... 189
A new colonial taskmaster - global capital and the force of debt ............... 190
A new colonial taskmaster - global capital and patent force ....................... 191
Two themes emerging from my geneological engagement with unnecessary hunger and parasitic development ....................................... 195
Wealth creation as “clever usurpation” transformed to “unalterable right” ................................................................................................. 195
Proceeding beyond injustice with a will-to-function .................................. 197
Conclusion ........................................................................................................ 198
Chapter 7: Finding theoretical support for self-making

Introduction ........................................................................................................ 199

Different perspectives of science and technology in relation to development ................................................................. 202

The Davey safety lamp ......................................................................................... 204

Green revolution for the minority ...................................................................... 207

The centrality of peasant experience - challenging sociology ......................... 208

A changing sociological framework .................................................................. 208

A changed frame of mind .................................................................................. 209

Discussion ........................................................................................................... 213

A biological explanation of development as ‘self-making’................................... 214

Introduction ....................................................................................................... 214

An explanation of two different onto-epistemologies ....................................... 215

Explaining the process of living from within a constitutive ontology ............... 217

Discussion ........................................................................................................... 223

Habermas’s Philosophy - maintaining social control over bureaucracy .......... 225

Introduction ....................................................................................................... 225

Rationalisation .................................................................................................. 226

“Colonisation of the Lifeworld” ....................................................................... 229

Communicative action ...................................................................................... 234

Communication as the coordination of action ................................................... 237

Discussion ........................................................................................................... 239

Overall Discussion ............................................................................................. 240

Chapter 8: From mechanism to systemic participation - an autoethnographic evoking of epistemic learning in development .... 242

Introduction ....................................................................................................... 242

Epistemic learning ............................................................................................. 243

An explanation of my epistemic learning in development .................................. 245

Phase 1: Naïve epistemic learning – the transformation of action through systemic reframing ......................................................... 246

Pre-overseas experiences of systemic reframing .............................................. 247

Overseas iteration of systemic reframing .......................................................... 250

Depicting naïve epistemic learning .................................................................. 256
Phase 2: Secondary epistemic learning - transformation of thinking through the understanding of naïve epistemic learning .................................................258
  Research iteration - fundamental failure of the known ................................259
  Research iteration - immersion in the unknown: learning as unravelling ....260
  Research iteration - emergence of new categories and processes from ad hoc experience within the unknown .................................................................261
  Research iteration - side-stepping resistance to systemic participation ......269
  Depicting Phase 2 epistemic learning ..........................................................270

Phase 3: Tertiary epistemic learning - evolving social institutions that replicate systemic participation .................................................................270

Chapter 9: The systemically participating self ..............................................274
  An overview of my epistemically learning self .............................................274
  In pursuit of structures that replicate systemic participation ......................280
  Encouraging commitment to contextual relativism and self-making ..........283

References ........................................................................................................285

Appendix 1: A development model .................................................................302
  Introduction .................................................................................................302
  A model of Kurunegala? .............................................................................304
  A “CATWOE” of the KDP ..........................................................................305
    A new direction ..........................................................................................307
  Developing a personal model of development in Lesser-Developed Countries (LDC) .............................................................307
    Situation unstructured and structured .......................................................308
    Depicting a process of development inquiry ...........................................311
    Who makes the decisions? ........................................................................312
    Intercultural inter-action ........................................................................313
    Root definition .........................................................................................313
  Developing the conceptual model ..............................................................314
    Stage 1 - Orientation (Preparation) ..........................................................316
    Stage 2 - Strategy (Planning) .................................................................317
    Stage 3 - Activity (performing) ...............................................................318
    Stage 4 - Monitoring/evaluating (pondering) .........................................319
LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Comparison between Classical Physics and Quantum Physics ................................................................. 19

Table 2: Comparison between Classical Physics and Quantum Physics and their respective implications for Social Science............. 20

Table 3: Comparison of Classical Physics and Quantum Physics drawing from Zukav (1979).................................................. 20

Table 4: An Autoethnographic reframing of objectivist research ...... 59

Table 5: Different dimensions of Habermas’s learning dynamics...... 230

Table 6: From embeddedness to self-awareness - drawing from the work of Freire, Habermas, Perry and the concepts of autoethnography.................................................................................. 268

Table 7: Depicting my epistemic learning as a shift from a paradigm of mechanism to a paradigm of systemic participation ..... 277

Table A1-1: List of important characteristics of the Kurunegala Development Project .......................................................... 305
LIST OF DIAGRAMS

Diagram A1-1: How does the process of inquiry and adjustment take place? ................................................................. 311

Diagram A1-2: Who makes the decisions? ......................................................... 313

Diagram A1-3: Model of processes involved in effective development projects .......................................................... 316
LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS

Photo 1: A woman returning home after working on her machamba in the Limpopo Valley, Julius Nyerere Village, Mozambique ................................................................. ii

Photo 2: Children cultivating corn in the Limpopo Valley, Mozambique ........................................................................................................ iii

Photo 3: Old man returning with part of his corn harvest, Limpopo Valley, Mozambique ................................................................. iv

Photo 4: Mango tree orchard destroyed by Cyclone - Mango trees pushed over in windrows (centre picture), Honiara, Solomon Islands ................................................................. 99

Photo 5: Demonstration steepland garden, Honiara, Solomon Islands ........................................................................................................ 99

Photo 6: Demonstration kitchen showing raised work table with food storage, Honiara, Solomon Islands ......................................................... 100

Photo 7: My residence and hosts, Solomon Islands ......................... 100

Photo 8: Newly constructed Casa Agraria with CA, village and project representatives, Julius Nyerere, Mozambique ......................... 138

Photo 9: Children “sharing,” Julius Nyerere, Mozambique .......... 139

Photo 10: Tube from an agricultural extensionist’s personal bike showing at least 33 puncture repairs, Julius Nyerere, Mozambique ................................................................. 140
ABBREVIATIONS

ACW  Area Council of Women
ADRA  Adventist Development and Relief Agency
AusAID  The aid agency of the Australian Government
CA  Casa Agraria
CFO  Chief Field Officer - Solomon Islands
CSD  Centre for Systemic Development
DDA  District Department of Agriculture - Mozambique
DCRS  Dodo Creek Research Station - Solomon Islands
DSE  Development Services Exchange
FAO  Food and Agricultural Organisation
FFPN  Family Food Production and Nutrition Project
GDEC  Generic Dynamic of Epistemic Change
Hawkesbury  Once Hawkesbury Agricultural College and now University of Western Sydney, Hawkesbury Campus
HFGP  Honiara Food Garden Project
IMF  International Monetary Fund
IOs  Irrigation Officers
KDP  Kurunegala Development Project
LDC  Lesser-Developed Countries
MAL  Ministry of Agriculture and Lands - Solomon Islands
NATI  National Agricultural Training Institute - Solomon Islands
NGO  Non-Government Organisation
PCC  Project Coordinating Committee - Mozambique
PAD  Provincial Agricultural Department - Solomon Islands
PDA  Provincial Department of Agriculture - Mozambique
PFO  Principle Field Officer - Solomon Islands
RAP       Resource Access Program
SCFA      Save the Children Fund Australia
SC(US)    Save the Children (United States)
SIDT      Solomon Islands Development Trust
TRIPS     Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights
UNDP      United Nations Development Program
UNICEF    United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UWS       University of Western Sydney
VDC       Village Development Committee - Mozambique
VFGRIP    Village Food Garden Rehabilitation and Improvement Project
WWII      World War 2
ABSTRACT

This thesis is motivated by my felt connection with the unnecessarily hungry peasants of the Majority World. The odyssey that results is portrayed as one of epistemic learning (Kitchener, Perry, and Salner) in which the meaning of participation is central. The first part (Chapters 1-4) introduces the philosophical understandings gained at the end of the research in order to assist the reader’s orientation at the beginning of the thesis. This explanation depends upon understanding the paradigmatic implications of Classical and Quantum Physics along with an autoethnographic approach. Using these concepts, I portray my experiences in agricultural development with peasants in the Solomon Islands and Mozambique as naïve systemic practice. This practice arises in response to the continual failure of contemporary development which I refer to as expat-centric development. I systemically reframe the categories of “expert” and “blueprint project” which become “expert and project with peasant.” The development that results I find to be easy and successful, yet it is ignored and undermined. This leads me to a watershed experience, which becomes Part 2 (Chapter 5) of the thesis, where with the help of Freire I come to realise my paradigmatic entrapment.

In Part 3 (Chapters 6-9) I find support for my experiences of systemic participation: within the ideas of Foucault’s and Habermas’s philosophy, Uphoff’s sociology, and Maturana and Varela’s biology. These authors provide support for the mutual simultaneous shaping and constitutive ontology of systemic participation that permit personal engagement in the construction of truth. Within Part 3 I see the role of society’s institutions to replicate the mechanistic paradigm. Thus, in order to avoid the institutional entrapment that results from this, I see the need post-thesis, to participate in evolving new social structures that can replicate the paradigm of
systemic participation. This will largely depend upon the willingness of society to engage with a cosmology of connectedness (Skolimowski).
Search, miserable! All the shores around
Thy coasts, and then within they bosom look,
If peace in any part of thee be found.

Canto VI, Dante’s *Purgatorio*

*Binyon (1938:67)*

You must be the change you want to see in the world.

*Ghandi*
CHAPTER 1

WHAT IS EPISTEMIC LEARNING AND HOW CAN IT ASSIST RURAL DEVELOPMENT THROUGH WORKING WITH PEASANTS?

The student must have the opportunity to experience the epistemological dilemmas that characterize each stage as his or her own personal dilemmas. The dilemmas must become real, in life, before the student will 'be moved.'

Salner (1986:231)

TIMEFRAME OF RESEARCH

Before launching into this thesis I would like to have a preliminary word in regard to the timeframe of my thesis. This thesis is different to a traditional disciplinary thesis that tests out and expands the boundaries of existing knowledge, due both to its: exploratory and problem-based nature, together with the systemic philosophy which guides it. Because of this I never had a blueprint to follow, only a commitment to: resolve, explain, or clarify the problems arising from my overseas experiences resulting from my interaction with agricultural projects and peasants I worked with.

I first enrolled as a part-time student to undertake the research for this thesis in 1994. In this year I wrote up my overseas experiences as objectively as I could and was exposed to the action research of my colleagues (Roberts 1997, Weekley 1999). However, my problem was not lack of action, it was in understanding and explaining what resulted from my past actions. With support from my supervisors, and some notions of grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss 1967), I launched myself into the sociology of Norman Uphoff in Learning from Gal Oya (1992). This first immersion in a different discipline was very difficult and time consuming. It required
a lot of patience and re-reading over time, but with each iterative foray came greater understanding. In 1996 I came close to launching into writing a thesis following Uphoff’s (1992) approach, but for reasons described in Chapter 7, I desisted.

Instead, I followed an interesting lead from Uphoff (1992) to the work of Zukav (1979). This process represented the first of what would become many iterations of: immersing myself in different disciplines, and follow interesting connections that arose both within, and between them. I continued doing this until 2000.

Tools that I used to support my research included: a) a card file of word meanings and references to those meanings, b) a filing system for my notes on books and journal articles, c) the Endnote bibliography that allowed me to search through all my references using keywords, and d) a growing number of pieces of writing that arose from different themes emerging from my research.

In 2001 I started writing my first thesis titled: Addressing the phenomenon of starvation, hunger, and poverty. In that thesis the main dynamic was to see my overseas experiences as “experiencing” my Hawkesbury undergraduate education that occurred from 1981-1984, and to see my postgraduate research as “educating” my overseas experiences. I had separate chapters for my overseas projects and on each of the main elements of my research that now form the current Chapter 7. However, my writing reflected what I thought until then about thesis writing – that is I was writing about what I already knew.

However, I began to experience writing as part of the research process. This resulted in a second thesis forming in 2002 titled: A systemic odyssey of theory and practice in the pursuit of the transformation of human deprivation. The chapters
Chapter 1: What is epistemic learning and how can it assist rural development through working with peasants?

were similar to the previous thesis but instead of treating my experiences as data it tried to show how they helped develop my theory of development and built upon each other.

The first two theses however, were only half completed before I changed/developed my approach as a result of my continuing research and writing. In 2004 I completed writing my first full thesis, titled *An odyssey towards easy development: systemic participation with peasants*. I had continued to develop my focus on how my experiences and theory interacted and developed. This was further assisted through my increasing understanding of systems thinking and my more recent encounter with autoethnography. However, it was twice as long as this thesis. It was suggested by my supervisors that: I had written autobiography and not autoethnography, that I needed to focus on a particular theme, and use my first thesis as laboratory notes for my next thesis.

I began to realise along with Holt (2003:3) that my thesis needed to be more than a good story, it needed to be grounded in theory. Further, the theory and practice needed to be mutual and reflexive (Midgley 2000). I marvelled at my capacity to remain lost in the process of seeking a better direction and enjoying the process at the same time. This assisted me in the process which followed in 2005 and 2006 in which I wrote my current thesis. The breakthrough for me in this thesis was in focussing on epistemic learning and using the concepts of autoethnography to assist me in guiding my writing reflexively between two different paradigmatic concepts of participation. In short, what you now see in the first two chapters of this thesis largely emerged toward the end of an arduous and rewarding research process. It emerged from the writing/research process and inturn assisted in directing it.
Chapter 1: What is epistemic learning and how can it assist rural development through working with peasants?

LEARNING AND EPISTEMIC LEARNING

For a majority of the time while undertaking the research for this thesis I had been aware of the term epistemic learning, but I did not appreciate its significance or meaning. Now, it has become the central theme of this thesis to explore what it means to learn epistemically. To evoke a sense of this form of learning from a self-reflective and critical reconstruction, of a career that has focussed on working with rural peasants in Majority World countries, a term defined later in this chapter. This focus resulted from my twin goals that sought to reduce the incidence of unnecessary hunger and redeem my trammelled sense of humanity arising from my awareness of unnecessary hunger. The term, unnecessary hunger, arises from the fact that people remain exposed to hunger and starvation in a world that has sufficient food to feed everyone (Tudge 2003b:381).

The twin goals above emerged from an intense feeling of connection between my sense of self and others who were starving. A proposition appeared to be permanently etched on my mind, challenging me: “What would I do, or expect others to do, if I or my family and friends were starving?” Flood (1999) takes a similar approach when problematising the concept of “knowledge-power” when he poses the question:

How would you feel if your friends, sisters and brothers, mother and father, children or partner were subjects of the decision or design? Flood (1999:118)

Balancing different elements of learning

After gaining the inspiration to do something about unnecessary hunger, my response was to go to university to learn both specific skills in food production, and learn about learning, so I had sufficient knowledge to teach others and help them improve their lives. I did this from 1981-1984 at Hawkesbury Agricultural College,
Chapter 1: What is epistemic learning and how can it assist rural development through working with peasants?

now the University of Western Sydney, and hereafter referred to as, Hawkesbury. In my first job with an international agricultural consulting company (1984-1987 with a 9 month break working with an NGO in the Solomon Islands in 1986) I learnt to use these competencies in a professional manner. However, this professional environment kept me distant from the real-life experience of peasants. Drawing from the theory and skills I gained at Hawkesbury, in moving toward the farmer’s reality, I applied the same process towards moving closer to the peasant’s reality in my work in the Solomon Islands (1ˢᵗ time in 1986, 2ⁿᵈ time from 1987-1989) and Mozambique (1989-1991). The problem facing me in my work overseas was in knowing how to apply my skills and theories in situations that I could not have previously imagined.

After many years of overseas development work I found the moral and intellectual dilemmas I faced reached a point that I could not continue to leave them unaddressed. This then became the purpose of this research: to understand, and find a way through the dilemmas of my overseas work that would allow me to continue to pursue the twin goals I have already described.

During my research I came to see my learning as a synthesis resulting from the interaction of inspiration (gaining insight from within), personal experience and knowledge for knowing (the propositional), and knowledge for doing (the practical). Such a view is expressed in Bawden (2001), who in drawing upon Reason and Heron (1986) notes the systemic unity resulting from the interaction of diverse ways of knowing - the propositional, practical, experiential, and inspirational. What has been difficult, in my experience, has been the interaction between these different ways of knowing. It seemed that at any one particular time one form of knowing tended to be emphasised at the expense of the other. While at university the
propositional was emphasised, while overseas - the practical. Both tended to influence my inspiration to work and the understanding of my experiences in a dualistic manner. Either they supported inspiration and engagement with my experiences, or enervating them. It is my hope that following the work that has gone into the preparation of this thesis that I can engage in a unity of learning that is more balanced than it has been previously.

From what I have experienced, there are many projects that are very practical but not well informed by theory, and others that are very propositional and well informed theoretically, but impractical. Perhaps the worst kind of project that I have encountered is that where there was a strong spiritual commitment to help, but where the results for the peasants were neither practical nor sensible. The systemic learning emphasis in Bawden (2001) that seeks “unity through the diversity of knowing,” reverses the tendency towards a singular view on learning that becomes one or other of: rationalism, pragmatism, subjectivism or spiritualism/intuitionalism. This systemic emphasis provides an analysis of learning that does not confuse a different element of learning for a new paradigm. For example, when operating largely in a propositional domain it may appear that intuitional learning is “new paradigm” - when systemic learning would be more likely to see it as a different aspect or element of learning. This leads me now to the point of discussing what “new paradigm” or “epistemic” learning may mean.

Levels of learning

In my overseas experiences of development, and my research experience in researching about it, I have come to see three different levels of development. I say “come to see” as it was not a process of being taught, but rather a process of experiencing my own epistemological dilemmas (Salner 1986:231). The three levels
of learning involve first doing things better through better performance. Second, reflecting upon improving the effectiveness and/or efficiency of a range of better performances, without changing the framework by which the performance is defined. Thirdly, epistemic learning that reflects upon the way an improvement is defined. This third level of learning goes beyond the possibilities of the existing framework and its assumed definitions. By so doing it allows for the emergence of a new framework, paradigm, or worldview that redefines what better performance is.

Taking the notion of participation in development and applying it to these different levels of learning resulted in depicting my first level of learning as the decision to work overseas with peasants. I left a commercial organisation that implemented international agricultural projects because those projects seemed so far from the reach of peasant participation. Participation seemed simply to be the peasant’s response to a project as an end product of collaboration between donors, implementers, and beneficiary governments. At the time, I had no intention of changing the notion of development, or of trying to improve it. My ideas of peasant participation simply seemed a better way of improving the position of the peasants and therefore project outcomes. It was through this operational change, within which my twin development goals revolved around the production of more food, that I came to observe that peasants obtained little lasting benefit from development projects. I came to reflect on this and saw that participation was part of the mantra of development, but that its scope and application was very limited. I saw operational ways of improving the effectiveness and efficiency of participation. I still used my previous level of learning by moving as close to the experience of peasants without loosing my own culture. However, I found that my ability to implement changes that allowed for the increasing participation of peasants could not be sustained due to the limitations built into the structures, roles, and processes of
contemporary development. The dilemma that I faced was that I did not have a supporting framework of ideas, institutions, and processes that would support me in this endeavour. Further, the language which I used to explain myself appeared to have a different meaning to those listening compared to the meaning I understood.

Over the process of the research I have come to recognise the third level of my learning as a change in framework, or epistemic learning. This thesis concerns itself with how I came about doing and understanding this and why I think it is an important process to continue to foster in development with peasants. Kitchener (1983) refers to this trilogy of learning levels as cognition, meta-cognition and epistemic cognition. Bateson’s (1972:287-308) nomenclature is a little different, referring to level one, level two, and level three learning. Both trilogies reflect a growing complexity in each level: whereby changes are made respectively from within a set of alternatives, from alternative sets of alternatives, and lastly, in epistemic learning from alternative systems of sets of alternatives or different onto-epistemologies. I use the word onto-epistemology to reflect the observations of both Bateson (1972:314) and Skolimowsky (1994) that ontology and epistemology are inseparable. A more detailed elaboration of epistemic learning can be found in Bawden (2005b:157-159). Perry’s (1999) schema of intellectual and ethical development is complementary to the above trilogies. It follows a progression from dualism through multiplicity to contextual relativism. In this progression epistemological truth is determined dialectically and interactively.

**Competing contexts and reasons for learning**

The complexity does not stop here. Working with peasants introduces a whole range of complexities in addition to a foreign yet emerging framework that is epistemic learning. I was faced with foreign cultures and languages. For example,
in Mozambique the peasant’s local language was twice removed from English. This is because the official language for Mozambique was Portuguese while the native language of the peasants was Changana. In addition, I faced foreign agricultural systems and environments, as well as a foreign level of human subsistence. Such “foreign” realities of the peasant provide a disparate context when compared to the context from which systems theory emerged. The context for much of systems theory lies within the domain of commercial enterprise (Checkland 1981, 2000) and the management sciences (Flood 1999, and Jackson 2000). More social applications can be found in Bawden (1991, 1995a) and Callo and Packham (1999) in regard to the role of the university in agricultural and rural development. Midgley (2000) extends the systems context towards the more social enterprise of community development. However, these contexts are still a long way from the context I found myself where survival was more significant than debates about theory. A small insight into the significance of such differences lay for me in the story of an expatriate expert visiting a drought stricken country on the African continent and commenting on the, “nice wildflowers.” The local person accompanying him replied that it took two generations of full stomachs before the wildflowers could be appreciated!

The problem facing me was how could I use my systemic perspectives within a peasant context? The “hierarchy of needs” in Maslow (1998) suggests the tendency for humans to satisfy “lower level” needs before the higher ones. This, together with the notion of adult learning as interacting with vital daily issues, saw me transform conversation and intellectual debate into actions with peasants. While some systems authors are cognisant of the role of power, including the power to ignore contexts which to them are foreign, others like Flood (1990:50) see the need for “emancipation in response to dominance and subjugation in work and social
Chapter 1: What is epistemic learning and how can it assist rural development through working with peasants?

situations.” Bawden (1999) includes the concepts of the “ethically defensible” and the axiological. Such concepts change the purposes of learning from a narrow domain of commercial success, management control, or successful professional careers, into a human and humanising enterprise that resonates with my twin objectives that link the deprivation of the other with the deprivation within. In working towards overcoming this outward deprivation I was also overcoming the inward one, and so redeeming my sense of humanity within and without. Resonating with my felt connection with others I found support within the onto-epistemological view nicely expressed by Gibbs (2003), and brought to my attention by Bawden (2005b:158), that “acts that wrong and harm one individual...ultimately wrong and harm us all.” According to Fitzgerald (1987:71) this view is not new. He quotes an American Indian chief who in 1845 said:

This we know: all things are connected like the blood which unites one family. Whatever befalls the earth befalls the sons of the earth. Man did not weave the web of life; he is merely a strand in it. Whatever he does to the web, he does to himself.

Such a systemic view which interacts between the individual and the “other” comes alive for me in Freire’s (1970a) notion of human development that portrays the human vocation “to be more”: to transcend what is taken to be necessary as defined by another. In this view the dichotomy of learning lay between the two alternatives of learning for freedom or domestication.

Education is either for domestication or for freedom. It either makes us the object of someone else’s concern or assists us in participating in and better understanding our experiences and our thoughts. (Freire 1970a:preface)

EPISTEMIC DOMAIN OF PARADIGMS, FRAMEWORKS AND WORLDVIEWS (WELTANSCHAUUNGEN)

In looking at the relationship between learning, meta-learning, and epistemic learning it is possible to say that the higher of each level provides the context in which the lower level makes sense. Epistemic learning according to Salner (2001)
Chapter 1: What is epistemic learning and how can it assist rural development through working with peasants?

is often avoided, as it is inevitably an unravelling experience, in contrast to the more comfortable notion of learning as expanding one’s boundaries. Instead of any feeling of control obtained by being guided by what we know, as in the boundary expansion mode of meta learning, epistemic learning involves working with the unknown and the unknowable (Flood 1999) which reminds us of how incomplete our knowledge really is. As Midgley (2003:89) reminds us of in quoting Churchman (1979):

…all understandings are incomplete: there is a need for humility and openness to the perspectives of others.

Three words that I have found useful in providing a sense of the epistemic domain, and the limits of knowing, are those of: paradigm, framework, and worldview (Weltanschauung). It is towards these three words that I would now like to turn my attention.

Paradigm

In my readings of Thomas Kuhn’s, *The structure of scientific revolutions*, I have found a common parallel theme that I often think about in relation to development with peasants - the structure of revolutions in development. Within this concept several themes are apparent: a) the difference between normal science and revolutionary science, b) the dynamic of the scientist involved in extraordinary science, and c) the dynamic of resistance by normal science to extraordinary science. Central to this discussion is the concept of paradigm in Kuhn (1970:294) which embraces “all the shared commitments of a scientific group,” and depicted as a shared or standard example that was seen to account for a scientific group’s “unproblematic conduct of research” (Kuhn 1977:307,319).

Shared examples of successful practice could, I next concluded, provide what the group lacked in rules. Those examples were its paradigms, and as such essential to its continued research. (Ibid)
Chapter 1: What is epistemic learning and how can it assist rural development through working with peasants?

These “shared examples of successful practice” (italics not in the original) become a symbolic “generative mechanism,” to borrow a term from Maturana (1994). Being symbolic there is no rule-like correspondence between a paradigm and successful practice. Kuhn (1977:307, note 16) notes the tendency for some of the readers of Kuhn (1970) to equate a paradigm with a disciplinary matrix, and so reduce his initial intention to convey the symbolic role of paradigms.

In trying to explain the rather unproblematic progress of normal science Kuhn (1970) makes three points which I would like to highlight in the process of trying to understand epistemic learning. The first is the difference between normal science and revolutionary science. Kuhn (1970:35) paints a picture of “normal science as puzzle-solving” (italics not in original) whereby “unexpected novelty” is avoided. This is in part due to the role of a paradigm in only admitting problems that are seen to have solutions. This kind of science is not unlike the meta-cognition of Kitchener (1983), or learning as an extension of boundaries as suggested by Salner (2001). This puzzle-solving of normal science, of operating within a paradigm, is different to developing a new paradigm. I would now like to explore Kuhn’s explanation of the development of a new paradigm. His explanation combines the description of extraordinary science with the process within which it arises. The process from which a new paradigm emerges is detailed in Kuhn (1970:61ff) and includes the following evolutionary direction:

1. an awareness of the significant failure of the existing paradigm,
2. the concomitant emergence of a convergence of concepts and experiences that initially appear to be ad hoc, but which in time;
3. develop into the new paradigmatic “categories and procedures” which is;
4. frequently met by significant resistance from those holding onto the old paradigm.
Chapter 1: What is epistemic learning and how can it assist rural development through working with peasants?

According to Kuhn (1970:122) normal science cannot correct the paradigms within which it operates. This is seen to be the work of extraordinary or revolutionary science that emerges from the above process. It does not result from a cumulative process based on different articulations of the old paradigm, but rather:

…is a reconstruction of the field from new fundamentals, a reconstruction that changes some of the field’s most elementary theoretical generalizations as well as many of its paradigm methods and applications. …[Viewed by Herbert Butterfield in 1949 it was seen as] handling the same bundle of data as before, but placing them in a new system of relations with one another by giving them a different framework. (Kuhn 1970:84-85)

The resistance that results from those still holding onto the old paradigm is seen by Kuhn as a testing for the new paradigm. This testing ensures that current paradigms are not easily given up, and so reduces unnecessary distractions to the scientist’s work. It also represents the vested interests of scientists, who have invested a lifetime in the old paradigm, and have no desire to give up this commitment and expertise. As a result, the possibility of a paradigm change is seen by Kuhn to occur only when the old paradigm is found completely wanting.

Framework

Rather than trying to develop a singular view on the differences in meaning between the terms: paradigm, framework, and worldview; I see more value in engaging these terms in respect of gaining different views of the epistemic domain, much like looking at different facets of the same gem. For the term paradigm, as Kuhn (1970, 1977) describes it, I see epistemic learning as a change in symbolic correspondence accorded through the paradigmatic evoking of a different image of “successful practice.” Using the domain of my experience in development, I would suggest the old paradigm revolves around the image of an expert practitioner who intervenes in a process of project implementation that is seen to bring a particular benefit to others. This image is co-created by the convergence of the disciplines of Newtonian
physics, economics, and management science. If there was only one word I could use to describe this paradigm it would be, *mechanistic*. I suggest it is mechanistic because known actions and resources are brought to bear on a known problem, in a known process, and producing supposedly known results. An alternative image of a paradigm emerging from my experience and research is that of someone who is in need of development, muddling through with others who are in need of development, entwined in a continual process of re-defining both themselves and development. If I had to use a one word description for this process it would be, *communicative*. In this process human objectives are brought to bear on physical and ideological necessity.

The use of the term framework, in the quote of Kuhn (1970) above, evokes a concept of the epistemic that is not obtained through successful practice within the existing paradigm, but through different *perspectives* emergent from a new system of relationships - that is a new paradigm. A move is made from remaining in the same symbolic family, through an association with practice, to that of association with a new perspective emerging from a different symbolic family. Such a change in perspective is wonderfully emergent in Strom (2000). Here, the apostle Paul is systemically reframed, from a perspective of being above and apart from those he ministered to, to that of being on the same level, and partaking of a “rhythm of conversation.” This is portrayed as an iterative process of: conversation, compassion, action, and back to conversation again.

As with paradigms there are also discrepancies between different frameworks. These discrepancies arise in Strom’s comparison of the different emphases within the respective Graeco-Roman framework, and his construction of Paul’s framework. Many of these comparisons seem applicable to my reframing of development,
whereby the development professional or expert stands out and above the peasants, and exhorts them to change for their own good: is reframed to that of a person who also is a part of the development problem, and seeks, in relationship with peasants, to transform the situation. I have chosen four comparisons from Strom that are of particular pertinence to my experience. They are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GRAECO-ROMAN FRAMEWORK</th>
<th>PAUL’S FRAMEWORK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>give priority to abstract reality</td>
<td>…ground all truth in relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>play down the everyday</td>
<td>…focus on the everyday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pursue ideals</td>
<td>…pursue relations of love, not ideals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>censure change</td>
<td>…promote transformation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Strom 2000:187)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An emerging view of a framework, for me, is a *symbolic perspective* that is formalised through principles and processes which cannot themselves completely explain the symbolic perspective. In this case, it is similar to the paradigm in which the *symbolic action* of successful practice is formalised, but never completely explained by generic mechanism.

**Worldview (Weltanschauung)**

_Weltanschauung_, the German word for worldview, introduces another facet of the epistemic. Moving from a radical change in practice, as suggested by the Kuhnian sense of paradigm, to the radical change of perspective as suggested by the framework of Strom, we now come to the radical change of *culture* that I hope to show is the result of a change in worldview. Kuhn (1970) represents a change in paradigm as a revolutionary change in worldview. He highlights this in the example provided in the different viewing of swinging stones. Aristotle saw “constrained fall” at work while Galileo saw a pendulum. Kuhn concludes:

...though the world does not change with a change in paradigm, the scientist afterwards works in a different world. (Kuhn 1970:121)
But I would like to move on past the scientific domain of paradigms and Kuhnian thought, and move towards the everyday-world reality of peasant existence, and development practice that is associated with its improvement. Paradigm as worldview in this more every-day sense is a comprehensive view of life and how it fits within the universe. It reflects on how cultures create the relatively unproblematic cooperation of its members in the process of living. Cultural changes are more complex than paradigm changes. They include many other community groups other than scientists, and also operate in domains much more general than scientific disciplines. They are also more intimately involved with daily living. A perspective in interacting and changing cultures with which I have become recently aware, is that of autoethnography which I will discuss more fully later in the thesis. Suffice it to say at the moment, a change in worldview represents a considerably more complex and far reaching change than either paradigm or framework change. Such a view is alluded to in the work of Skolimowski (1994) discussed in Chapter 9.

A TALE OF TWO FRAMEWORKS

In a delightful children's film (Bluth, D. and G. Goldman 1994) using one of Hans Christian Anderson's stories, Thumbalina, the following advice is given:

"Your sure to do impossible things,
If you follow your heart,
Your dreams will fly on magical wings,
If you follow your heart,....
If the choosing get confusing
Maybe it's the map you're using
You don't need a chart to guide you
Close your eyes and look inside you"

In thinking over this message and what we have talked about I am drawn to the sense of epistemic change elicited from a change in perspective, or a change in
framework as I have called it: as being a change in the perspective of learning centred on the “heart,” rather than the mind. It is possible, to say that this also is a mistake as learning involves both, and to that we might add learning by doing, a perspective of the “hand.” At this point we are back discussing something that is similar to the elements of learning: the propositional, practical, experiential and inspirational, which we have previously talked about. However, what I would like to highlight from the verse of this catchy song is the possibility of thinking, feeling, and doing things differently that can arise in the metaphor of a “map” which I like to think of as bringing forth a sense of epistemic change. But what does a perspective from a different map look like, and how does it compare to the old perspective? For the remainder of this part of the thesis I would like to focus on elucidating two different “maps,” or symbolic perspectives as frameworks that focus on the researcher in the process of researching.

**The different frameworks of classical and quantum physics**

A symbolic perspective or framework that seemed to emerge as the basis of action for those unsatisfied with the direction of their discipline, or society at large, seems to refer to or resonate with the framework of quantum physics. In the nicely reflexive and entwined notions of Maturana (1994), the instrument of analysis is found analysing the instrument of analysis. The scientist within this view becomes a part of her or his science! This notion became a part of my imagining of what development could look like if the developer became a part of their development rather than retaining the passive observer status of an expert. A reframing in the sense that Strom (2000) evokes, when applied to the development expert or practitioner, places them with the peasant rather than above and removed from them.
Coming from the domain of rural development with peasants I found it extremely
difficult not to just enter into a level of complexity that I had not previously engaged
with, but also engage with disciplinary domains that were foreign to me. However,
this difficulty was counterbalanced by the abilities that I had gained within my
undergraduate degree at Hawkesbury, and also in participating within the foreign
cultures, languages, and the domains of understanding of peasants in various
countries. This is similar to how I found it easier to understand the Portuguese of a
person who also speaks English. In like manner I have come to find it easier to read
writers such as Zukav (1979), who is not a physicist, yet writes so well about it.

Zukav starts his elaboration of quantum physics in the context of a brief history of
understanding starting from Scholasticism (12th – 15th century), where we were
impotent bystanders in a world of unfathomable forces; to Modernism (16th – 19th
century), ushered in by Copernicus, Newton, and Descartes where humans became
passive observers of a world apart from them; and finally to Post-Modernism (20th
century onwards), ushered in by Planck and Einstein through their theories relating
to quanta and relativity. In this latter domain of quantum physics we become
participators in a world that arises from our action within it.

Of note, is that quantum physics does not do away with classical physics, but rather
more closely defines its boundaries. Classical physics cannot tell us about the
subatomic world or the observer who is observing. However, classical physic’s
paradigm of successful scientific practice lies in empirical observation within a
framework that has the perspective of a passive observer and a worldview that the
world can be known. This knowledge of the world is seen to arise from the belief in
objective reality and the one-to-one correlation between reality and its observation.
In association with this belief is that of the notion of cause and effect whereby fixed
and specific causes give rise to fixed and specific responses. Life is like a huge machine and we are but cogs. The problem arising with this onto-epistemology is that we lose our freedom, as what we do can only be already determined by the absolute truth of reality. This is the frustration that I found with conventional development that emerges from this paradigm, framework, and worldview. Projects are constructed by specialists and donors that are seen to be closer to “reality,” and the implementers and peasants can only respond in a very limited way to this pre-defined “reality” that is the project.

Quantum physics, however, provides a whole range of different possibilities for development. Its paradigm of successful practice, I posit as being systemic participation, with the perspective of a participant actor within a worldview that is: multiple, constructivistic, holistic, and inseparable from the world being observed. I have drawn the views above from the interaction of my experience with others, who have also attempted to compare the onto-epistemology of classical and quantum physics. Three examples from the domain of economics, sociology, and physics are provided in the tables below.

**Table 1: Comparison between Classical Physics and Quantum Physics**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Classical Physics</th>
<th>Quantum Physics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reality</td>
<td>unique/positivistic/fragmentable</td>
<td>multiple/constructivistic/holistic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Causation</td>
<td>necessary and sufficient conditions having deterministic effects</td>
<td>mutual simultaneous shaping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knower &amp; Known</td>
<td>independent</td>
<td>interactive and inseparable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chapter 1: What is epistemic learning and how can it assist rural development through working with peasants?

Table 2: Comparison between Classical Physics and Quantum Physics and their respective implications for Social Science.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Classical Physics</th>
<th>Quantum Physics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Focus</td>
<td>motivation</td>
<td>energisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process</td>
<td>manipulation of incentives</td>
<td>reducing individual or collective “friction” impeding forward movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model</td>
<td>mechanistic</td>
<td>organic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Output</td>
<td>linear</td>
<td>variable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 3: Comparison of Classical Physics and Quantum Physics drawing from Zukav (1979)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Classical Physics</th>
<th>Quantum Physics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Based on:</td>
<td>ordinary sense perceptions</td>
<td>behaviour of subatomic particles and systems not directly observable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Describes</td>
<td>things; individual objects in space and their changes in time</td>
<td>statistical behaviour of systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Predicts</td>
<td>events</td>
<td>probabilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claims</td>
<td>to be based on “absolute truth”; the way that nature really is “behind the scenes”</td>
<td>only to correlate experience correctly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knower as:</td>
<td>observer</td>
<td>participator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theories</td>
<td>each element has “one-to-one relation” with reality</td>
<td>no “one-to-one relation” with reality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philosophical Implication</td>
<td>leads to impotence in the face of a Great Machine which is the universe</td>
<td>leads to the possibility that our reality is influenced by our choices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Epistemological Assumptions</td>
<td>separate parts which together constitute reality</td>
<td>unbroken wholeness</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Before moving on to seeing how other people have used the symbolism of quantum physics and its onto-epistemological implications, I would like to note the epistemic shift evident in Einstein’s moved from working within classical physics to quantum physics. The process I sensed emerging from Zukav’s description of Einstein’s work
in developing the special and general theories of relativity is as follows. The ability to address the *most important issues* of the day, look at them in a manner which *casts aside existing theory*, focus on the *phenomena*, be willing to *entertain nonsense*, and have *confidence* in the results – even though they may appear to be nonsense to everyone else. This has resonance with Kuhn’s description of paradigmatic shift, particularly the ability to entertain nonsense, and the confidence to move beyond the common-sense of the day. Zukav describes the ability to entertain nonsense as a “beginner’s mind” that can move beyond the obvious with “…a childlike ability to see the world as it is, not as it appears according to what we know about it” (Zukav 1979:141). Our existing paradigms in this manner are not just seen as enabling but also disabling.

**Examples of epistemic change towards a participative framework**

So far we have seen how Kuhn described epistemic change within science, describing it as extraordinary science that moved beyond the existing framework and very likely to attract resistance. Zukav’s comparison of classical and quantum physics, and the experience of Einstein, reflects a similar epistemic shift within physics. Just as classical physics has a huge influence over the contemporary institutions, and the onto-epistemology of the West through the concepts of: mechanism, objectivism, and reductionism that evokes a sense of the scientist as objective observer; quantum physics, and its framework of the scientist as *active participator*, can be seen as a metaphor that can enrich a whole range of endeavours in epistemic change. I would like to take three different examples of this from the domains of education, social enterprise development, and the university education of rural developers. Wallerstein (1991) provides a good example of a call for paradigm change within the social sciences, but space does not permit further elaboration of his work here.
Epistemic change and the work of Higginson in the domain of education

Higginson (1987) argues that some of the most profound insights in education occurred over sixty years ago in the work of A.N. Whitehead who said:

…any serious fundamental change in the intellectual outlook of human society must necessarily be followed by an educational revolution (Whitehead 1949).

I would posit that the kind of change Whitehead is referring to is what I have been describing as epistemic change. The implication being that such epistemic change brings a revolutionary change both within science, as Kuhn suggests, and within education, as Whitehead asserts. The questions that I am encouraged to ask after reading the quote from Whitehead is, “What does an educational revolution look like?” Is it just a radical change in thinking, or does it include radical new structures and processes? If radical new structures and processes are not present, does it indicate that the change in thinking is not as radical as may be suggested? My observations of development are that while new paradigms of participation are professed, the structures of development: projects, experts, donors, and institutions have largely remained the same.

Higginson goes on to explain some differences between a classical and constructivist paradigm of education. The classical paradigm is:

…essentially an objectivist, neo-behaviouristic one in which the planning focus is primarily on the creation of optimal stimuli to elicit “correct” responses. (Higginson 1987:174)

Within this paradigm the learner is seen to be reactive, and learns best by being told what they need to learn in a hierarchical and competitive environment where both motivation and evaluation are external to them. The constructivist paradigm that is human-centred moves contrary to the decontextualised context of classical education. It is seen to be motivated by a “democratic pedagogy” toward:
Chapter 1: What is epistemic learning and how can it assist rural development through working with peasants?

...teaching and learning as purposeful communal activity with an emphasis on performance where the learner constructs his or her own version of reality. The focus is on process and product, rather than on product alone. (Higginson 1987:174)

However, Higginson, beyond suggesting the need to question the certainties taught in school, does not provide an example of what sort of educational structures would support a constructivist education.

Epistemic change and the work of Midgley in a social domain

Midgley seeks to address social problems in society through broadening support for a move from mechanism to systems thinking. Starting from the domain of physics, he seeks to include philosophical, biological, and psychological perspectives. These all undermine the objective status of scientific observation and implicate a connection between the observer and the observed (Midgley 2003). The resulting implication is the view that the observer co-creates the world that s/he is part of - not separate from. Midgley rightly points out how the assumptions from mechanistic science unwittingly persist in these new domains (Midgley 2003:4), and this is something that I have found in my personal experience of development. New constructions of development can be of mixed construction, part new and part old paradigm, and only over extended time and persistence have I found my ability to develop the new paradigm more fully in its own right, and to engage its implications more completely. Midgley (2003) replaces traditional scientific observation with the concepts and practices of systemic intervention. Systemic intervention then becomes an argument for reflexivity between practice, methodology, philosophy, and the inclusion of “service users” in a process referred to as “sweeping in.” But Midgley’s (2003) sense of participation as practiced in systemic intervention, I suggest, is only a token of what it could be. Again and again the voice of the organising committee Chair and the institutional managers are given priority over “service users.” Institutional structures that have developed from the old paradigm
are still left in place, and participation is not much more than a tokenism that includes the voice of the “service user,” as a preliminary input to projects which have their mandate and management still set in the same manner, and which still largely excludes the people themselves from the overall process.

**Epistemic change - the Hawkesbury approach**

The Hawkesbury approach which applied systems thinking to the university education of agricultural graduates and post-graduates, has demonstrated an ability to restructure according to the newly emergent systemic onto-epistemology. All participants became part of the new structure and affected its daily operation, not just providing information inputs to the development process as is the case in Midgley (2003). The role of the lecturers changed to one of facilitators, with the necessity for individual change being linked with institutional change:

But our institution could only change as we were prepared to change ourselves as individuals. We had to learn how to become different in order to allow our College to be different. (Bawden and Macadam 1988:19)

And part of this difference is seen not just as a change in thinking but also a change in constituency. And this was demonstrated by a movement toward and with the farmer, agricultural industry, and the student. This change in constituency reflects a change in epistemic capacity towards the contextual relativism of Perry (1999) and Salner (1986), and the constitutive ontology of Maturana and Varela (1992). This results in a move away from the transcendent realities of the objective, Chairs of organising committees, institutional managers, and other “enemies of the systems approach” (Churchman 1979). Unity is not gained through homogeneous information and direction, but through “the diversity of knowing” (Bawden 2001), whereby each is engaged with their own epistemological dilemmas (Salner 1986). What results is connected by an ontology that recognises that we *belong* together.
That is, we are part of, and reflections of each other. This compares with an epistemology that suggests we belong together through thinking the same thing. A comparison of these two different notions of belonging is evoked in Bawden (2005a:106).

FROM SYSTEMIC FRAMEWORK TOWARDS A SYSTEMIC PARADIGM IN DEVELOPMENT WITH PEASANTS

In the last section of this chapter I would like to provide the context in which my systems thinking will be applied. This includes an outline of my characterisation of the notion of Majority World peasants, and a brief overview of the world problem of hunger and starvation. I also put forward that the persistence of unnecessary hunger suggests the need for a fundamental change in our approach to it. This fundamental change, I posit, is assisted by the notion of epistemic learning, an outline of which is provided in the remainder of the thesis.

What do I mean by Majority World peasants?

The term peasant was a term that I avoided using for considerable time in drafting my thesis, opting in preference for the term smallholder. But I sensed the word smallholder inferred a preoccupation with agriculture. A peasant, however, while often having small landholdings used for food production, and typically having little formal education, has a breadth of preoccupations which can include: water supply, housing, money, education, clothing, health services, sanitation, political and social standing along with food. Theirs is a whole of life experience focused on obtaining “a secure subsistence” (Scott 1976:vii), where priorities change with changing context over time, and to which the resources of the family, extended family, and friends are directed. So the term peasant is used in recognition of the broader interests of the peasant inherent in the term, rather than the narrow agricultural
focus I felt that the term smallholder was vested with. Such a view was also recognised by Neeson (1993:328) in regard to the peasantry of English society in the eighteenth-century. To the concept of a peasant as a rural cultivator, whose production is directed largely toward family consumption, Scott (1979:157) adds another feature – that of being part of a wider society that make claims which reduce their ability to secure their own subsistence.

I have also chosen the term *Majority World* instead of *Third World* or other synonyms such as: developing countries, lesser developed countries, and underdeveloped countries. This has been done in an attempt to maintain the progressive meaning inherent in the term Third World when it was first coined by Alfred Sauvey in the 1950s. According to Carmen (1996:26) Sauvey used the term Third World to represent an improved social order being brought through the hands of ordinary commoners of the “Third Estate.” The Third Estate class, or commoners, were seen in distinction to the First and Second Estates which were constituted within the social classes of the nobles and clergy. These latter two groups had monopolised power at the expense of the commoners. The political aspiration I seek to evoke by using the term Majority World is in harmony with the original use of the term Third World. This aspiration also emerges in Freire (1970a:20) and George (1984), whereby causes of hunger and poverty of the exploited class are seen not to arise from within their midst, but rather in the relationships they have with the dominant classes. Development within this progressive view then goes against the wish of the dominant classes for it to remain an apolitical process (Ferguson 1994). Through using the term Majority World I seek to revest development with the socio-political vision that the term Third World originally had, but which now appears to have been lost. This loss is exampled by Bauer (1981), who sees the Third World as the product of foreign aid. I would hope, along with Rist (1997:1), that we do not
Chapter 1: What is epistemic learning and how can it assist rural development through working with peasants?

shy away from the debate about the problems that “majority destitution poses in the face of minority opulence,” a question that Easterly also aptly raises.

How did some people (about 900 million of them) in Western Europe, North America, and parts of the Pacific Rim find prosperity, while 5 billion people live in poor nations? Why do 1.2 billion people live in extreme poverty on less than one dollar per day? (Easterly 2002b:289)

**How bad is the problem of chronic unnecessary hunger?**

Famine, often the only form of hunger the Minority World is cognisant of, is an exceptional form of hunger. The majority of deaths by starvation arise from chronic hunger, a product of “grinding poverty” like the 1.2 billion people referred to above living off US$1/day or less. Bennett (1987:preface) puts the number of people experiencing chronic hunger at 1 billion, and from this group 35,000/day (close to 13 million/year) die of hunger. This picture of hunger is in stark contrast to the picture of success that the development industry creates. Crump (1998:130) paints a depressing picture of the growing problem of hunger.

During the first half of the 1980s the number of 'hungry' people in the world reached 512 million. Every year another 40 million people are added to the total. By the year 2000, an estimated 588 million men, women and children will be seriously undernourished. Each year, some 40 million people die from hunger and hunger-related diseases.

The point is raised in Crump’s comments above of hunger-related diseases which DeRose, Messer et al. (1998:8) elaborate:

… most hunger-related deaths are due to infectious disease rather than starvation per se: with severe malnutrition, ability to resist infection deteriorates sharply.

Diseases like cholera are recognised as resulting from hunger. In addition there is the problem of micro-nutrient malnutrition that threatens the health and mental ability of 2 billion people worldwide, and is in the main preventable (Darnton-Hill 1998).

The people most exposed to poverty live in rural areas (McRobie 1981:49), and those most exposed to hunger ironically also live in rural areas (DeRose, Messer et
Hunger loses its visibility spread out in the countryside, and those least visible in the rural areas, women and children, experience it even more (Sen 1984:347). Even areas where food production may seem to be adequate, seasonal hunger may exist (DeRose, et al. 1998:60), especially just prior to harvest.

What makes all this hunger so disconcerting is that since the mid 1970’s there has been sufficient food in the world to feed everyone (DeRose, et al. 1998:54; George 1984). Best analysis suggests that people remain without food due to lack of entitlement, rather than lack of food availability (Sen 1981). This concept of entitlement was a significant shift from the Malthusian focus on the relationship between population numbers and food availability. With this concept Sen (1981:40, 1984) argued that famine could occur even when sufficient food was available. This was because those starving had inadequate entitlement to procure food via direct production, purchasing, exchanging food for labour, or acquiring it via social relationships (Sen 1981:2). Devereux (2001) has since critiqued Sen’s concept of entitlement (Sen 1984:497) as privileging economic and legal argument in which “there is no technical reason for markets to meet subsistence needs – and no moral or legal reason why they should.” In so doing the socio-political causes of hunger can be overlooked.

One example of an often excluded cause for hunger is the Western meat diet. Meat production is an extravagant user of available calories, with animals eating a significant amount of the world’s grain supplies (DeRose et al. 1998:54). George (1988) points to another major factor of hunger, majority world debt. Yet conventional development has shown its incapacity to significantly improve the situation.
The need for fundamental change

No doubt the daily calamity of hunger would be more noticed by us if it affected us or our families in some way. It seems we have a remarkable ability to cut ourselves off from the fate of others. Yet after 50 years of post-WWII development there appears to be a growing convergence that will ensure this problem gains more of our attention. Firstly, the development industry is running out of excuses and ideas. William Easterly, economist with the World Bank, points out how “foreign aid works for everyone except those it is intended to help,” and further, that it requires US$3,521 of aid to increase the income of a poor person by $3.65 per year (Easterly 2002a). Dollar and Pritchett (1998), along with Stiglitz (2002), also offer a critical analysis of development, having worked as economists with the World Bank. Sachs (2005:310) also highlights how little of the money spent on aid actually reaches the beneficiaries:

In 2002, the United States gave $3 per sub-Saharan African. Taking out the parts for U.S. consultants, food and other emergency aid, administrative costs, and debt relief, the aid per African came to the grand total of six cents. It's hardly shocking that Secretary O'Neill could find ‘nothing to show for it.’

To this critique there is a growing radical critique from those who do not argue from within the domain of economics, but from the kind of rage evoked by a continual travesty against humanity. Unger (1997) suggests the travesty of starvation is “morally monstrous” and demands immediate action, while Churchman (1982:17) uses the term “moral outrage,” and suggests it as a good starting point for systems planners.

…if the systems planner's germination was moral outrage and not just a mild felt need. In other words, I do not think we should view the major problems of the world today with calm objectivity. We shouldn't first ask ourselves for a precise and operational definition of malnutrition. We should begin with 'kids are starving in great numbers, damn it all!'

In so doing one moves away from emphasising ideas to emphasising commitment. A commitment that recognises the continuing injustice and the need to take action
Chapter 1: What is epistemic learning and how can it assist rural development through working with peasants?

that will correct it. Francis Lappe writing in George (1984) suggests that the current development model generates the hunger it claims to alleviate. Hancock (1991) provocatively suggests that the whole official aid industry should be dismantled as it is detrimental to the poor. He suggests that official aid represents money from the taxes of the relatively poor in the Minority World and used to pay rich autocrats in the Majority World. In this transaction between official aid bureaucrats and Majority World autocrats, the people taxed and the people meant to benefit are “incidental to the main event” (Hancock 1991:67).

The second emergent view that I believe is starting to make itself felt, is the notion that the development of the Minority World is dysfunctional, in that it is not sufficiently robust to enable the long-term survival of humanity, and that something is dramatically wrong. In the domain of agriculture, for example, we have a picture provided by Vanclay and Lawrence (1995) of modern agricultural practices that are putting at risk the very productive capacity of nature, and yet it is these practices that are being promoted as “development” for the Majority World! This is associated with a presumption that the Majority World can live as the Minority World when it is physically impossible. This is due to the finite nature of the resources upon which the Minority World lifestyle depends. This kind of development can be seen as the development of a false dream, and one that should be abandoned.

The last emergent idea that demands change lies in the increasing awareness peasants have through improved worldwide communications, of their position in the world in relation to others. Take the Chinese peasant who was adding night soil to her garden plot and who wished to go to Paris for holidays. She had seen other Chinese do it, why not she? (Röling 2002:12). This proximity of inequity has a profound influence on the way we feel (de Botton 2004). The starving are more
likely to be outraged by the obesity problems of the West, not just because they cannot obtain sufficient food to eat, but because they are starving while others are gorging themselves to excess on the “other side.” In Pretty’s words:

The consequences of food systems producing anonymous and homogeneous food are obesity and diet-related diseases for about one tenth of the world’s people, and persistent poverty and hunger for another seventh. (Pretty 2002:3)

What effects these growing problems will have is difficult to say. However, it seems to reflect a point whereby the dominated begin to look into the eyes of those that dominate them and question the differences they see. Maybe in that moment, the ideology of freedom in the Minority World is seen as a farce. In the words of Susan George in concluding (Bennett 1987:213):

Ideas are not lacking, but when the concept of ‘freedom’ is bastardized to the point that it becomes the ‘freedom’ of unlimited accumulation by an individual, a corporation or, for that matter, a nation or group of nations at the expense of others’ survival, something is deeply wrong with our system.

If we accept that something is, “deeply wrong with our system,” then it would make sense to consider the possibility of constructing a different system, and so move beyond being constrained within it. That is, move from Kitchener’s level 2 to level three learning, a point well made in Brown and Packham (1999:14).

**Epistemic learning as a response to the demand for fundamental change**

This thesis attempts to describe and explain my experience of epistemic learning (Kitchener 1983, King and Kitchener 1994) that resulted from my experiences of the failures of contemporary development in improving the every-day experiences of the peasants I worked with in the Solomon Islands and Mozambique. This is done through the dialectic that emerges between my overseas experiences and the research which follows. The resulting dialectic that occurs has been characterised differently in three sections.
Chapter 1: What is epistemic learning and how can it assist rural development through working with peasants?

In the first part (Chapters 1-4) I outline my progress in developing a concept of systemic participation, in my work with peasants both in the Solomon Islands and Mozambique. The impetus for such a radical change in approach was provided by the failure of the contemporary paradigm of development to provide me with examples of success. The guide for my new approach was provided through a systemic reframing of “expert with peasant,” and a notion of development as intercultural interaction, along with my other systemic orientations provided during my time at Hawkesbury. Such a process evolves through participation and so there cannot be any blueprint for either practitioner or researcher. What I outline in Chapters 1 and 2 are perspectives I gained largely toward the end of my research in order to assist the reader in understanding my approach. The systemic reframing of my practice and research was also assisted through the concepts of autoethnography. Within this concept or manner of thinking, a dialectic interaction is seen to occur between self and society, where self is not seen to be simply a product of society’s template, but a category that can also be seen to be self-forming while at the same time as influencing society. In Chapters 2, 3, and 4 I seek to evoke a sense of my epistemic learning in the Solomon Islands and Mozambique as naïve epistemic learning. This learning was intuitively practiced, informed through an iconic systemic reframing of the expert that inturn influenced a reframing of project implementation. My experiences in Chapters 3 and 4 portray an emergent practice of development as systemic participation as being surprisingly easy. However, by the end of Chapter 4, a crisis is reached that puts my emergent experiences and thoughts of systemic participation in jeopardy.

The second part of the thesis (Chapter 5) provides a watershed between Part 1 and Part 3. With the help of Freire’s (1970a) notion of conscientização, I have come to depict Part 2 as the realisation of my paradigmatic entrapment. At the end of Part 1
Chapter 1: What is epistemic learning and how can it assist rural development through working with peasants?

of the thesis, I was unravelled by the increasing resistance shown by dominant expatriates and their institutions towards my practice of systemic participation in my overseas work. In Part 2, I explain my unravelling experience in Part 1 as a clash of paradigms. This is exacerbated by my attempts in Part 1, to explain and understand my naive systemic development in terms of the mechanistic paradigm from which I was emerging, and which informed contemporary development. Part 2 of the thesis ends with my realisation that I had to give up the contemporary paradigm and seek an explanation for my experiences elsewhere.

Part 3 (Chapters 6-9) results from the motivation provided in Part 2 to eschew the explanations arising within a mechanistic paradigm. In so doing it becomes an odyssey toward the theoretical construction of a new paradigm that resonates with my systemic framework and my experiences. Within Part 3 I found resonance with the work of Foucault, Uphoff, Maturana and Varela, and Habermas. Foucault assisted me to deny the “necessities” of dominant culture (Valero-Silva 1994:221), such as unnecessary hunger, and participate in the development of “truth” which I did through recounting a genealogy of unnecessary hunger in Chapter 6. Within this genealogy I come to see unnecessary hunger as a created condition that can be reversed – not an original condition. In Chapter 7, through the work of Uphoff, I gained confidence to focus on peasant experience in seeking to change disciplinary science, and to engage previously foreign disciplines, such as quantum physics, to inform new directions. In Maturana and Varela’s work, my newly emerging interest in an onto-epistemology informed by quantum physics grows, as it is further informed by an onto-epistemology that takes into account the self-forming (autopoietic) nature of living organisms. This explanation evolves within a constitutive onto-epistemology that makes redundant the transcendent onto-epistemology of a mechanistic paradigm. This redundancy of transcendent truth
initially resulted in confusion and a sense of hopelessness, but in time, led me to the importance of the participating self and the responsibility entailed in choosing. This concept of choice is used in the work of Perry, who proposes that learning development should encourage the choice for commitment to self-actualisation within an environment of contextual relativism. Chapter 7 finishes with the work of Habermas. Here I find an explanation of the social and philosophical dynamic arising between Western society and its institutions, referred to by Habermas respectively as the *Lifeworld* and the *System*. Within this explanation, the colonisation of the *Lifeworld* through the strategic and instrumental action of the *System*, achieves its strategic and instrumental causes via the media of power and money. However, this is not seen as inevitable. Habermas endeavours to show how the *Lifeworld* can take control of the *System* via communicative action.

Chapter 8, after gaining support from a re-writing of a history of the problem, and gaining theoretical support for systemic participation, seeks to provide an explanation of my epistemic journey from which the notion of systemic participation has emerged. The phases of this journey are described as: naïve, secondary, and tertiary epistemic learning, in which the focus is respectively on a systemic reframing of action, theory, and institutions. Finally, in Chapter 9 I relate the three phases of my epistemic learning to the three parts of my thesis. I draw on the work of Skolimowski (1994) to provide a perspective within which my Phase 3, or post-thesis activities, will focus on; that is, a systemic reframing of development institutions.
CHAPTER 2

A STARTING POINT FOR EPISTEMIC LEARNING IN DEVELOPMENT THEORY, PRACTICE, AND IN RESEARCH ON THEORY AND PRACTICE

Our period is not defined by the triumph of technology for technology’s sake, as it is not defined by art for art’s sake, as it is not defined by nihilism. It is action for a world to come, transcendence of its period – transcendence of self which calls for epiphany of the Other.

EMANUEL LEVINAS

INTRODUCTION

The sense of epistemic change and learning provided in Chapter 1 was assisted by the distinction made by Kitchener (1983) between cognition, meta-cognition, and epistemic cognition. This was further enhanced by Kuhn (1970, 1977) and his distinction between: a) normal science that operates within an existing paradigm or symbol of successful practice, and b) extra-ordinary or revolutionary science which is the crucible for a new paradigm.

But we are faced with a dilemma with both epistemic learning and paradigm change, in that there are no directions or methodologies that we can take to ensure arrival at a particular destination. This sense of disengagement with what we know, and engagement with the unknown, is illustrated by Salner (1986, 2001) through the proposition of learning as an “unravelling” experience, rather than an “enlarging” of the boundaries of our knowledge. Vivid imagery of this kind of learning is exampled in Canto XXVII of Dante’s Purgatorio (Binyon 1938) where Virgil, the student, must
pass through the inferno alone in order to pass into paradise. In the epic poem *Odyssey* (Homer 1946), Odysseus is given the advice: “You will never see your home again...by sailing there directly. You must detour to the land of Death, there to consult the blind prophet Tiresias... .” Perry (1999:239) uses the term groping to implicate a sense of working within the unknown. Mithun (2003) provides for a metaphor of epistemic learning in the context of the work of anthropologist Franz Boas, and his study of North American languages.

Franz Boas was quite different from his European predecessors... he recognised right away that you don't describe these languages in terms of Greek grammar or Latin grammar, you don't just look for the six cases that are supposed to be there. You sit and let it happen. You let people talk, and then you see the structures that evolve as they speak. Which means you see distinctions you would never have dreamed possible, and you see generalisations you would never have dreamed possible...

Applying this idea in the domain of development leads to a concept like that evoked in the title of the book, *We make the road by walking* (Horton and Freire 1990). But unlike cognition and meta-cognition or the puzzle-solving of normal science, in epistemic learning we do not start with a paradigm. Rather, we start with a problematic that would suggest significant failure of the existing paradigm (Kuhn 1970:61). This requires the casting aside of the existing paradigm, following Einstein’s observation that, “the more significant problems we face cannot be solved at the same level of thinking we were at when we created those problems” (Bawden 1999:3), and engage the unknown. This requires an ability to entertain nonsense, a nonsense from which a new paradigm may form and vest it with sense.

Reframing, in the sense provided by Strom (2000), can provide support for engaging in the development of a new paradigm, and eventually over time a different worldview. It is this re-framing, assisted by the symbolism of quantum physics, where the scientist is seen as part of her/his science and the developer as part of his/her development, that I would like to focus on in this chapter. Within this
reframing a constitutive onto-epistemology emerges, with the development practitioner participating within their development with the peasant. I seek to understand this reframing in respect to: a) the theory that informed my practice during my time at Hawkesbury, b) my practice of development in my first overseas experience in the Solomon Islands, and c) my researching of my theory and practice that is this thesis. This reframing of my theory, practice, and research forms the focus for the rest of this chapter.

EPISTEMIC CHANGE AND A PRAXIS OF DEVELOPMENT AT HAWKESBURY – REFRAMING THEORY

The Hawkesbury perspective on the training of graduates in agriculture during the early 1980s, and later postgraduates in Australia, has had decades of exposure. The approach taken and developed since then is described in Bawden and Macadam (1983), Packham and Bawden (1985), Bawden (1988a, 1988b, 1990, 1992a, 1995b, 2003), Macadam and Packham (1992), and Bawden and Packham (1993). The most current and complete picture of the perspective that has evolved from this experience is provided in a recent special edition of the journal of Systems Research and Behavioral Science. In that issue various authors who had participated in the transformations at Hawkesbury, reflect on their current understanding of the perspectives that formed and emerged from it (Bawden 2005a, Bawden 2005b, Kuhn and Woog 2005, Packham and Sriskandarajah 2005, Russell and Ison 2005, Valentine 2005). Unfortunately there are not many academic reviews of the course undertaken by students, so I feel it is appropriate to include a critical review of my experiences at Hawkesbury in Appendix 2.
Chapter 2: A starting point for epistemic learning in development theory, practice, and in research on theory and practice

Coming home to a place I had never been

My choice of enrolling in an Agricultural degree at the then Hawkesbury Agricultural College – and now University of Western Sydney, Hawkesbury campus, which I will refer to simply as Hawkesbury - was a simple one. Coming from Adelaide and wanting to learn how to grow food so I could help the starving and hungry, made seeking an agricultural degree seem inevitable for me. I had wanted to gain the best qualification I could, and so applied to agricultural colleges in South Australia, Queensland, and New South Wales. In my dealings with the former two organisations I felt like an object, like a number. I sensed that my education at those institutions would be something done to me. This was most starkly brought home to me in an interview in Queensland. Most of the interview time was spent with a preoccupation in trying to ascertain how the grading on my South Australian high school qualification, transposed to the entry grading for the Queensland institution. This contrasted amazingly with the sense of belonging that I felt during the interview at Hawkesbury. At that interview I felt that who I was mattered to them, and was significant to what I would do at Hawkesbury. I felt “at home,” even though I had never been there before. It is a feeling that I have wanted to maintain in both the practice of my overseas work and also in my research: a feeling that I also wanted to afford the peasants and local extensionists, to feel at home with the projects we were all a part of. It is this sense of belonging that still is apparent within the Hawkesbury Diaspora (Bawden 2005a:106). This sense of systemic belonging is onto-epistemologically founded. Though one is part of something that is bigger than oneself, there is knowledge that one is able to influence it. This is in contrast to being directed by the larger unit through ideological conformity. Within this onto-epistemology of systemic belonging, there is a commitment to understand the other as a means of a continuing dialectic with the self that continually seeks to be more. The sense of connectedness that I felt with the starving and hungry, seemed to be
supported by a similar connectedness that Hawkesbury was fostering with the farmers and agricultural community at large, including the students. A move that gained currency through the important role of the problematic as illustrated in the words of Freire (1970a:vii):

Problematization, which means both asking questions and calling into question and is therefore a challenging attitude, is, at one and the same time the beginning of an authentic act of knowing and the beginning of an act of subversion of 'overdetermination,' that is, subversion of praxis inverted upon man.

This over-determining can be seen in the paradigm within which we have operated, prior to the realisation and growing acceptance of its failure that is brought to our attention by an emerging problematic.

The problematic of contemporary Australian agricultural training - a Hawkesbury perspective

The Hawkesbury perspective, as I sensed it, was twofold. The first, emanated from the observation of the contemporary practice of agriculture as depleting both the physical and social fabric within which it was constituted (Bawden and Macadam 1983:10). This is evident in the decline of our physical ecology through: soil erosion, soil salinity, soil acidity, chemical pollution, and increasing pest and weed resistances to agricultural chemicals. More broadly Bawden (1983:3) noted the decline in rural communities through declining terms of trade, and other economic pressures, together with the mal-distribution of food resources on a worldwide scale. More recently Vanclay and Lawrence (1995) and Tudge (2003b) have made similar observations. These views identified Australian agriculture, and more generally Western agriculture, had a clear need to develop a focus on sustainability. In response to this need Bawden and his colleagues questioned the appropriateness of the discipline-based learning pedagogy of contemporary agriculture.
Chapter 2: A starting point for epistemic learning in development theory, practice, and in research on theory and practice

The second problematic that arose from the first, posed the question: “What would agricultural education that addressed these problems, and communicated with all participants in order to confront these complex and interrelated problems look like?” Such an approach is founded on the understanding that the existing paradigm has in a large part failed. This is illustrated in Bawden (1987a:140) where the disconnection between traditional teaching and learning, traditional research and farmer needs, and between disciplinary reductionism and our experience of the world is noted. The way forward, according to Bawden (1987a:153), is not a continual addiction to the status quo, and its dependence on education as a “transmission of facts,” but rather, the challenge and courage to adapt, “to change the way our education organisations function and are structured.” Here, learning is seen through the eyes of David Kolb as, “the creation of knowledge through the transformation of experience” (Bawden 1992c) [my emphasis].

Reframing agricultural education

The Hawkesbury Approach that emerged from this problematic reframed Hawkesbury as a learning institution apart from the agricultural community, to one that was increasingly a part of it. This resulted in members from the agricultural industry, farmers, and government organisations participating with staff in developing and guiding the new course, so that it would also be open to the views and experiences of its students. This reframing of staff with students resulted in three functional changes in the course.

1. Weekly course-wide student convocations with staff that discussed the direction and content of the course.

2. An almost daily contact with group facilitators, who were open to student conversations, as well as a broader openness displayed by all course staff to student inquiries.
3. Education moved from being predominantly a one-way flow of information to being reflexive and dynamic. The staff facilitators, course organisers, and students became a part of the wider agricultural learning community.

Re-structuring agricultural education

The structure of learning that resulted in this reframing was completely different to my previous education. It reflected on the problematical, and the re-framing of different relationships and processes that resulted in a transformation of participation and connectedness between people, experiences, the process of articulating problems, and supporting institutions. Significant changes in the structure and relationships of education arose through the interaction between group learning, changed roles, staged learning, and student attributes.

Group learning

Group learning was the most significant difference for me. To be placed in a room with about eight other students and a facilitator was an amazingly challenging situation. Increasing the sense of challenge was the need to produce joint reports! The learning dynamic changed from primarily teacher to learner, to learner with other learners, and learners with facilitator. The dichotomy of my own knowledge and views was first challenged by having to listen to others who held views that were often different to mine, and indeed unique to those that held them. At first, out of frustration in listening to eight different ideas, and with time running out to complete a task, our group would run with one particular idea and drop the others. In time, as we began to know each other’s experience and skills, we began to differentiate between the different meanings of the same words spoken by different people. This progressed to the discussion of multiple meanings and eventually a convergence on a normative outcome.
In retrospect this was similar to the progressive learning ability observed by Perry in university students, progressing from the categories of dualism and multiplicity, towards contextual relativism (Perry 1999). Having about eight such student groups in the entire year cohort we were able to get an idea of how other groups operated as well. The most successful, in my observation, were those who shared leadership depending on the context and individual skills and experience of participants, rather than those who had one or two strong leaders with the rest of the group largely following them. These latter groups tended to only draw on the strong motivation and experiences of a small part of their group and the results reflected this. There was also a temptation to escape the complexity of these social interactions that initially seemed so cumbersome, laborious, and ineffective. I found out how poor a communicator I really was. But in time, within our group, we found that short-cuts to the group process proved a false-economy in regard to the quality of outcomes. Thus there arose a *commitment to process and participation*.

**Roles**

The roles of all participants both informed, and grew out of, the group learning process. *Informed* because we were advised at the start that the lecturers were now facilitators, and *grew out of*, because in a group situation we began to see that there were some things the facilitators knew better than us, and others where we knew better than them. We began to see first hand the contextuality of knowledge, both between ourselves and between us and our facilitators. We were encouraged to seek “expertise” outside of the university and this was assisted with one half-year semester spent living and working on a commercial farm. This change in roles affected the relationship between teacher and learner: from being respectively knowers and learners, to that of *co-learners in the quest to transform the problematical*. 
Staged learning
Learning was staged so that the learner progressed from staff initiated projects in the early part of the course to essentially self-initiated projects in the latter part. Thus the students were able to fashion themselves towards their own particular career interests and not according to abstract disciplinary categories. The variety of student interests and experiences were amazingly different compared to traditional disciplinary categories.

Student attributes
Emergent from the Hawkesbury perspective, and the resulting reframing of agricultural education, a Hawkesbury education was seen as fostering three main attributes in students. These were attributes of a systems perspective on agriculture, autonomous learning capabilities, and effective communication competencies. A visiting academic from the University of Minnesota characterised Hawkesbury students in the following manner:

An autonomous learner, a systems agriculturist and an effective communicator that has the attitudes (feelings), cognitive (knowledge) and conative (doing skills) needed to deal with constant change and multifaceted, complex problems of the real world. (Cardwell 1987:19)

The notion of agricultural systems (Spedding 1979) first adopted in the course took a fairly rudimentary “hard systems” approach. It evolved, however, to become softer and reflexive as Hawkesbury came to see agriculture as a human endeavour, bearing the characteristics of human activity systems as described by Checkland (1981). It was during this later period of the course that I came to work with Checkland’s (1981) Soft Systems Methodology (SSM). Autonomous learning, within the course was reflected in Adult Learning principles that were problem or experience-based (Kolb, Rubin et al. 1979; Freire 1970a), and learner-centred (Boud 1981). This kind of learning was focussed on the vital daily interests of farmers and students, individually and as groups. Jarvis (1983:170&171)
characterises this kind of learning as an “active process in which the teacher neither controls the knowledge learned nor the learning outcomes.” Lastly, the principles of effective communication drew particularly on the work of Mackay and Jones 1982 (Better Communication), and Jensen (1982) (Language and Communication). These resources encouraged me to develop my view of communication as an imperfect and imprecise process that required continual iteration, and a move towards an understanding of self and of others. I came to view communication as a sharing of meaning rather than using it strategically for personal benefit.

**Soft systems thinking**

While I endeavoured to balance my education with operational agricultural and horticultural skills, along with the theory and technology of traditional agriculture and horticulture, it was the revolutionary nature of systems thinking that was of the greatest interest to me. This radical approach to thinking not only enabled me to learn traditional skills, technology, and theory, but also went beyond the conventional paradigm in its ability to recognise the agricultural problematic and its implication for new kinds of learning that can deal with complexity and a re-framing of participation. Using Checkland’s key SSM concept that an ideal conceptual system is created from within an unstructured problem situation, and then compared with the “real world” (Checkland 1981, 1989), I was able, in concert with some colleagues in the last year of my course at Hawkesbury, to develop a notion of development with peasants as intercultural interaction. This process involved the mutual simultaneous “shaping” of all parties. The resulting phased progression of this process was seen by the interaction between the categories of preparation, planning, performing and pondering. The details of this process are outline in Appendix 1. One of the most significant breakthroughs with our use of Checkland’s SSM was the need to adapt the commercial context in which the methodology was
developed to our socially progressive purposes. This is resonant in our re-categorisation of the distinct categories of Checkland’s participators as clients, actors, and owners in a commercial environment, to all participators in development taking on all three roles. This dramatically changed the power dynamics of the process. Interestingly, many years later, Luckett and his colleagues working in South Africa within a rural community development context also note the weakness of the Soft Systems Methodology in its failure to address the problem of power in a development context (Luckett et al. 2001).

Framework politics

While the new framework which was guiding the course at Hawkesbury seemed so natural to me, it was obvious that other students and some staff did not take to it so easily. Many did what they could to change it, or sought to avoid its more radical elements. This was evident to me within the course, with staff moves in and out, and a move by what I thought was a majority of students early in the course, wanting to change it back to its old form. All the students had participated in individual interviews in which the nature of the new course was discussed. Why had they not understood these discussions? This highlighted to me the difficulty of trying to communicate concepts within the new framework, to people who interpret such ideas through the old paradigm. In commercial life outside the course, I found a preferred career pathway blocked to me because the relevant government officer did not want to employ anyone from Hawkesbury, as he did not agree with the approach. In my first job with an agricultural consulting company, I undertook a consultancy where I decided to use the systems approach. Following his reading of my report the supervising director said it was “bullshit,” and so I re-wrote it in conventional terms. Amazingly the director from this company had participated in the community group that had assisted in guiding the development of the
Hawkesbury course! I found this particularly ironic as it was the week before I was to graduate from Hawkesbury with merit and the College medal for academic achievement. So although I thoroughly enjoyed the course and found it very useful, I was confronted with the everyday reality outside of it. In relation to my career objectives, I thought it could be to my detriment if I continued to overtly practice my new found systems knowledge and systemic competencies. Paradoxically it was my systemic understanding and framework that I decided to ignore that provided me with the impetus to move closer toward the peasant’s experience. This led me to work overseas directly with peasants, yet with a mindset that reverted to seeking traditional knowledge and experience in development.

**RE-FRAMING DEVELOPMENT PRACTICE AND THE DEVELOPMENT PRACTITIONER – MY FIRST OVERSEAS POSITION IN THE SOLOMON ISLANDS**

The reframing of my development practice occurred in spite of my regression to the contemporary development paradigm. But this regression was short lived, as rather than finding the development success that I expected, I was confronted with gross failure. I would now like to discuss two aspects of my regression to contemporary development and my observation of development’s gross failure.

**Regressing to the contemporary development paradigm**

Regardless of the Hawkesbury perspective of the problematic of Australian agriculture with which I agreed, together with its systemic approach to learning, the persistence of the conventional paradigm remained in my mind. This persistence was enhanced by the political resistance to the Hawkesbury perspective I experienced in my post-Hawkesbury work life. This led me to believe that I would be able to learn conventionally from the development success I expected to find in
Chapter 2: A starting point for epistemic learning in development theory, practice, and in research on theory and practice

the Solomon Islands. Perry refers to such an experience as a “Functional Regression” (Perry 1999:xvii) that occurs as a result of adult learners being placed in a foreign context. The regression is seen to pass as the learner becomes familiar and comfortable with the new environment. Wallerstein (1991:2) calls it “backsliding,” demonstrating how we are so enveloped within the old paradigm that we need to “unthink” our old assumptions. My sense of it was that I just wanted to get on with what I wanted to do: to work successfully overseas in assisting the production of food. I felt the certainty of my Hawkesbury experience was wavering in the face of contradiction. In some ways I now feel I was taking a short-cut, like we did in the early stages of our group learning at Hawkesbury: the type I experienced that normally did not pay off. In other ways I just wanted to feel normal. The double whammy I felt with systems thinking was that its foreignness made it close to impossible to talk about to local Solomon Islanders or to expatriates who were in the main, more firmly entrenched in the dominant paradigm than anyone. Interestingly, Checkland has recently provided a blunt warning in regard to the use of systems thinking with non-systems thinkers.

Therefore the first factor with regard to the introduction of SSM to a problem situation is the presence of natural systems thinkers. If none should be present, SSM is likely to fall on infertile ground, and prove unfruitful. (Checkland 2000:813)

In a Kuhnian sense I could say that the conventional paradigm had not yet shown itself to me to be a complete failure in the field of development. Yet I was not untouched by my Hawkesbury experience, and still felt a sense of connection with the starving that had led me there in the first place. Through my Hawkesbury experience, I had reframed agricultural development in Australia to include all participants (including the natural environment), and I had done this intellectually in my SSM concept of development as intercultural interaction. This reframing that provided the impetus to relentlessly move toward the unknown, in this case the unknown lives and experiences of peasants, helped me make the decision to leave
Chapter 2: A starting point for epistemic learning in development theory, practice, and in research on theory and practice

the comfort of my previous position with an Australian international agricultural development firm. Conceptually I was in a kind of a liminal zone or in-between world, like being at the airport where one has not yet fully left or fully arrived. This is a world with which I would come to be so familiar with, as I found myself between the person I know myself to have been, and the possible person that I can see myself becoming. Maybe I should start to describe my personhood in terms of a dynamic transition, rather than as a fixed entity. Yet, sometimes one just wants to be comfortable with what is, and I guess that is what in part explains my reversion to wanting to learn from others about successful development in the Solomon Islands.

My encounter with contemporary development in the Solomon Islands

I negotiated a six month volunteer position, which extended itself to nine months, with an Australian NGO, the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA). The position was to assist in the continued development of a 16ha fruit tree orchard. This orchard had been established with $200,000 from AusAID, the Australian Government development agency. Its purpose was to provide a source of income for a privately run High School with about 360 boarding students. An expatriate had overseen the development, and most of the trees were in the order of 3 years of age. The orchard had been in decline since his departure.

In my transit to the Solomon Islands via Port Moresby I experienced for the first time a sense of being a foreign oddity. I felt as if my whiteness screamed out to everyone in this sea of black-skinned humans. It was hard to know whether this novelty resided in me, outside of me, or a bit of both. Yet in time I came accustomed to it in Honiara, the capital of the Solomon Islands. From then on I only was aware of my whiteness when I was in a place where white expatriates did not frequent, like boat voyages between islands or in remote village “steepland” food
gardens. This sense of being an object of foreign scrutiny provides a good contrast, and starting point, to debate the often assumed expatriate view of the local that will be further discussed in the next section of this thesis on autoethnography.

Upon arrival at the high school the local headmaster added to my brief. In addition to providing support for the fruit orchard, he wanted me to support the local Farm Managers of the other farms that were located on the school estate. This included the only dairy in the Solomon Islands, a market garden, a pineapple plantation, and root-crop production that provided the staple food for the school cafeteria.

Reframing the role of the expert

While I intended to learn from the successes of conventional development, I found that upon arriving in the Solomon Islands I could not bring myself to take on the role of an “expert.” Personally it seemed such nonsense, and even outrageous, that expatriates could ever assume this role. Here I was, in a foreign country, with a foreign culture, many foreign languages, a foreign environment, foreign agriculture and foreign food. “How could I possibly present myself as an expert?” To do so would be to ignore all my own ignorance and all the knowledge of the locals: to set my own foreign (to the locals) knowledge up as the only knowledge worthy of attention. Yet that was the role model that contemporary development largely provided me. My Hawkesbury experience had provided me with an example of reframing the teacher/student relationship and I thought I could do something similar to the expert/local relationship. It was here that the notion of development as intercultural interaction and the three Hawkesbury graduate attributes of systems thinking, adult learning (that is built on the view of a learner as self-directing), and communication as the sharing of meaning, assisted my move towards the possibility of a relationship with locals in a manner that was more participative, and more
Chapter 2: A starting point for epistemic learning in development theory, practice, and in research on theory and practice

respecting of who they were, and what they were doing. I marvelled at the powerful dogma that could turn an ignorant foreign visitor into an expert and a local resident into an ignoramus! In my reframing of expatriate and local on the same level, what became important to me was not what I knew, but what I did not know about all those foreign elements that I have previously mentioned. These unknowns were the key in providing a context, and through which the relevance of my knowledge would be assessed. How could I possibly be effective if I remained ignorant of them?

Engaging with the local

In engaging with the local people I felt a need to lose my “expertness,” and to permit a closer association with them, asking questions of them and learning from them. My neatly discrete phased categories of preparation, planning, performing, and pondering; that emerged from my notion of development as intercultural interaction, gave way to the chaotic interaction of these categories within my experience. Rather than phases they became elements or principles of interaction. Everyday was a continual iterative cycling through these elements of development.

This engagement was assisted from my Hawkesbury experience of working in groups and the concomitant value of communication as a sharing of meaning. If the whole group was to take advantage of each member of the group, then there needed to be a growing understanding of each other. Along with this came a growing understanding of self that is inevitable through engaging with the perceptions of others, that also includes their perception of you. The on-farm learning experience of the Hawkesbury course had highlighted the farmer as an effective knower and someone whose knowledge and experience was worth knowing. I found myself engaging more and more with the Solomon Islanders. I learnt to speak Pidgin English which most locals spoke as a means of
communicating across their different language groups. Like the Australian aboriginals, Solomon Islanders are really a group of nations within a nation - something that many Australians find hard to understand. I had meals with the locals, socialised with them, used their kind of transport, and worked alongside them. In my reframed perspective I needed to learn from them before I felt I could apply my knowledge in a context that was useful for them.

An emerging problematic experience of contemporary development

While I was working through my emerging participative and communicative role, and moving closer to the local people, I was also coming to understand the farm environment, particularly, that of the newly developed fruit orchard. Unfortunately I did not find the success that I hoped to see. Gross failure became evident in two major areas: firstly, the fruit orchard was a technical disaster, and secondly the farms that were supposed to provide a balanced diet for the students failed to do so.

I saw four main reasons for the failure of the fruit orchard. These reasons lay with the orchard’s technical foundation, location, marketing plan, and continual technical complexity. The technical foundations for the project were a disaster. The expatriate who had implemented the project under the direction of the School Board had come to the school as a builder and built some houses. While he was there he gained an interest in agriculture and so they gave him the job of developing the orchard. The avocado and rambutan trees were not true to type and the mango trees, the 10ha centrepiece of the project, were of a variety that had not previously been tested in the Solomon Islands – the Bowen Mango, a variety grown in Australia. The mango trees had not been pruned appropriately and had significant infestations of both leaf miner and tip borer that had stunted their natural growth. Spraying these pests proved extremely problematic due to the frequent rain and hot
and humid conditions that made wearing protective equipment close to impossible. The main orchard area was located on the flood plain of the meandering Lungga River about a 25 minute tractor journey along a bumpy dirt road from the school. A local source advised me that he had told the expatriate “expert” that the orchard should never be located where it was, as it was at risk of being destroyed by flooding. The distance from the school, and lack of good transport access, made servicing the project very difficult. The marketing plan was not much better. It was devised by the expatriate President of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church Mission. He had a friend who chartered Fokker Friendship planes and the plan was to charter a plane and send the produce to Australia before the Bowen Mango season started there. When I asked him about post-harvest care and phyto-sanitary requirements I drew a complete blank. The complexity required in management was such that the local farm manager could not cope with the development, and this was the cause of their need for assistance so soon after the other expatriate’s departure. This was not helped by the other three faults of the project.

A more disconcerting problematic was that the very farms that were meant to provide a balanced diet for the school students were not doing that at all. The mangoes from the fruit orchard were intended to be exported to Australia. The vegetables produced in the market garden, along with the milk and pineapples from the other farms, were primarily sold to expatriates, the local elite or in the local market. What remained was the cassava which was close to the only food served in the cafeteria. There was a persistent rumour that the students were subsisting on a diet of only cassava for months at a time. On several occasions I unexpectedly dropped into the cafeteria for a meal to find myself holding a plate full of boiled cassava, nothing more. I was not surprised then to hear rumours of students stealing from the school farms.
What was disconcerting was not that these problems existed but that they were not learnt from, or addressed in any coherent manner. I could not find any documentation of the fruit orchard project from ADRA, AusAID, or the school! It was like the project had never existed. Following the flooding of the mango orchard during Cyclone Namu (see Photo 4), the project was silently written off. We had gone some way in addressing the problems the orchard farm was having and had seen alternative appropriate uses for the area that would assist in providing a more balanced diet for the students, but there was no interest in these alternatives.

You’re different from the other expatriates

When the local farm managers saw me asking questions of them they started to feel comfortable asking questions of me. I would not just provide them with an answer but also show them how the answer could be worked out. This involved facilitating them in gaining understanding of particular technical problems, or taking them to other people with appropriate expertise. Other sources of expertise included the national research station and other local producers. The Farm Manager of the market garden, for example, did not know the area of the market garden he managed. Any order of inputs he made, was simply a guess or a repeat of what always had been done. I tutored him so that he could work out the areas for crops and also how to translate that into amounts of inputs used.

Surprisingly, at one casual social gathering with the farm managers and agricultural teachers, they said that I was different to other expatriates. I asked them why they said that, and they replied that expatriates with whom they had previously worked, had kept relevant information to themselves, and then took it all with them when they left. They said that I shared information with them, taught them how to access information, and developed useful information which enabled them to make
decisions when I was not there. Ironically, I also found that some expatriates who were meant to be training them in the past were also in need of training themselves! The builder turned horticulturalist being a case in point.

**Expat-centric development**

As a result of this first overseas experience, and its commitment to working through a participative framework, I began to see what I had understood as development as “expat-centric development.” That is, development as expatriates chose so often to see it. But I found expat-centric development remained largely oblivious and ignorant of the richness of local life and of their development aspirations. It was foreign to them, and they seemed to think they could not remain experts if they engaged with it.

Expat-centric development provided an explanation for me in regard to why experts tended to focus on the form of agriculture occurring in their country of origin, while at the same time overlooking examples of local development. It explained why there was such an interest in having a dairy which provided milk to the local tourist hotel. Why the farms focussed on technical expertise, and on varieties of crops that were available and suitable in the countries of the expatriates’ origin. Why the expatriates were so keen to get locals to learn artificial insemination in Australia when they could not even manage a natural breeding program. Why the expatriate that took over from me decided to make yoghurt from the milk and sell it to the tourist hotel. Manning puts this expatriate tendency toward their cultural preferences well:

We [US agriculture] grow wheat, corn, rice and sugar not because that is what people want or need, but because that’s what we know how to grow well. (Manning 2004:189)
Expat-centric development seemed to be providing the right answer to the wrong question, and in the process, examples of successful local development were so often unseen or overlooked.

Two examples of local development attracted my attention and I found it strange that other expatriates had not noticed them. Both occurred without any expatriate assistance or advice. Firstly, the staple food needs (cassava) of the students was consistently supplied throughout the year. This occurred without the use of purchased inputs such as fertilisers, pesticides, herbicides, or plant materials and occurred under the supervision of the least educated farm manager - who incidentally had the most difficulty in gaining access to the farm tractors. If excess cassava was produced it gained a very good price at the market. Unfortunately it was always given the least resources and was considered the lowliest of all farm activities. I observed that the farm managers undertaking expat-centric production and working on the latest expat-centric priorities, had greater prestige and power than their colleagues. The other example was my observation of the farm managers’ cultivation of Chinese cabbage at the rear of their homes and selling the produce at the local markets. I estimated that they could double their wage by doing this. I had no doubt that if these two examples of self-development were built upon, it would dramatically improve agricultural development across the school.

Lack of history

Arriving at the school was like arriving at a place with no history. My experience was that there were two versions of reality, the expatriate version and the local version; and both were self-serving, unreliable, and uncertain. Yet by holding these different stories within and between these groups in tension, a composite picture could emerge. The advantage of such a position being perpetuated was that the
expatriates could retain their expat-centredness. Further, the locals could massage the direction of the expatriate by telling their own history that would influence the direction of the expatriates without having to contradict them, or tell them they were wrong. In the remainder of my time I decided that I would write a history of development at the school, the farm resources available, and the husbandry practices for all the crops grown. I then left that report with farm managers, the school, and relevant expatriates. I hoped that this would go some way in bringing the expatriate and local stories together, as well as providing a much needed information resource for the local farm managers.

REFRAMING MY RESEARCH OF THEORY AND PRACTICE IN DEVELOPMENT

My theoretical construction of agriculture as it had developed at Hawkesbury had been framed by the problematic, that Australian agricultural practices were having adverse impacts on the physical and social environments, and that these adverse affects were largely being overlooked. A profound impact of this reframing was to see all participants as both knowers and learners. My practice of development overseas, which I will continue to talk about in the next two chapters, was reframed by my observation that the development practices of the projects of which I was a part, were having an adverse impact on the very people they were meaning to help. A profound impact of this reframing was to see all participants as partly developed and partly undeveloped. This provided me with the possibility of seeing peasants as development practitioners in their own right. Both changes in theory and practice were prompted by the awareness of a problematic situation. This awareness was assisted through a reframing that was informed by the symbolism of quantum physics and evoked in Strom (2000). This symbolism was aided by an experiential
approach that muddled through a problem situation with a faith that a constituent onto-epistemology would emerge, and in time a new paradigm could result.

What is interesting here is that there are no blueprints. Life has gone from an outside reality that is mechanistic and linear to one in which the researcher is part of, and is characterised by being organic and variable. The implications for this reframing are just as profound for researching about theory and practice as they are for theory and practice in themselves. Research that was informed by the symbolism of classical physics I found no longer appropriate, as it had informed the sort of practice which I found did not improved the lives of the peasants in a way that either its practitioners claimed, or that I experienced. So I was not planning on seeking an answer within that domain. Although due to its enculturation, I did at times experience regressive tendencies, similar to my practice that regressed to old patterns of depending upon others for my learning. The beginning of my research was similar in nature to the beginning of my development theory at Hawkesbury and my development practice in the Solomon Islands. A feeling of being unravelled, a feeling that the map that you had been given to direct you was no longer good, and you had to focus on the terrain and topography that lay before you, and try and work another map out for yourself. In time, what was a burden becomes a joy, for in moments of being lost one rediscovers the self in a way that it was never known before. Epistemic possibilities arise such that we can experience a metamorphosis, whereby the known becomes foreign and the foreign known.

In the early stages of my research I thought I would take security in the papers and understanding of my principle supervisor, but fortunately he had the wisdom to guide me towards my own dilemmas and experience. Following more than ten years absence, three initial impressions stood out when enrolling for postgraduate
research at Hawkesbury. Firstly, I sensed that systems thinking had become a status quo subject that could be taught. Secondly, that the postgraduate course was less participatory than my undergraduate course. Lastly, that action research was seen to be a standard systemic methodology used by my colleagues. My intuition was to ignore the systems status quo around me. This was in part assisted by the fact that unlike my student colleagues, my development practice had spanned 10 years since I learnt about the systems approach. So my approach was more contemplative and demanding. Each theory I came in contact with was interesting and useful, but not interesting and useful enough in themselves. My research odyssey is elaborated in Chapters 5-9 as it reflects on a process that has had informing principles, but never a blueprint that would direct the research.

Towards the end of my research Richard Bawden brought autoethnography to my attention. I found it resonated strongly with my systemic heritage and approach. Its “frame of mind” has informed the writing of this thesis, particularly the re-writing of my overseas experiences, and so I would like now to spend some time discussing this frame of mind.

A similar framework with a human twist

The appeal of autoethnography was that it had a similar frame of mind as that evoked in Chapter 1, arising from the symbolic difference between classical and quantum physics (refer Tables 1-3). The autoethnographic critique of objectivist research is also similar to my critique of the symbolism of classical physics in the domain of development with peasants. Table 4 below provides an indication of the difference between research as autoethnographic narrative and objectivist research that I have drawn from Ellis and Bochner (2000). When I look at Tables 1-3 (Chapter 1) and Table 4 below, what stands out, is that the orientation of Table 4 is

58
Chapter 2: A starting point for epistemic learning in development theory, practice, and in research on theory and practice

not so much focussed on cognitive understanding or onto-epistemological positioning, as are Tables 1-3, rather it provides strong evidence of its human positioning. Here the researcher, me ... and you? ...experience our research and humanity together. Autoethnographic research is very much a human enterprise that cannot be separated from the story of our life. And this I suggest is a result of its intellectual genealogy.

Table 4: An Autoethnographic reframing of objectivist research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>OBJECTIVIST RESEARCH</th>
<th>AUTOETHNOGRAPHIC NARRATIVE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ontological task</td>
<td>Representational</td>
<td>Evocative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Researcher’s performance</td>
<td>Rational actor</td>
<td>Inter-subjective participator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Epistemological aim</td>
<td>To make the researchers knowledge the readers</td>
<td>Allow readers to “feel the moral dilemma,” think WITH rather than about the story, and consider how “their own lives can be made a story worth talking” (Ellis and Bochner 2000:735)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Researcher’s position</td>
<td>Transcendent</td>
<td>Constitutive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research dilemma</td>
<td>What is methodologically sound and disciplinary correct?</td>
<td>What is it “right to do and good to be?” (Ellis and Bochner 2000:747)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivational purpose</td>
<td>Control and knowledge</td>
<td>Caring and empathy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Priority</td>
<td>Mastering part of life</td>
<td>Sense of life as a whole</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Productive artefacts</td>
<td>Facts</td>
<td>Meaning and epiphany</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impulse</td>
<td>Abstract explanation</td>
<td>Personal accountability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voice</td>
<td>Third person passive</td>
<td>First person active</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A genealogy of autoethnography

The lineage of autoethnography flows from anthropology (the study of mankind), through ethnography (the study of human society and its encounter with that which is “foreign”), to develop its own distinct purpose of resisting the hegemony of a culture that would subsume the self. This is in contradistinction to the
overdetermination of self by society. What makes the emergence of the “auto” or “self” part of autoethnography significant, changing it from ethnography, is the capacity of self to observe and make ethnographic observations about both itself and the dominant society that over-determines it. My experience of autoethnography has been that it resonates with the individual struggle with what may appear to be a monolithic social group that has the effect of crushing non-conforming elements. This is done by turning the individual from an object of a social group, doing its bidding, to turning the ideas of a social group into an object of the individual as a means for the individual to regain the space which their social group may have denied them. This is tied in with the various meanings of autoethnography.

**What is autoethnography?**

One way of understanding autoethnography is to deconstruct the components of the word. In this fashion *auto* refers to the self or the autobiographical (Reed-Danahay 1997:2), *ethno* to a social group, and *graphy* to the process of researching and writing (Whitmore 2003, Ellis and Bochner 2000:740, Reed-Danahay 1997:2). But ethnography is not so much content as a dynamic, not so much a methodology as a frame of mind. Ellis and Bochner (2000) struggle with the tendency to fall back into the objectivist mould that attempts a rational representation of authoethnography. In resisting this tendency they inter-subjectively participate in the creation of a narrative that they hope will evoke its meaning.

Another way to try and understand autoethnography is to look at the conceptual differences between three forms of autoethnography. The first relates to the manner whereby those “observed” tell their own ethnographies while having something to say about the ethnography of the dominant society that sought to analyse them.
Chapter 2: A starting point for epistemic learning in development theory, practice, and in research on theory and practice

(Pratt 1992:7). The second form is where the culture of self and the culture of society are seen to fashion each other in a process that Pratt (1992) calls transculturation. Lastly, autoethnography can be seen through the changing relationship between categories of the “self” and the “other” that is evoked in Fine (1994). The first builds on a view that the observed are capable of representing themselves and the latter two on the mutual constitution obtained through the systemic unity of previously considered separate categories.

“Observed” as ethnographer

An example of this sense of autoethnography is provided by Pratt (1992:7) who tells the story of Guaman Poma, an unknown Andean Indian, who wrote a twelve hundred page manuscript and sent it to the King of Spain in 1613, forty years after the Spanish had conquered the Inca Empire. The manuscript re-wrote the history of Christendom to include the South Americans, described the Andean way of life and gave a revised account of the Spanish conquest. This was a surprising feat given that up until the early 20th century Quechua was not known to be a written language, nor Andean culture a literate one. Yet Guaman Poma’s manuscript is seen as an example of autoethnography that “…involves partial collaboration with and appropriation of the idioms of the conqueror …[used] in unravelling the histories of imperial subjugation and resistance as seen from the site of their occurrence” (Pratt 1992:7-8). Pratt goes on to say:

If ethnographic texts are a means by which Europeans represent to themselves their (usually subjugated) others, autoethnographic texts are those the others construct in response to or in dialogue with those metropolitan representations. (Ibid)

This movement in which people as the “objects” of attention start to become subjects in their own right is also evoked by Freire (1970a) who says:

…it that the ‘object’ world is stirring and there is a spreading feeling that the truth of the First World may not be found in its own self-authenticated definitions but in the lives and consciousness of its victims.
I often wonder why it is so difficult to come across such literature in relation to development. For example, the story of development as told by peasants themselves. This should not to be confused with the narratives used by projects as a public relations exercise. The task of this thesis is not to represent the views of the peasant, nor to repeat examples of their own narratives of development, but to take on a similar task for myself, of resisting the dominant institutional interpretations of development, and seeking to make sense of them from my own experience and understanding of them. It also accepts peasants as development practitioners in their own right.

My intention is not to concentrate on trying to explain autoethnography, or to evoke it, as I did not try and do autoethnography from the start of my research. Rather, I hope to analyse what attracted me to autoethnography and the influences that it will have on my thesis. Three dimensions that will assist me in this process include boundary walking, emotions, and the notions of “struggling” and “risk.”

**Researcher as boundary walker**

The role of boundaries is central within systems thinking. This is exampled in the various classifications and designs of systems that Churchman (1971) presents for instance, the changing hierarchy and typology of systems presented by Checkland (1981), and the systemic intervention of Midgley (2000) that redraws the boundaries around the researcher and the researched, as well as around philosophy, methodology, and practice. At Hawkesbury, I learnt through both systems and experiential learning to move towards my own reality and the reality of the on-farm experience. This was a radical deviation from the tradition of a reality within a particular agricultural discipline. Overseas, this Hawkesbury move was transposed to the reality and participation with the local peasant in development endeavours.
Chapter 2: A starting point for epistemic learning in development theory, practice, and in research on theory and practice

However, my experience with “systems thinking,” was still not sufficient to prepare me for, nor explain my experience of, crossing the boundaries of traditional development: to engage with the unknown of the foreign (as viewed by me) peasant and, in the process of crossing the boundary, experience the emergence of a constituent onto-epistemology from engaging with the foreign. I found an encouraging example of this process of boundary walking in the work of Reynolds (1990). He suggests that newly emergent knowledge from boundary walking results in the “foreign losing its foreignness,” as it also provides a perspective through which what was known can appear as foreign. But more than this, systems thinking could not assist me in explaining the loss of authenticity I experienced with contemporary development when engaging the reality of the peasant. Alsop (2002:10) evokes this risk of remaining “on the other side of the border”:

"Auto-/ethnographers who set themselves the task of relating cultures are boundary walkers: they crisscross between the boundaries of being home and away, of being insider and outsider, of being personal and cultural selves. There is nothing more difficult than this back and forth between ways of living, speaking, thinking and feeling. There is nothing more risky than switching between various identities and practices of estrangement. We expose ourselves, we make ourselves vulnerable and we are constantly in danger of remaining on one side of the border…"

Autoethnography exhibits a more human-centric genealogy than does systems thinking, and so is able to provide me with greater support in handling problems of this nature. It does this through the notions of transculturation and “othering.”

Transculturation

This inter-subjective way of understanding “self and other” turns the imperial gaze (to analyse others) upon itself, and breaks the colonising quest of conflating “the other” with “the self”: “others” can no longer be seen as possessions of “the self,” to be used for the benefit of self. Transculturation provides the ability to see “self” also as foreign, and of requiring further understanding and in need of change. This ability to develop from an objective interest in “the foreign” to an inter-subjective
understanding is nicely illustrated in the development of ethnography as illustrated by Clifford (1997:20-25). The first form of ethnography, that I refer to as naïve ethnography, sees “the foreign” through the cultural gaze of the observing ethnographer. Within this image, the ethnographer is depicted by Clifford as a travelling gentleman living among his own white culture and “calling up informants” to talk culture in an encampment or on a veranda. What results is a presentation of “the native as a distorted, childish caricature of a human being” (Pratt 1986:27). The advent of scientific ethnography according to Malinowski in Pratt (1986:27) was seen to bring this naïve view to an end. It also brought a dramatic repositioning of the ethnographer, who now lived within the village. But Rabinow (1986:245) critiques the objectivist stance accompanying scientific ethnography, even within its new village location, that portrays “the cultural realities of other peoples without placing their [the ethnographer’s] reality in jeopardy.” What follows this critique is a move from the static and objective account of scientific ethnography, towards a transcultural ethnography, whereby the foreign “informant” is vested as an equal subject who is able to also call upon the ethnographer as informant, and is able to call forth a world of her or his own making that is not delimited by dominant culture.

This latter view of the development of ethnographic complexity corroborates my understanding of Kitchener’s (1983) representation of three broad categories of epistemic development evident in Perry’s schema of learning complexity (Perry 1999). Dualism represented by naïve ethnography; multiplicity, represented by scientific ethnography that allows for a multiplicity of cultural understandings; and contextual relativism, represented by transcultural ethnography whereby one’s own culture is exposed to analysis along with the “foreign,” which begins to lose its foreignness, due to an epistemic capacity or skill in contextual relativism to engage with it. This transcultural ethnography, that I see as including autoethnography,
mitigates against the tendency for “othering” that is most dramatic in naïve ethnography and still residing in scientific ethnography.

Before looking at the notion of “othering,” I would like to apply the above three categories to my observation of development with peasants. Transposing ethnographic categories into agricultural development would result in categories of naïve development, scientific development, and transcultural development. It is my assessment that much of the development in the past (and even today) which passes as agricultural development, falls within the rubric of naïve development. Within this category the peasant remains an oddity, and is superstitious, technically backward, ignorant, and even lazy. Peasants remain in this light as long as the gaze through which they are observed is that of Western culture’s worldview of agriculture. Shiva is among those who hotly dispute the appropriateness of Western agriculture, particularly in its globalised form, for peasants (Shiva 1992, 1994, 1997, 2000a, 2000b). It is also questioned by critics of the green revolution, including Griffin (1979) and Pearse (1980). Pearse (1980:180) points out that if Western agriculture is to be of any use, it needs to take into account “the cultural and agricultural traditions and practices of the smallholders.” Schumacher (1973) provides an example of taking the smallholder context into account in relation to technology. But agricultural developmentalists appear largely reticent to make this move, or to accept that there are other forms of agriculture equally valid as Western agriculture. As such they are confined to a fixed cultural gaze and resist the movement towards Perry’s cultural relativism or transcultural ethnography, whereby ones own gaze is open to scrutiny. The fixed gaze of Western agriculture is being open to question by such authors as Vanclay and Lawrence (1995) and Shiva, and is also questioned in the Hawkesbury problematic. The fixed gaze of development is also being brought into question through the works of Maren (1997), Terry (2002),
Klitgaard (1991), Vaux (2001), Rieff (2002) andWrong (2002). It is this movement towards transcultural ethnography that assists in the breaking down of “othering” as a central feature of the fixed cultural gaze of naïve ethnography.

“Othering”

Othering that arises from a fixed cultural gaze, according to Fischer (1986:210), depicts “the other” in one of three ways: as exotic (implying the impossibility of understanding it), as a variant subsumed by dominant culture (denying cultural difference), or as an ideal model of adaptation to the dominant culture. I found different combinations of these forms apparent in the views of many expatriate colleagues in my overseas work. These categories were also familiar to my recent past. Such views vest the expatriate gaze with universal attributes which transcend the peasant as equal subject. The resulting barrier is illustrated by Fine (1994:72) in her imagery of home and of the world outside of it.

Self and Other reside on opposite sides of the same door. Home and the “real world” are successfully split. The former codes comfort, whereas the latter flags danger. Othering helps us deny the dangers that loiter inside our homes. Othering keeps us from seeing the comforts that linger outside.

Through the boundary walking of the autoethnographer, she/he is confronted with the ambiguity of being able to feel at home outside in the foreign as well as when at home, and also feeling the danger within as well as without. Fischer (1986:226) highlights the “danger within” as it arises within a Native American ethnic framework.

Old Betonie … insists that one must confront the sickness-witchery in oneself and not take the easy way out, writing off all whites…

Autoethnography with its ability in transcultural ethnography and boundary crossing, together with its “look back home” (from the perspective of the foreign) characteristic, becomes an antidote for the othering of the fixed cultural gaze of naïve ethnography, or naïve agricultural development. In this reduction of othering...
through crossing the boundaries of our cultural home we, ourselves, become exposed to estrangement.

**Emotion that leads to commitment and empathy**

In Churchman (1982:17) moral outrage is considered a more appropriate starting point than “calm objectivity” in discussing the problem of malnutrition. Yet in spite of such admonition systems thinking has remained remarkably unemotional. I could not explain this lack of emotion when emotion not just motivated but also informed my research. The notion of learning as unravelling in Salner (1986, 2001), or the cognitive development stage of contextual inter-subjectivity evident in Perry (1999), together with my experiences of development with peasants proved very demanding on my emotions. Midgley (2000) reflects this difficulty in handling emotion which also seems to be associated with a limited approach at risk taking. This is reflected in his boundary critique being a “sweeping in” of participants rather than his crossing of cultural boundaries. Thus while Midgley provided a wonderful cognitive representation of systems he was not able to provide me with a notion of how to incorporate the emotional aspects of my experiences as part of my research.

**Emotional reframing**

In my experience, my emotions assisted and magnified the cognitive reframing provided through the symbolism of quantum physics that unites the observer with what is observed. My emotions provided a commitment to participate in my experience and move beyond the conservatism of the symbolism of classical physics that persisted in spite of my newly found perspective. The move from the emotion of compassion to action is dramatically evoked in Behar (1997). In the opening chapter, Behar relates the story of a 13 year old girl, Omaira Sánchez who is trapped in mud as a result of an avalanche that buried a complete village in
Chapter 2: A starting point for epistemic learning in development theory, practice, and in research on theory and practice

Colombia in 1985. Television cameras capture her as the mud squeezes the life out of her, the images transmitted to a "horrid audience of onlookers" watching "the cruel 'show'." Finally Rolf Carlé burst onto the screen.

He too has been looking, gazing, reporting, taking pictures. Then something snaps in him. He can no longer bear to watch silently from behind the camera. He will not document tragedy as an innocent bystander. Crouching down in the mud Rolf Carlé throws aside his camera and flings his arms around Omaira Sánchez as her heart and lungs collapse. The vulnerable observer par excellence, Rolf Carlé incarnates the central dilemma of all efforts at witnessing. (Behar 1997:1&2)

This emotional commitment to self and its experiences loses its caution, its institutional and disciplinary conformity and ideology, to participate in the flow of events as they occur. What arises is not a commitment to a polished product in response to an institutional mandate, but a commitment to the other, flowing from a commitment to the self. We see others best, when we see ourselves best.

…with understanding yourself comes understanding others. (Ellis and Bochner 2000:738)

This inter-subjective way of understanding self and other turns the imperial gaze (to analyse others) upon itself and breaks the colonising quest of conflating the other with the self. It no longer sees others as the possession of the self, for the benefit of self. It provides the ability to see self also as foreign and of requiring further understanding and in need of change. Thus the boundary crossing of the autoethnographer is assisted through emotion that connects the self with the other and the cultural, and so provides for many levels of consciousness.

Back and forth autoethnographers gaze, first through an ethnographic wide-angle lens, focusing outward on social and cultural aspects of their personal experience; then, they look inward, exposing a vulnerable self that is moved by and may move through, refract and resist cultural interpretations. (Ellis and Bochner 2000:739)

Emotion, as depicted by autoethnography, amplifies the connection between self and other and provides a purpose for resisting given cultural interpretations. It is to this element of resistance that I would now like to briefly focus.
The struggling inherent with resistance and risk taking

Our emotional disposition, together with a sense of boundary crossing that results from engagement with the other that was once foreign and set apart, also enables a “look back home” from the perspective of what was once foreign but now less so. Home begins to look different from the ethnography of the observed. Just as development began to look different in the Solomon Islands when the farm managers said that most expatriates kept information to themselves. Home now, in part, becomes a place of previously unrealised failure. A struggle for a constitutive identity emerges in Fischer (1986:96) through a combined dynamic of “the search for coherence” that is “grounded in a connection to the past,” with the “discovery of a vision” that is “both ethical and future oriented.”

It is from this experience that two forms of resistance are required. The first, provided by Alsop (2002:11) is a resistance not to revert to “our original template for meaning and explanation.” This is illustrated by Perry (1999) in a need for the learner to resist the tendency to retreat (denying the “potential of legitimacy in otherness”), or escape (rejecting the “implications for growth”). Ellis and Bochner (2000:744) enhance this need for resistance through their portrayal of researchers as:

...characters embedded in the complexities of lived moments of struggle, resisting the intrusions of chaos, disconnection, fragmentation, marginalization, and incoherence, trying to preserve or restore the continuity and coherence of life’s unity in the face of unexpected blows of fate that call one’s meanings and values into question.

The second form of resistance is to resist the colonising tendency of the status quo to use any new forms of knowledge as an add-on that enhances and broadens the old paradigm. The reaction of Strathern, a feminist, to this prospect highlights this important aspect of resistance in autoethnography. In Rabinow (1986:254-256) Strathern relates how a male colleague saw her feminist anthropology as “enriching
the discipline.” She felt uncomfortable with this, and later was able to describe the difference between her feminist anthropology that proceeded from the “unassimilable fact of domination,” and saw its incorporation into an improved experimental anthropology as a “further act of violence.”

Feminist anthropology is trying to shift discourse, not improve a paradigm... Strathern is not seeking to invent a new synthesis, but to strengthen difference. (Rabinow 1986:255)

Here “resistance and nonassimilation are the highest values” (Rabinow 1986:256).

In critiquing a paper that sought to return to ethnographic realism Bochner and Ellis (1999) resist the objective turn from intersubjectivity. They see the desire of a growing generation of ethnographers who seek to move beyond “received traditions.”

So, when we strip away the legitimations and the rhetorical appeals of the turn-takers you mention, what we see is an authentic desire on the part of a new generation of ethnographers to move beyond the boundaries of the received traditions, away from facts (pure and simple) and toward meanings (ambiguous and complicated); away from prediction and control and toward understanding and social criticism; away from language as a neutral medium for representing reality and toward language as a constitutive quality of reality; away from master narratives and toward local stories; away from objectivized variables and toward situated meanings; away from idolizing categorical thought, conceptual analysis, and abstracted theory and toward embracing the values of irony, emotionality, and activism; away from assuming the stance of the disinterested speculator and toward the position of a feeling, embodied and vulnerable observer; away from writing essays and toward telling stories. (Bochner and Ellis 1999:489)

I hope the next two chapters that focus on my overseas experience will reflect my systemic move towards epistemic change with peasants through an autoethnographic style similar to that outlined above, which resists the received tradition of contemporary development. In so doing I hope to provide the opportunity for a more ethical future that does not require unnecessary hunger.
INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 1, the concepts inherent within a systemic worldview resulting from the interactive and inseparable relationship between the “knower” and the “known” are elaborated. But how do we move from a worldview where necessary and sufficient conditions have deterministic effects, to one whereby causation arises in a process of mutual simultaneous shaping? Chapter 1 posits that this is done in a process called epistemic cognition (Kitchener 1983) or epistemic learning (Bawden 2005b). Chapter 1 seeks to provide a sense of epistemic learning provided through Kuhn’s (1970) characterisation of paradigm change and Zukav’s (1979) characterisation of revolutionary science. Epistemic change is seen in various degrees within the concepts of “framework,” “paradigm,” and “worldview.”

Chapter 2 takes the simplest form of epistemic change, described as a process of “reframing,” whereby there is a change in symbolic perspective that guides new forms of action. This act of reframing is then applied to review: a) my Hawkesbury education where the institution was reframed as part of the community, and the learning process guided by a reframing of “lecturer with student,” b) my first
Chapter 3: From systemic reframing to an emerging practice of easy development

overseas experience where I reframed the development process as “expert with peasant,” and c) my research that is reframed through autoethnography as a process of transculturation, or cultural boundary crossing between my problematic experience of the culture of contemporary development and my newly forming practice that I started to describe as easy development.

A generic characterisation of epistemic learning

In trying to characterise a generic synthesis of epistemic learning from the characterisations of epistemic change: paradigm change, revolutionary science, and transculturation, I posit the following evolutionary trajectory: a) a fundamental failure of the “known” is experienced, this leads to b) an immersion in the “unknown,” from which c) a convergence of ad hoc experiences that may support new categories and processes within an emerging constitutive onto-epistemology can arise, but which d) often meets with resistance from those not accepting the failure of the known, and the tendency of the learner to regress to enculturated patterns and structures of old forms of knowing, however, e) the possibility of overcoming the over-determining nature of the old paradigm arises through resisting the old ways of knowing, and providing structures and processes that flow from the new categories of knowing that permit the formation and maintenance of a new paradigm, which in turn, f) is open to failure and which may lead to another round of epistemic learning.

Focus of Chapter 3

The focus of Chapter 3 is to evoke a sense of how I used a change in symbolic perspective, reflected in the reframing of “expert with peasant,” to form a new paradigm or symbol of successful practice – the practice of “easy development” which in later chapters develops into the concept of “systemic participation.” This focus is assisted by the generic characteristics of epistemic learning described
above, and my experiences in implementing the Village Food Garden Rehabilitation and Improvement Project.


Background to the project

The Solomon Islands Village Food Garden Rehabilitation and Improvement Project (VFGARP) resulted from a joint NGO and Government response to Cyclone Namu, considered by Bell (1986:4) as the worst cyclone in the Solomon Islands for a century. Cyclone Namu occurred on the 18th and 19th May 1986, during my previous position in the Solomon Islands. Along with destroying the mango orchard (see Photo 4) I had been working on, it had resulted in the loss of over 80 lives, much infrastructure, and many of the food gardens in the three provinces that it affected. At that time 85% of the population lived in rural areas, and depended on their food gardens as their primary source of food. As the geographical relief of the Solomon Islands consists mainly of mountainous areas, with only a small portion of the land being flat, most of the food gardens are found on steepland having a gradient over fifteen percent. In the past, portions of forest would be cleared every ten years or so, used to grow root crops for a year, and then left to re-afforest. But with increasing population pressure the re-afforesting period was being reduced to four or five years. Along with this change was an associated move from root crops such as cassava, taking up to nine months or more to grow, toward sweet potato which would take from four to six months. The food gardens affected by the cyclone had been seriously wind damaged, which had resulted in the leaves being stripped from the plant. There had also been extensive waterlogging of the soil, which following sun exposure led to the root crops rotting in the ground.
As a result of the Solomon Islands Disaster Committee’s request to the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands (MAL), to assess the damage Cyclone Namu caused to food gardens, a rehabilitation plan was recommended. This resulted in the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) funding the VFGRIP that was subcontracted to the United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF) under the umbrella of its ongoing Pacific wide Family Food Production and Nutrition Project (FFPN) administered from Suva, Fiji.

In an ideal world, a project such as this should have been implemented as soon as possible following the cyclone, so that root-crops could be replanted without delay. This would result in harvests within six months that would reduce dependence on aid and exposure to hunger. However, it was well over 12 months before this project started to come to fruition, and almost 18 months before I became its permanent coordinator. This experience acquainted me with the wider phenomenon of the delays involved in contemporary aid. Hancock (1991:21-22) highlights various studies showing that it took the European Economic Community (EEC), and the UN World Food Program, an average of 400 and 196 days respectively to respond to urgent requests for food.

The VFGRIP was a two year project formed by collaboration between NGO and government organisations. The Australian High Commission paid the money to cover my wages. This money was paid to the Development Services Exchange (DSE), the national umbrella organisation of NGOs that employed me. The project expense budget of SI$88,000 was to be paid by UNICEF in successive tranches. The project was implemented by the MAL under the supervision of the Chief Field Officer (CFO). The area covered included rural areas of the three provinces of Central, Guadalcanal, and Malaita that were affected by Cyclone Namu.
The project’s aim was to rehabilitate and improve village food gardens damaged by Cyclone Namu, and provide institutional support to government and NGOs to assist continuing food garden improvement in rural areas (Mattner 1987). This was seen to be accomplished via a) “training of trainer” workshops, with the idea that the participants would in turn hold peasant training workshops, b) demonstration gardens that could serve as multiplication and distribution sites for improved sweet potato varieties, vegetable seeds, fruit trees, and c) continuous technical assistance and support to field workers. The details of the project are reported in (Mattner 1987) and (Mattner 1989).

**From expat-centric development towards inter-subjective development**

**Introduction**

My first overseas development experience, as I related in the previous chapter, resulted in my awareness of expat-centric development. This was exhibited by the focus on forms of agriculture associated with the country of origin of the expatriate, and a fixed expatriate gaze which could not “see itself” or examples of successful local agricultural development that lay before it. This fixed gaze was broken for me, through my move towards the local culture. My immersion in local culture enabled me to “look back home” and see myself, and the expatriate culture from which I came, from a different perspective. The focus on expatriate agriculture was made morally reprehensible when it was so incompetently practiced by so-called “NGO experts.” The insight that resulted was that expat-centric development was only one form of development. Through this insight, I began to see a multiplicity of developments that included a local view and my own view. In time, I began to see these different developments inter-subjectively. This trajectory of maturity in development resonates with the progression in learning maturity described in Perry (1999). As previously described, this progression starts with dualism, develops to
multiplicity, and in time with continued commitment, to contextual relativism. Autoethnographically it is depicted as the inter-subjective capacity to engage previously fixed categories of self and of other (Fine 1994:72), or the cultural categories of “insider” and “outsider” (Alsop 2002:10).

City-centric development

I had an inherent complicity with expat-centric development. This was most obvious to me in the question, “Why did they employ an expatriate to co-ordinate assistance for steepland food gardens?” It was obvious that my experience and understanding, in either steepland food gardens or self-sufficiency of food production, was very limited compared with the peasants I came to help. This preference for the expatriate, above direct local support, is nicely expressed by Hancock (1991), where an extensive survey of project aid carried out by the OECD’s Development Centre (Lecomte 1986) raised this issue through local eyes.

Improving our efficiency in the field often depends on factors quite removed from what a foreign expert can teach us. Here we don’t have petrol, spare parts or sometimes even the vehicles to go round the nearby farms as regularly as we should. A minute fraction of the salary of one single expert would have settled that problem for five or six of our administrative staff and given them more opportunity to operate effectively. (Hancock 1991:118)

The competencies of expatriates also seem to result in a city-based orientation for projects. This issue is illustrated more broadly by the Technical Assistance that was provided to Cambodia following The Paris Peace Accord of October 1991. What resulted, according to (EUROSTEP and ICVA 1996:50), was that less than 5% of Technical Assistant personnel worked outside the capital where the majority of people in need lived. FAO and its Rome based staff are another example of this preponderant pattern of skewed orientation.

By mid decade [1985] the organisation [FAO] was spending in excess of $1.5 million every day – to little effect in the opinion of many; more than two-thirds of its staff were to be found at their desks in Rome rather than working on agricultural projects in the developing countries. (Hancock 1991:86)
Chapter 3: From systemic reframing to an emerging practice of easy development

As part of this city orientation, I found myself bereft of resources that could realistically ensure that I could meet the demands of the project. I had no transport, other than an unreliable motorbike that I purchased for myself. This proved very frustrating in tropical downpours, for carrying tools and plant materials, or transporting project participants. It didn’t stop us from doing things, just took us a lot of extra time and effort. It did have one advantage in that it brought the project within the realm of everyday people who had the same problems. The project had also been centrally developed through national organisations, with little input from the provincial authorities whose extensionists were supposed to implement it. Just as “the antidote” for disciplined-based agriculture was expressed at Hawkesbury by “a move” towards the farmer’s experience, I saw “the antidote” for expat-centric experience, as “a move towards” local people and their experience.

Moving towards local experience

My “move” towards the local was both professional and personal. Professionally I moved towards the Provincial Agricultural Departments (PADs) and their extensionists in the field. I found the resources to which they had access were worse than mine. Although they had an interest in food garden production, those higher up in the PADs were pre-occupied with conventional projects, and had no budget or time allocation for this kind of work. The situation for the extensionists at the village level was even more difficult. Often they had no resources at all, and had to get by in the best manner that they could. All too often, promises of new resources at these provincial levels went unfulfilled. While it was not unusual for extensionists to make representations on behalf of a project, to reflect the interests of the peasants, they were frequently ignored. On other occasions, administrative changes beyond their control were made in a manner that exacerbated situations. This resulted in the extensionists losing credibility with peasants. I did not envy the
often disheartening position in which they found themselves, in having to “tow the party line” in order to avoid the risk of losing credibility with their superiors.

My “move towards the local” did not stop with the extensionists. I continued to “move” towards the peasants and towards their own steepland gardens. The move was normally through contact with extensionists, although, there were occasions when I had direct contact with peasants. I needed this contact with villagers to collaborate extensionist’s perspectives, as well as to attempt to see peasant reality through direct self-representation. This need for self-representation is highlighted in Emberson’s experience of mass media training in the Pacific. Talking of her experience with the East Sepik Council of Women in Papua New Guinea she says:

Fed up with having their stories told by outsiders who too often got them wrong, they started to acquire the tools and techniques to record their own life stories. Their version of Papua New Guinea development turned the academic version on its head and even challenged the version of official ‘women’s leaders.’ (Emberson 1994:74)

With four months of the project still to run, I shifted from the institutional accommodation provided by ADRA to live in a village outside of Honiara. A Catholic Nun with whom I became good friends, found me a place to board with a young couple who had a baby boy. They shared their two roomed house with me. It was built of local materials, had a thatched roof, bamboo walls, and betel-nut open-slat flooring (see Photo 7).

Looking back home through a different “gaze” – a local view of expatriate-centric development

It certainly seemed to me that expat-centric development, and the central role of the expert that largely guided this project, was hierarchical and extremely patronising of locals. Its hierarchical nature was demonstrated in the way national institutions initiated and directed the development of the project. The patronising attitude was reflected in the focus on the training of trainer’s, who would in turn train the
peasants. Yet of the five training programs that were run in the eleven months before my arrival, none of the trained trainers had progressed to training villagers, and none of the demonstration or multiplication gardens had succeeded. The failure of this expat-centric top-down approach to steepland garden development, and the wider development approach of which it was a part, was due in my view, to its mismatch with what was happening as experienced by both local extensionists and peasants.

It was toward the extensionist’s and peasant’s views to which I was moving. Once there I was able to see myself, and the expatriate culture which I was moving from, in a different perspective. I would like to illustrate this change of perspectives through four vignettes. The first has to do with a peasant’s perspective of my skills. In Australia I had thought of myself as a good bushwalker and had gone on many backpacking trips. However, when walking in the Solomon Island rainforests I found myself tripping or falling over things I had not seen. The peasants I was walking with would laugh at me, and I could not help laughing at myself also. When in their gardens, making mounds with a wooden digging stick on recently cleared steepland, they also laughed at my efforts. It was comical indeed. I was out of my depth. They were the experts, this was their laboratory, and I was a visitor. The point for me was not if I could do the same as them, but how could I get a sense of their experience so I could help them better? I still had skills, but I had to recognise the limits of my skills, in order to begin to recognise the skills peasants had. The immense mass and tangle of organic matter facing peasants after clearing, makes a problematic out of the simple rhetoric that burning is bad. I liked the idea of composting, but I could see why they burnt the vegetation. I could not do what my expatriate colleague from the UNICEF FFPN project did by pretending to be an expert, writing booklets on the subject that were intended as training materials for
the project, and all the while making excuses every time that he fell over (which was 3-4 times every visit) when I was showing him around the project steepland demonstration garden. On another occasion he required the assistance of two locals when descending from a steepland garden we had visited.

Another vignette relates to a peasant perspective of discipline based projects. Upon independent representation to the VFGRIP for assistance, I had begun to work with a women’s group in East Kwaio, Malaita. Through working with them I came to see the single disciplinary focus of the project in a new light. For this women’s group, the biggest problem at the time of my visit was to be able to clothe their children. As someone who is interested in assisting peasants, I felt it was unjust to say, “I’m here only for food garden production, sorry I can’t help you.” This specialised approach I came to see as reflecting expat-centric development. Providing clothes was not a complicated problem. They had material, but they needed a sewing machine. At the time I said I would do my best to put them onto another project that I thought could help them. That project ended up supporting the women get a sewing machine. Later, building on this concept, I ran a Resource Access Program (RAP). This program helped peasants and extensionists access a whole range of development resources in Honiara relevant to their current needs. I now have vision of a single project that can handle most of the development problems facing peasants, and work through their areas of need as they experience them. The VFGRIP project still helped the village women with improving their food production, but it was within the wider context of their broader development needs.

The third vignette provides a peasant’s perspective of a traditional agricultural project. This vignette is provided by the peasant with whom I was boarding. Five years earlier he had planted a small area of cocoa trees which had grown well. He
had started harvesting them and wanted to expand the area. To do this he needed plastic bags in which to propagate the seeds. I was aware of a project that was specifically designed to encourage smallholder production of cocoa. So, in consultation with the peasant, I arranged a time that he could meet the relevant government Field Officer concerned. That day, after returning home from work, I was looking forward expectantly to hear a “good news story” about how the project was going to assist him. My hopes were dashed as he told me that he had not kept the appointment. The reason he gave was that his uncle had some pigs delivered and he had needed to help unload them. I felt that he was using this as an excuse for not having to tell me the real reason that he did not go. I pressed for an open and honest answer, as he had done to me on occasions, in order to gain insight into an expatriate view of the world. The reason that he provided me for his non-attendance, related to the extensive process of mapping, soil testing, and “red tape” that he envisaged he would have to go through, and which may not even guarantee the plastic nursery bags he was after. His good cocoa harvest had provided ample evidence for him that his soil, and the variety that he was growing, were perfectly adequate. Thus he felt that by exposing himself to a process of which he was suspicious, particularly the mapping of his land, without any certainty of a favourable outcome, was a waste of his time. The insight that I gained as a result of this episode was of an agricultural project that could not help the very people for which it was intended. The kind of people that such projects did seem to help, were the local elite, who tended to share the same cultural orientation as the expatriates. An alternative view, however, would be to consider that my peasant friend was unnecessarily negative and superstitious. Boarding with him however, I knew that this was certainly not to be the case. This experience made me more wary of my own presumption that I was helping peasants. It raised the need to dig below the
Chapter 3: From systemic reframing to an emerging practice of easy development

surface of peasant opinion that did not contradict expatriate-centric development, but adjudged it irrelevant.

The last vignette is of a peasant’s view of promised expatriate assistance. This peasant’s agricultural development was located not far from the entrance of the National Agricultural Training Institute (NATI) in Malaita. He had adopted some of NATI’s practices, such as planting leguminous trees in hedgerows, in order to improve the soil and provide fodder for his pigs. He had built a small piggery, but did not have the resources to get water to it. His smallholder plot was often visited by visiting expatriates, being shown as an example of the adoption of technologies promoted by NATI. Each visit would take in the order of a half a day for him, and could stop him from doing something else important for a day. Each time the visiting expatriate would promise him something to help him, but each time nothing eventuated. I corroborated his story and assisted him in gaining the piping he needed to supply water to his piggery. The insight that this story afforded me was how expat-centric development in its project focus, overlooked how a peasant’s time involvement with the project can impact negatively on the peasant’s own work.

There are many more stories of my experiences in the Solomon Islands that demonstrate the failure of the contemporary development paradigm for peasants. However, there is one emergent generic story relating to the development of the timber industry in the Solomon Islands that I would like to tell. I find this story particularly powerful in illustrating a perspective of expat-centric development that actually did result in peasant impoverishment, and which provides strong circumstantial support for the claim by the Australian economist Helen Hughes, that development aid has done little to improve the situation in the Pacific. She states:
...after three decades of aid per capita income in the Pacific Island states had grown by an average of less than 1 per cent a year, with the gains going mainly to urban elites while village living standards deteriorated. (Mitchell 2005)

Drawing on International Monetary Fund sources Mitchell (2003) paints an even starker picture for development in Papua New Guinea:

Real per capita GDP is 10 per cent lower than at independence in 1975. ... Average life expectancy is 20 years below that of Australia; infant mortality is 10 times higher. ... The proportion of the population in poverty has doubled to around 40 per cent in 10 years.

The following story reflects a picture of a kind of development that leads to these results. It is a general story that emerged from talking and staying with dozens of villagers as I travelled and worked in the Solomon Islands. The story is about the timber industry, but it could be just as equally applied to the fisheries industry. The story started with a hint of jealousy that I experience in regard to the young couple with whom I was staying. Married before 20, they had house and land, and were basically self sufficient in food. The cash that they needed for other household items came from the sale of the copra, cocoa, and the marketing of the excess fruit and vegetables that they produced. How different it was in my culture, where one had to work close to a lifetime to buy land and house. There, in the Pacific Islands, house building was a communal affair. The older men of the village plan the planting of a sufficient balance of trees in the forest to suit housing construction needs. Timber is used for posts and beams. Sago palm leaves are used for roof thatch. Betel nut trees are split to provide the open-slatted flooring, bamboo is used for walling and vines used for lashing things together. This combination varies depending on location and tradition. The young men climb the sago palm to cut down the leaves and do other hard work with middle-aged men. The women dry then sew the palm leaves onto lengths of split timber. These are then tied onto the roof beams. Younger women assist in food preparation and other related house building activities.
The forest area is communally owned. While the matri-linear or patri-linear chief may have the power to use those resources selfishly, to build a bigger house for her or himself, this is limited by the fact that they need to gain the support and help of the rest of the village in order to do this. The villagers might agree to help, but then, just not turn up - just like my peasant friend did not attend his appointment with the project. So in many respects, under these traditional circumstances, the chief’s power is limited and is democratically tied to his or her dependence on the villagers to carry out the work.

Development projects, however, can so easily change this balance of power: with the patronage of the government, expatriate timber companies seek to log the forests. Tradition holds that they must seek the permission of the chief who they believe is the “representative” of the people. With this move, the historical interdependent relationship between and the villagers and their chief is changed. The chief can now act to use resources previously held in common without peasant participation, a process I will now elaborate upon. The chief is offered what is a relatively huge sum of money for the trees, money which is then deposited into a bank account over which he or she largely has control, together with a close coterie of “supporters.” This small executive group can now buy whatever they want - boats, outboard motors, beer, women or whatever - and eventually the money all goes in such consumption. Meanwhile the forest is destroyed and it becomes difficult for the villagers to get the materials for a house without having to buy timber, and any money that was available has been squandered. It was after all, not that much money anyhow.

According to the research of the Solomon Islands Development Trust (SIDT) when I was there, the villagers received in the order of SI$10 per cubic meter of tree log,
the Government SI$30, and the timber company SI$80. So in a country that abounds in trees, the people within it become too poor to be able to use it! The same story can be told about the fisheries. Once upon a time, almost anyone could grab a dugout canoe, paddle out a little way and catch some fish to eat. With the development of commercial fishing, however, they are lucky if they can afford the cheapest quality tuna. This is the tuna that I ate while living in the village. An expatriate acquaintance once coming across me buying it poked fun at me by saying that he bought it to feed his cat.

**Participation**

The ethnographic “boundary walking” illustrated above, breaks the spell of the fixed ethnographic gaze. It is broken as it becomes subject to the unknown foreign category that it objectified. By participating in this process the autoethnographer gains an ability to see him/herself from a vantage point of what was previously unknown. Along with a falling away of the fixed ethnographic gaze, comes the sense of “othering” that maintains a dangerous and unknown sense of the foreign other. This falling away of the “other,” permits a new resistance and sensitivity to expat-centric development, along with a new sense of participation that is concomitantly being reframed.

My first challenge in developing greater local participation in developing the VFGRIP project was to face the heritage of problematic failures that had characterised the project from its implementation. The next challenge was to resist any temptation to offer an alternative blueprint and to “move toward” the local situation by encouraging active local participation. Working with the Chief Field Officer of the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands, we collaborated with senior government and NGO staff along with other interested persons to develop a two day Village Food Garden Program
Chapter 3: From systemic reframing to an emerging practice of easy development

Development Workshop. The 23 local participants worked together to provide direction for the remaining 17 months of the project. Interestingly, they opted not for a fixed program, but a commitment to a process which contained four key principles:

a) Work in multi-disciplinary teams with representatives from Govt. agricultural extension, NGO, women’s groups, area council and an outsider e.g. project coordinator.

b) Start from village needs through an initial needs survey.

c) Use a participatory approach which is responsive and adaptable.

d) Start small; taking into account previous mistakes... (Mattner 1989:4)

It was an unusual feeling to be labelled an “outsider” rather than an expert, and I began feeling comfortable with that view. I started participating with the Malaita and Guadalcanal Provincial Agricultural Departments (PADs) to find out why their extension staff had largely been overlooked in previous workshops. The Malaita PAD provided another useful perspective. In their view: a) training should occur in the village rather than at a workshop location removed from the village, b) it should be individually oriented rather than community oriented, and c) it should be undertaken in conjunction with SIDT, the largest NGO in the Solomon Islands (Mattner 1989:2). Interestingly this initial process of local participation generated a direction in which local participation and circumstance largely informed the way the project evolved.

**Process and structure**

Through moving away from expat-centric development and engaging local experience and reality at senior, mid-level, and assistant field officer level of government and NGO agencies, as well as peasants, an innovative, reflexive and participative development process emerged. And this in turn, dictated a change in the structure of the project.

While the only mandate that I had was to support local initiatives engendered through interest and cooperation, I had no “hierarchical” mandate that ensured
compliance and participation by the extensionist’s in the project. If I was to create interest in an outsider without administrative power to mandate participation, I needed to show that I was relevant to the existing situation. Such relevance could not be defined as traditional workshop training, which I heard frequently referred locally to in pidgin as, “tok tok nuting nomoa” - nothing but talk or hot air. To be relevant, I felt I had to understand their situation and to garner the resources that would assist in its improvement. This was a demanding task as the project involved endless conversations and follow-up actions during the day, and then when everyone else had finished work, I had to return to the office undertake all the administrative requirements to make it happen, along with all the project reporting.

In time I gained a good sense of most of the participants and of their views. The project slowly evolved into an openly directed endeavour, whereby each month I produced a highlight sheet that summarised the activities, program concepts that were developing, and the constraints facing the project. This was sent to all of the organisations and the people within them who had an interest in food gardens, so they were aware of what was going on, and could be a part of it if they wished. Jointly with this open form of reporting and administration, I felt the need to develop specific resources that would make a difference to the food garden activities of the peasants. I did not want any person visiting the VFGRIP office to go away empty handed, or empty headed; but I also saw that I was not the only source of assistance. I also learned from them, and was also not left empty handed or handed in my interactions with them. While it was a long and convoluted story, I will attempt to illustrate how this changing process and structure worked itself out via three examples of development. These examples focus on a central demonstration garden, appropriate tools, and a pilot project in Rennell and Bellona.
Learning from personal experience and the role of a demonstration garden

In my rural travels and participating in NGO workshop training, I had observed something that I had experienced in my first project in the Solomon Islands. It was common for NGO trainers to merely parrot what they had been told in their own training sessions. Without firsthand experience of it, they would, for instance, recommend new varieties of sweet potato without having grown them, or harvested them, or cooked them, or even tasted them. When the villagers questioned them about these attributes, they could not respond appropriately. Their incompetence extended to other matters such as natural pest control, for which they advocated the use of fire ash to control aphids under circumstances where the tropical rain soon washed such substances off. This kind of training reflected the serious inadequacies of “learning what one is told” rather than “learning from one’s own experiences.”

It seemed a good use of resources to join forces with the demonstration garden that had been started for the town of Honiara. UNICEF had supported a sister project in encouraging food to be grown around the suburban house. Unfortunately this project was not interested in working together on the demonstration garden. In any case, I had noted that their garden had too much shade, had no house (i.e. lacked ownership interest needed for a good garden), and lacked security so any food disappeared before it could be harvested. Surprisingly, the gardener there began to come up to my office after his evening meal and talk to me. I was amazed at how much he knew given his scant schooling, and how dedicated he was to his work. He expressed disappointment in working for the town garden demonstration garden, primarily because he felt he had nothing to learn from the two people in charge of it, nor would they allow him to put in practice what he knew. He said he wanted to work for me.
I said I could not employ him as I did not want to poach other project's workers. But when he told me one evening that he had resigned and was going to return to his village, I said I would like to employ him. As there appeared to be no sense in developing a demonstration garden just for a project that would finish in less than two years, I had begun negotiating with SIDT. SIDT was an NGO that had an extensive national network of 120 village-based extensionists. I thought it would be a marvellous possibility to site a demonstration garden at the rear of SIDT's new offices on the outskirts of Honiara. There was an infertile hill that could provide a good site for a steepland garden. It was agreed with them that they would employ the gardener and the project would pay the first two years of his wages. I negotiated and arranged for an improved local form of housing to be built in the garden in which the gardener could live. Later an improved kitchen with a raised fireplace and food preparation table (see Photo 6) was also constructed. The produce the gardener grew would be his to use for his own consumption and for use in demonstrations with extensionists and peasant visitors from rural areas. The significance of the demonstration garden was manifold. It would demonstrate that permanent steepland gardens could be maintained via terracing with the use of leguminous trees to protect contour lines. It would be a place where extensionists and peasants could meet to see first hand the different varieties of root crops, their taste, and their texture. It also had a section maintained by the research station to demonstrate the growing of cash crops such as turmeric and chilli. Following the gardens establishment (see Photo 5) the Guadalcanal PAD sent extensionists to work there for a week at a time before being sent out to their new rural postings. It also provided a practical training facility for SIDT's national network of village-based extensionists. Being incorporated as an SIDT facility it would continue even after the project was completed. More recent conversations with SIDT indicate the demonstration garden is still running and an integral part of their program.
The most touching story arising from the development of the demonstration garden occurred in the first village-based training session by the demonstration gardener. The villagers were so interested in what he had shown and told them in their village, that twenty two of them paid the SI$6 return fare to visit the demonstration garden (Mattner 1989:14). This was a considerable expense for them as it represented more than a days pay for a casual labourer, so it demonstrated the program was meeting a real need. Later the gardener undertook a "walk about" village training program in many villages in Malaita province. Such a process of learning represented in my mind a very effective form of learning. Peasants learning from each other, much like as students at Hawkesbury we were encouraged to learn from each other.

**Focusing on individual gardens and appropriate tools**

The local view to support individual food gardeners, and not depend fully on community demonstration gardens, relieved problems associated with developing community gardens that the project had previously experienced before my arrival. With the community-based demonstration gardens, disputes inevitably arose about land ownership, the work effort to maintain the garden and protect it from marauding animals, and about questions of ownership of the food produced. Inevitably the early problems resulted in lack of maintenance and thus no produce resulted. Support for individual gardeners, particularly the gardens of extensionists themselves, recognised the keen local eye for improving their own gardens. They would observe what each other was doing, experiment with new varieties, observe which varieties yielded better together with other characteristics such as taste, texture, and cooking characteristics. Getting any interest from anyone in a village thus left opportunity for a much larger circle of influence in good time. This change
in focus to an individual's gardens rather than community gardens, leant itself to supporting individual initiative through the use of hand tools.

Hand tools, essential for food gardens were difficult to obtain. The project could obtain hoes that the peasants used very cheaply from China. These hoes cost SI$6, and the project subsidised them by SI$4, thus leaving the peasant only SI$2 to pay. For extensionists, a tool subsidy of SI$14 was provided and they would often spend double that on the tools they purchased. For the Malaita PAD annual conference of extensionists there was palpable excitement when the tools they ordered from me one day arrived on the boat the next day. The 23 participants paid SI$573 of their own money on top of the SI$308 subsidy for garden tools. It was from this kind of activity that field officers later came forward and contacted me to assist them with their continuing work, or to start new pilot projects.

While staying in the home of the Principal Field Officer (PFO) of the Department of Agriculture in Malaita, I came across a steel implement. I asked him what it was for, and he said his wife used it for digging the root crop mounds in their steepland garden. He said that it was difficult to find a good traditional timber digging stick due to the scarcity of trees from which they were made. A digging stick is an essential tool for subsistent root crop production. It does not break up the soil as fine as any western garden tool, and penetrates deeper, thus reducing the chance of erosion. Further, lots of steepland gardens have stones and roots, and the digging stick is adept at handling these conditions. The steel digging stick was made from a 1.5m length of 4cm galvanised water pipe. This pipe was then split at the end, with the flat part of a car spring with one end sharpened, inserted and welded into the pipe. The PFO had his steel digging stick fabricated at the ministry of works department. In time I was to find out that the PFO in Guadalcanal also had a steel digging stick.
Then upon talking to a whole range of people including the villagers, I found that they were all very interested in them and would be prepared to buy one. I returned to the PFO in Malaita from whence I gained the initial idea and encouraged him to make a small trial run of them and sell them at cost. He expressed interest, but said he did not have the time. I did the same in Guadalcanal and obtained a similar response. So I decided to organise the fabrication of a trial run of steel digging sticks myself. After negotiating with the ministry of works a small batch of ten was made. They were all sold before they were finished. Then another batch of 100 were all made, and sold for $10 to cover all costs. The spring metal was obtained from wrecked cars of which there was an abundance of in Honiara.

I found as a cultural boundary walker that I could communicate between groups that did not normally communicate with each other. Principal Field Officers, as a rule, did not socialise with peasants, and vice a versa. I found that ideas that were held in common across all these groups, would lead to sure success, just like the idea of the steel digging stick.

**An evolving pilot project on the Islands of Rennell and Bellona**

This was a project that arose from the previous work of the MAL Women’s trainer, in conjunction with the Central Province National Council of Women and the Bellona Area Council of Women (ACW). They had been involved in a poultry program to assist with improving poultry breeds on the island. Poultry were an important part of the diet on these two islands, located a twelve hour boat journey from Honiara. In rough seas they could not fish and wandering pigs caused too many disputes. However, after the women’s group built a poultry house no improved poultry breeds were forthcoming. It was at this point that the MAL Women’s trainer requested assistance from the VFGRIP.
The VFGRIP was able to provide improved breed poultry recommended by the Livestock Development Authority, chicken wire, three months supply of feed, eight improved varieties of sweet potato recommended by Dodo Creek Research Station, basic garden tools, fruit trees, and vegetable seeds. The project worked by supporting past and existing efforts with subsidised or part-subsidised inputs. These subsidies receded over time. In the case of Rennell and Bellona, the project was organised by the National Council of Women and managed by the Area Council of Women. However, in the process of this pilot project they decided to devolve control of the poultry resources from the women’s councils to individual women’s groups. I felt this pertinent to the observation of the Malaita PAD that individuals should be supported, and not just a community focus taken, to be of relevance here. This was highlighted to me when returning from my scheduled holidays. Before leaving resources were left for about 10 different things to be accomplished. Only the two that required the most effort and cost were done, and these were where individuals were responsible. The other eight remaining incomplete tasks were institutionally or community controlled.

There were many other pilot projects completed, both individually and group controlled. All were based on starting from the situation the peasants and extensionists found themselves, building on their interests, and as much as possible on local resources. As each pilot project continued to evolve, greater interest was created by those observing it and those who were drawn to work with it. The main insight I gained from this project was that development did not have to be expensive, but it did have to be relevant.
EXPERIENCE IN DIALOGUE WITH MY CHARACTERISATION OF EPISTEMIC LEARNING

From the “scene setting” created by the above experiences of the VFRIP I would like to re-engage with the generic characterisation of epistemic learning described in the first part of this chapter. I came to experience these characteristics as interwoven and mutually reinforcing, rather than being separate entities. For example, my experience of the fundamental failure of the conventional paradigm of development was not just a foundational experience that provided my initial motivation for finding a better way of doing things. It was continually experienced and reinforced throughout my project experiences. This reinforcing effect is intensified through the process of immersion in the “unknown” – the unknown categories of peasants and local extensionists. From within this “immersion,” exemplified in the four vignettes in this chapter, the further breaking of my fixed expat-centric gaze was assisted. This was done by being open to the categories and processes of local culture which formed dialectic encounters with my own culture of development. It is from these dialectic encounters that I came to see peasants as development practitioners in their own right. This resulted in my previously fixed categories of knowledge being inter-subjectively interrogated. From this process, guided by the systemic reframing of “expert with peasant,” emerged a nascent form of successful practice within a new and emerging paradigm. This development in epistemic learning is reflected in my quandary within Chapter 2 in response to the question, how was I to act as a non-expert? However, in Chapter 3 this is no longer a quandary. In Chapter 3 I experience first hand the boundary crossing between cultures that resonates with my later encounter with the concept of “boundary crossing” in authoethnography. The same occurs with my experiences within the “foreign” category from which self-constitutive processes and structures arise. Each successful and non-successful
pilot project, with its own unique set of conditions and participants formed a cell of the project as an “organism,” which is either built upon or rejected.

What I found so surprising about this kind of development was how easy it was. It was self-regenerating. All project activities needed to be relevant to the participants if they were to survive. As the project is developed, implemented and assessed by the participants, this relevance is ensured. As a result, unlike mechanistic development, there is no residual need to use an “outside” reality or communicate in a way to manipulate meaning, and in turn the actions of others. Thus the difference in the meaning of “participation” and in turn “communication” between the paradigms of mechanist and systemic development are extremely significant.

However, equally surprising as my encounter with the emergent notion of easy development, were my experiences of resistance that dominant expatriates demonstrated to this emerging paradigm of development. It is towards this characteristic of epistemic learning that I would now like to focus.

**MY EXPERIENCES OF RESISTANCE TO EASY DEVELOPMENT**

I found it strange and unnerving, that the self-regenerating experiences of easy development were by-and-large dismissed, by the very expatriate institutions who had so demonstrably failed peasants. Ironically, it was a central institution that this project was fostered by, the institution that was initially seen to be the source of expertise and funding support, which proved to be most difficult to deal with. The extent of this resistance impacted greatly upon me, such that it tested my resolve to proceed with engaging directly with my experiences and with peasants. I found myself to be a reluctant epistemic learner wishing that learning was not so difficult,
and tempted by my learning heritage to re-submit to the wisdom of an “outside reality.”

My relationship with UNICEF was extremely problematic. We were meant to be working with each other to assist the plight of peasants yet we came to be antagonists. We were caught up within the dilemma reflected so ably in Kuhn (1970) by a revolutionary onto-epistemological divide. This was reflected in disparate thoughts and actions resulting from apparently incommensurable paradigms. But the antagonistic relationship that arose resulted from more than just paradigmatic differences. Issues of professionalism and ethics were also at stake.

The resistance to the examples of successful practice of self-regenerative growth achieved within this project, is demonstrated most acutely in the silent action taken by UNICEF in cutting off funding for the project over its last eight months. No dialogue was entered into in regard to this action on their part, and any action on my part to clarify the issue was met with silence. However, it was resolved under the initiative of the CFO of the MAL, who liked what the project was doing and funded the project with the advice that he would find ways of being reimbursed by UNICEF.

While I would prefer not to have to deal with the dilemmas posed by such actions, deep within, I feel along with Bochner (1997), the need to “name the silences” as a means to commence a process by which the problems behind those silences can be addressed.

In our work, (e.g., Ellis & Bochner, 1996) we try to produce texts that show how people breach canonical conventions and expectations; how they cope with exceptional, difficult, and transformative crises; how they invent new ways of speaking when old ways fail them, and how they turn calamities into gifts. …but I also feel an obligation to help students address the moral contradictions they feel, bring their dilemmas out into the realm of public discourse, name the silences, make them discussable issues. What is education if not an intense probing scrutiny of moral choices and dilemmas…? (Bochner 1997:435)
In so doing we can see better how “…life had a different shape and texture than the ways it was sculpted in the classroom and in scholarly journals” (Bochner 1997:421). We can see how development has a different texture than the sculpture provided it by mechanistic techno-expat-centric development.

Emotional wounds are difficult to heal and I do not wish to get untowardly diverted in describing these silences. Rather, I will briefly list the silences I experienced and elaborate only upon one. The silences I observed included: a) the notion of institutional performance being reflected in the importance of institutional visibility to high government officials, as in contrast to my sense of performing for the peasant’s benefit, b) an expatriate steepleand expert who had written books on the subject but who could not walk around steepleland gardens without repeatedly falling down, c) the misrepresentation of long-time peasant practices of planting “animal-resistant” food sources around their village as the result of project initiatives and training, and finally d) sexual misconduct. I will briefly overview this latter “silence” as it impacted so dramatically on my work.

**Sexual misconduct**

While working in the office one day a lady from Rennell and Bellona came in. After some small talk she mentioned that someone on her island was going to have my baby! My mind went spinning! How could this be when I did not fraternise with any of them? In working with village women’s groups I had been very careful to cultivate an atmosphere of mutual trust, and this to me, excluded fraternising. Yet here I had in my office someone who thought, along with other project participants she knew, that I was the father of this yet-to-be-born child. The story that evolved was that during my last visit with the expatriate UNICEF officer, he had gotten a women’s leader pregnant. As most of the women had not seen the UNICEF officer during this
brief visit, when they were told the father was a white man, they presumed it to be me.

In time I received a letter from the concerned women’s leader, saying that the father of her baby was the UNICEF officer, and the incident occurred one night while he was showing her the way home after a meeting with us. She was concerned, that as a widow and approaching her forties, that she would find it difficult to support the child. I asked her if she wanted me to write to him and see to what degree he would support her and the child. She agreed to that, so I wrote to him outlining the situation. In his reply he admitted what the women’s leader had said, but said that he would not be providing any monetary support to either her or the child, and that he intended to visit her in hospital when having the baby, should he be in Honiara at the time.

The women’s leader did not want me to pursue the matter further so I dropped it. Again I thought of the irony of the UNICEF child control programs in the Solomon Islands promoting the use of condoms. Perhaps, I thought, they should promote their use amongst their own employees before getting others to use them? On a more serious note, I could not believe how such behaviour of one of UNICEF’s employees was appropriate in development work and appeared to be completely ignored by UNICEF.
Chapter 3: From systemic reframing to an emerging practice of easy development

Photo 4: Mango tree orchard destroyed by Cyclone - Mango trees pushed over in windrows (centre picture), Honiara, Solomon Islands

Photo 5: Demonstration steepland garden, Honiara, Solomon Islands
Chapter 3: From systemic reframing to an emerging practice of easy development

Photo 6: Demonstration kitchen showing raised work table with food storage, Honiara, Solomon Islands

Photo 7: My residence and hosts, Solomon Islands
CHAPTER 4

THE PARADOX OF INCREASING RESISTANCE TO SYSTEMIC PARTICIPATION

Once ‘the West has gained sufficient self-reflexivity to prevent further patronizing and the rest of the world has gained sufficient self-assertion for emancipation, we can hope for a genuine intercultural exchange.’

(Alsop 2002:11)

We have tried to develop a rigour of softness, or a rigour of participation that takes into account the person as a whole being capable of critical awareness, and hence capable of human inquiry.

(Reason and Heron 1986:474)

INTRODUCTION

My experiences of the emergence of “easy development” described in Chapter 3 resulted from the reframing of “expert” with peasants. This reframing provided a sense of participation that was more complete than the sense afforded it by contemporary development. Within this more complete sense of participation, development that had previously failed was transformed into something that was relatively easy to achieve, something upon which all parties agreed to be a success. This relative ease was in my view, attained through the process of boundary walking, whereby I crossed over into the previously “foreign” domain of the peasant. Within this domain I was able to redefine what “appropriate action” was in my own thinking. Local involvement in developing project objectives and processes ensured peasant participation. This local participation overcame the problem mechanistic development had in trying to convince peasants of the wisdom of a project blueprint, developed by a privileged group of experts, wherein peasant participation was
largely proscribed as the carrying out of a “project reality” that transcended peasant experience.

Three elements of my emerging practice of “easy development” in the previous two chapters are: a) the failure of the contemporary development project I came to assist, b) the ease at which I was able to overcome this failure through the systemic reframing of expert with peasant, and c) the surprising resistance dominant expatriates showed towards this new successful form of practice. With each successive experience elaborated in Chapters 2, 3, and now 4, the magnitude of each of these elements grew. Chapters 2 and 3 focussed on the first two elements above, while this chapter will focus on the later two. The combination of these two elements for me was extremely disturbing. I found the meaning of participation within my emerging paradigm of systemic participation, irreconcilable with the meaning of participation practiced by Jack and Jane, my arch antagonists who I will introduce later. An ideological crisis occurred as I struggled with my philosophy and practice of systemic participation which sort their participation, and the practical reality that they were undermining other people’s rights, including mine, to participate.

This chapter starts with the theoretical perspective gained from my research, which I now use to describe the conflict as arising between two disparate meanings of the term participation. These differences of meaning are seen to result from the different paradigms within which they arise. I also draw from my learning as a practitioner from the experiences of Chapters 2 and 3. The Save the Children Fund Australia (SCFA) project in Mozambique is then outlined along with its central feature – the development of a rural peasant’s resource centre – known as a Casa Agraria (CA). However, I find what was presented to me by SCFA and its sister
organisation in America – Save the Children (US) or SC(US) in the project proposal document, is remarkably different to what I find upon arrival in country. Within this conflicting environment and different views of participation I used my previous experiences of “easy development” to engage peasants, extensionists, and local administrators. As a result of this engagement, the project which for the previous two years had not been able to work with more than 80 peasants, expanded to work with more than 1,350 peasants. Yet at the height of this success, the project via a joint SCFA/SC(US) edict, is returned to the operating structure that existed prior to my arrival. In the concluding parts of the chapter I come to see that the expatriate institutions that sponsor the contemporary development process are iatrogenic, that is, development institutions seen to be the source of development, become the cause for under-development. And I wonder how much I am complicit in this process, and if I can ever be able to develop institutional structures that support, rather than negate the success that emanated from my practice of systemic participation.

Conflict of meaning explained as a difference in paradigm

Central to my experience in Mozambique were two different meanings of participation. At the time I was immersed within the problem it was very confusing to find myself using the same terminology as others like Jack and Jane, yet acting so differently. During my research I have since come to realise that a useful way of informing my re-presentation of my Mozambique experiences, is to do so from the perspective of alternate meanings being derived from different paradigms.

This is an important element arising from my reading of Kuhn’s (1970) seminal book, The structure of scientific revolutions. Here conflict is seen to arise between the existing paradigm and the new emerging one. This conflict is seen as a purposeful
enterprise that; on the one hand keeps the scientist from unnecessarily getting sidetracked from their existing manner of thinking, and on the other, ensures the new paradigm is tested significantly before replacing the existing paradigm. During my research on epistemic learning, I have come to see the value in viewing my Mozambican experiences as a shift from a mechanistic paradigm of participation, to a systemic paradigm of participation. Peasant participation within the former category is pre-determined by experts, through the structure of a project, where the \textit{a priori} assumptions and values of experts are not amenable to change by the peasants. The work of the project implementers thus becomes, how best to offer incentives for peasants to comply with the vision of development projected by the project? Peasant participation in this sense becomes mechanical, as they are seen as objects open to manipulation through the rules of “cause and effect.” This role of the peasant, as a passive agent, changes completely within the notion of systemic participation. Participation within a systems perspective has been discussed in Chapter 1 where the specific example of Midgley’s (2000) systemic intervention was discussed. Another example of participatory learning can be found in Pretty and Guijt’s et al. (1995) systemic participation. Within my notion of systemic participation, peasants and/as implementers, do not submit to the transcendent categories of the expert and the project, rather they participate within the Foucauldian enterprise of taking part in the creation of “truth” (refer to Chapter 6). In this enterprise “truth” is not \textit{a priori} to participation, but emergent from it! As a result of a commitment to peasant participation, the \textit{allegiance} of the implementers is not to a project, commodity, or discipline, but rather to the peasant (Collinson 2001). This allegiance to the peasant is similar to the fundamental belief that Perry (1999:xii) had for students when he said, “A fundamental belief in students is more important than anything else.” This belief in, and allegiance with peasants, provides for an equality of participation. Participation grounded in ontological and moral
commitment, rather than the opportunism that is reflected in the expedient delivery of pre-planned projects. The implications this change in paradigm has for the practice of development are profound.

However, while I found this explanation very useful, I did not have access to these insights at the time of my Mozambican experiences which assisted in their emergence. Rather, I felt very much unravelled (Salner 2001), like Dante, an understudy of Virgil, who is encouraged to pass through the fiery experiences in the Italian poem *Purgatorio* (Binyon 1938:Canto XXVII). This sense of unravelling, I picture as being founded in the conflict arising from a common commitment to participation between two groups. But this common commitment to participation turns to conflict through the incommensurability of the different meanings and practices of participation resulting from the two groups of protagonists involved. The two protagonist groups in this unfolding drama of my epistemic learning were: the SC(US) expatriates, who co-ordinated the emergency and health projects and who I will refer to respectively as Jack and Jane; and myself as the SCFA expatriate coordinating the agricultural project. We were all located in Xai-Xai, the capital city of Gaza Province, Mozambique.

**Drawing from my past learning as a practitioner**

The profound change that I brought from my Hawkesbury experiences into my first experiences in the Solomon Islands was my change in role. This role change elaborated in Chapter 2, resulted from a systemic “reframing” of the “expert” with the peasant. This changed my perspective from the traditional role of “expert,” for which there were many examples, to one of a “development collaborator.” However, I had no examples of successful practice for this role of development collaborator, which made it a risky enterprise. As I began to develop this new role for myself, I found
resonance with notions that are described in Chapter 2, and illustrated within the concept of development as intercultural interaction that are discussed in Appendix 1. Within these concepts, power, meaning, and commitment arise through a process of mutual simultaneous shaping. As our failings and shortcomings are exposed, we leave ourselves open to knowledge that lies outside of our understanding. In the concepts of autoethnography we cross the boundaries between what we regard as “home” and what we regard as “foreign.” It is from the perspective of the “foreign” that one is able to see “home” in a new light, and from which the seeds of revolutionary insight can arise.

The role change that I embarked upon in Chapter 2 had good success. This success was brought to my attention by the local farm managers and teachers. They noted how different I was from other expatriates. Most expatriates, they said, kept their technical expertise to themselves; whereas I not only shared information with them, I assisted them in knowing how to access and use it so they could solve their own problems. In this process of change I learnt to eschew authority as a means of motivating change, and instead engage with local experience and achieve improvements as judged by peasants and extensionists themselves. To do that, I oriented myself to their experiences and values.

Taking these tentative images of participation that arose between collaborator and locals, and that showed promise of success in the face of development that had previously failed, I began my second lot of experiences in the Solomon Islands that are described in Chapter 3. Again, faced with the failure of the mechanistic paradigm of development to be of benefit for peasants, I began to further develop my emerging sense of systemic participation. My conceptual move toward the local extensionsist and peasant could only occur concomitantly with my physical and
Chapter 4: The paradox of increasing resistance to systemic participation

social movement towards engaging, living, and associating with them. This occurred through living, travelling, and working alongside of them. It was through these experiences that most of my insights arose. These insights included: that development can be simple; development was not development per se, rather it was usually development of a particular kind - expat-centric development; development did not have to be expensive, but it needed to be relevant and useful for the peasant; development should start small and build on successful interaction with peasants before making any attempt at expanding; and that locals themselves have an important role in guiding, developing and implementing development, more so than I.

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE SCFA FOOD SECURITY AND SELF RELIANCE PROJECT IN MOZAMBIQUE

The experiences I relate in this chapter concern the SCFA project with the official title “Australia: Save the Children Fund Australia, Food Security and Self Reliance Project, Mozambique.” My experience of this project was like living a lifetime in two years as there were so many intellectual, emotional, and practical challenges. It has taken a decade for me to be able to analyse the experiences with less emotional attachment, contrasting with intense emotional engagement at the time. An analysis of this project alone would be sufficient for a thesis. But the aim of this thesis is to analyse my experience as it informs and is informed by epistemic development in my theory, practice, and research. Within this context, this chapter focuses on the central meaning of participation as seen through two different paradigms. My research has been assisted by the extensive project reporting that includes a) Annual Plans (Mattner 1990a, 1990b, 1991c), b) Half-Yearly Progress Reports (Mattner 1990c, 1991a, 1991b) that reviewed project progress in relation to the project proposal (SCFA 1989) and formed the basis of discussion for the Project
Chapter 4: The paradox of increasing resistance to systemic participation

Coordinating Committee (PCC) meetings; c) Six-Monthly PCC Reports (Mattner 1990d, 1990f, 1991d, 1991e); and d) a village survey (Mattner 1990e). For my own research purposes my experiences of Mozambique were written down at the beginning of my research.

Negotiating with SCFA for the position of Agricultural Coordinator

In Adelaide, 1989, a couple of months after I had completed my contract with the Village Food Garden Rehabilitation and Improvement Program (VFGRIP) in the Solomon Islands, I received a phone call from the Program Director, Save the Children Fund Australia (SCFA). He had been to the Solomon Islands to visit SCFA projects there, and while there the SCFA Field Officers spoke highly of my work. So he was asking me to apply for the position of Agricultural Coordinator for the Australia: Save the Children Fund Australia, Food Security and Self Reliance Project, Mozambique – hereafter referred to in this chapter, as “the project.” In negotiations leading up to my appointment three issues arose that needed attention. The first issue related to the personal question of whether I was willing to risk my life by working in Mozambique. Secondly, the idea of participation reflected in the project proposal (SCFA 1989) was not compatible with my emerging practice of peasant participation. Lastly, my reference from UNICEF in regard to my previous position was not likely to be a positive one, arising in the main part, through me challenging the moral and professional behaviour of the UNICEF officer supporting the VFGRIP.

Was I prepared to risk my life working in Mozambique?

The most important question I felt that I needed to answer before deciding to go to Mozambique was: whether I was willing to risk my life working in Mozambique? What scarce information I could obtain of Mozambique painted a grim picture
indeed. I was introduced in Knight (1988), to an ex Portuguese colony that was
wracked with internal terrorism that was supported externally. The level of human
depravity and barbarity within Mozambique had affected almost every family. The
Renamo bandits terrorised the unarmed population by raping, killing, maiming,
kidnapping, stealing, and destroying houses, crops, and infrastructure. According to
Knight (1988:50&58) 500,000 people died in eight years from 1980-1988 as a result
of this terrorism, and US$6 billion of infrastructure was destroyed. In addition to the
above tragedies the population was bereft of skills and education:

…at the time of independence there was only one black doctor in Mozambique, one
agronomist, no mining engineers. Of the 4,000 university students, only 40 were
Mozambicans. 95 per cent of the population was illiterate. (Knight 1988:40)

Although scared of the possibility of losing my life, my heart went out to those within
this horrendous situation. I felt as if my time had come to show solidarity with a
wretched humanity, made so by inhumane circumstances beyond their control. This
move was assisted by associating with other like-minded people, and by a
touchstone verse I wrote in my Bible:

…and if by defencelessness we forfeit survival, the Christian answer can only be that
survival is not the chief end of man. Survival is not lightly relinquished. Life is a precious
boon, but life is not to be had at any price. (Roland H Bainton - reference unknown)

My desire to redeem my sense of humanity was such that I could not ignore my
knowledge of human calamity at a distance for the benefit of my own self
indulgence.

Could SCFA and I come to an agreement on peasant participation?

In the project proposal document (SCFA 1989) I found evidence of new paradigm
participatory thinking. It reflected my own first new paradigm understanding -
bogged down within old paradigm structures. This was most obvious in the Job
Description for the Agricultural Coordinator’s position that specifically sought
someone with “experience in community-based agricultural training, using non-
formal and experiential learning techniques.” However, this is later conflated with
someone who had skills in the “development of training curriculum and materials.”

A similar confusion arose in the SCFA claim of extensive participation with locals:

Save the Children’s proposed programs in Mozambique were developed through extensive
meetings between the SCF needs assessment team, local communities, and government
officials, and are aimed at addressing the most pressing long-term needs of the people.
(SCFA 1989:3)

…and my learning upon arrival in Mozambique that the project proposals in their
various forms were never translated into Portuguese, and the SCFA Program
Director had never made a visit to Mozambique during the two years in which SCFA
had negotiated the proposal for project funding with AusAID.

In any case, both the SCFA Program Director and SC(US) Director for Africa with
whom I negotiated the position with, proved interested in the participatory approach
that I said I would take, if I gained the position. I presented my approach as an
informal approach to learning that interacted with the farmer’s vital daily interests.
This informal learning approach was seen as the process through which the project
objectives, of increasing food production and the amount of food marketed by a
factor of 20%, would be achieved.

How would SCFA respond to a negative reference from UNICEF?
The last question needing a favourable response was, “How would SCFA respond
to a negative reference from UNICEF in Fiji in regard to my previous position in the
Solomon Islands?” I told SCFA about my problematic relationship with UNICEF and
that they would be unlikely to provide a good reference for me. As it turned out
UNICEF provided an unfavourable recommendation. However, based on what
SCFA had seen of my work in the Solomon Islands, and their discussions with me, they decided to ignore UNICEF’s recommendation.

**My understanding of the project proposal before departing Australia**

The project was made possible through the Australian Government’s commitment to Austral (Southern) Africa as a means of expressing dissatisfaction with the policy of apartheid in South Africa. Extra aid allocations were thus provided to countries of Southern Africa, in an effort to show Australian support for countries that South Africa sought to destabilise. Over a period of two years, SCFA had tried to access these funds for a project in conjunction with SC(US). I was not told much about these earlier efforts, which I found would become significant upon my arrival in Mozambique. The main issues in my mind prior to departure were:

1. Mozambique depended on “emergency support for about 90% of its domestic grain requirements” (UNDP 1989).

2. The Mozambican government policy had moved from supporting state farms and cooperatives to supporting family farmers:

   Family farmers cannot be left out of efforts to organize production of food, raw products, and exports. It is most important to ensure the involvement of local leaders and family farmers in the planning and development of production. (Report on the Fourth Party Congress, p 35 quoted in SCFA 1989:4)

3. From this intention to support family farmers arose the notion of the *casa agraria* (CA). CA is literally translated as “agricultural house.” Conceptually it was seen as “a community based agricultural centre, as a mechanism to channel technical assistance and agricultural inputs more directly to family farmers” (SCFA 1989). Typically the CA was seen as a physical building (see Photo 8) and accompanying social organisation that could sell farm inputs, along with other peasant needs such as food and clothing, as well as provide services such as the storage, drying, and grinding of corn.
Associated with these physical items the CA was also seen to be a provider of agricultural extension services, the cost of which could be sourced through profits made in the provision of its other services. The administration of the CA was not as formal as the cooperative model of development it was replacing.

4. The Australian Government in providing funds for the project specifically wanted an Australian identity, reflected in an Australian Agricultural Coordinator, and notices identifying the Australian project on the vehicle (see Photo 9), offices, and the CA building. The need to assist such projects operating in such difficult countries was recognised through six-monthly in-country Project Coordinating Committee (PCC) meetings and a rigorous reporting schedule.

5. SCFA used the Australian government funds to develop a project in line with both Mozambican and Australian government policies. This was done in conjunction with SC(US) who would provide the in-country project infrastructure for which they would be recompensed.

6. The resulting project was to aim to increase the amount of food crops grown and marketed by a factor of 20% over the three year period within the villages of Julius Nyerere and Agostinho Neto with a combined population of 22,000 people made up of 3,200 families (SCFA 1989:6).

7. The Mozambican government had shown support for the project through the provision of a house for the Agricultural Coordinator, offices for the project, agricultural extensionists, and a yearly budget for the project. SC(US) had shown interest in having agriculture combined with its other health and emergency sectors in Xai-Xai and Julius Nyerere.
For me this $850,000 three year project came to be very appealing. Its need was self-evident for a country only able to provide 10% of its food needs. The organisations involved showed commitment to working together, and the SCFA Program Director and SC(US) Director for Africa were happy with the participative and non-formal approach I would take. I was working in my area of interest, peasant food production, in a project that would provide me with the necessary resources for its implementation, and was associated with a huge organisation with an annual budget of US$80 million - SC(US) - from which I was eager to learn.

**REPRESENTATION - THE PROPOSAL IS NOT THE TERRITORY**

My understanding of the proposal, and its broader context that is represented above, changed dramatically as I moved from Australia towards the peasants in Julius Nyerere village. This started by spending one week with SC(US) in New York, and two months in Lisbon, Portugal, learning Portuguese. It was in Lisbon that my personal life changed, as here I courted my wife-to-be, and seven months later we married in Lisbon, whereupon she returned to Mozambique with me. Following my language training in Lisbon I went to Maputo, the capital of Mozambique. There I arranged the purchasing, banking, and project administration requirements with SC(US), and met with the national agricultural department to get a feeling of their agricultural policies, particularly those relating to CAs. Then I moved onto Xai-Xai (pronounced Shy-Shy), capital of Gaza province where I was to live, and familiarised myself with the Provincial Department of Agriculture (PDA), District Department of Agriculture (DDA), and SC(US) expatriate personnel - the overall Project Coordinator/Emergency Coordinator and the Health Coordinator, who I will refer to as Jack and Jane respectively. Finally I visited the village of Julius Nyerere. However, before proceeding with a description of the surprising
Chapter 4: The paradox of increasing resistance to systemic participation

differences I experienced between what the project proposal represented and my experiences upon arriving in Mozambique, I would like to describe my first observations of the peasant’s situation. For it is my experience with peasants that draws me on within the enterprise that we call development; and it is their reality that projects so often get wrong and mis-represent, not necessarily intentionally, but through making the mistake of being trapped within their own pre-determined project views, and not being able to see themselves through peasant eyes.

An encounter with peasant life

My first trip out to the village was a memorable one. First we travelled from Xai-Xai across the Limpopo valley for about ten kilometres. The heavy clay soil was very difficult to cultivate. It was further up this valley where the villagers grew their dryland maize and grazed their cattle. The cattle were looked after by young boys, who would stay with them for the whole day and then coral them at night. On the edge of the valley, the relief rose 20 to 30 meters to a sandy plateau where cashews grew in abundance - prior to independence Mozambique was the world’s largest exporter of cashew nuts. Peanuts were also grown on this sandy soil if the season permitted. Julius Nyerere village was located 35km from Xai-Xai and got its name from the respect they had for the first president of Tanzania. Julius Nyerere stretched for seven kilometres along the side of the sandy plateau overlooking the Limpopo valley.

Peasants would have their areas of maize located in the valley floor anywhere from half an hour, to two and a half hours walk away from the village, and sometimes more! The ladies who were responsible for the maintenance of the crop and its harvest would have a strenuous daily program. Typically they would rise about five in the morning, eat what was left over from the night before, prepare things for the
older children to go to school, walk the one to two hours with the smaller children to the maize field (see Photo 1), work in the field weeding (see Photo 2) till about ten or eleven o’clock when it started to get too hot. Then they would rest a little and eat something, or make a small fire and roast a cob or two of corn. Before returning to the village they may collect some firewood or roof thatch to carry back on their heads. It was not unusual for some women to have a bundle of firewood on their heads (a bundle of corn cobs in harvest season), a small baby on their back, a small child holding one hand, and the other hand holding a bag (see Photo 1). Walking long distances in the heat under these conditions was a remarkable feat. Arriving back to the village at around 2pm, they would then “pillar” the corn in preparation for the evening meal. This required the use of a large heavy round-ended wooden post being lifted and dropped end-on into a large wooden “egg-cup shaped” receptacle that was knee-high. After pounding the corn into coarse flour in this manner, it would then be left to soak in water. The girls arriving home from school would be responsible for collecting water from the wells located in the “soak areas” just at the side of the plateau, where the sandy soils met the clay soils of the valley. Before meal time the mother would then use a clay bowl and a wooden pestle to grind the coarse cornmeal which had been soaking, into a fine paste. This would then be cooked to form a white pudding that would be served with some kind of gravy, beans, or meat stew if available.

Many of the men had gone to work in the South African gold mines for years at a time hoping to save some money. Sometimes they came back with useful things for their family, such as galvanised iron roofing, cement, and household goods. Other times they arrived with material trophies such as large stereos, or 1000cc motorbikes which were extremely difficult to ride on dirt roads or roads which had more pot holes than flat surfaces. Sometimes the goods arrived, other times they
Chapter 4: The paradox of increasing resistance to systemic participation

were destroyed by bandits on the way, along with the purchaser. Men’s responsibility traditionally consisted of building and maintaining the house. For those with traditional housing this took continual effort - replacing the grass roof, repairing the mud walls and so on. However, those with houses that had galvanised roofing, cement walls and floors, had more time on their hands. Ploughing the fields was also largely a man’s responsibility, looking after the bullocks, ploughing their paddocks, and also ploughing other people’s paddocks for a fee. Those with a bit of money, and who knew someone with a tractor, would pay for a tractor to prepare the soil for planting.

In short, life for peasants, indeed everyone in Mozambique, was exceedingly tough. The lack of any material things showed itself in my everyday experiences with them. Whether this was the lack of clothing (see Photos 3 and 9), where anything still with threads was treasured; to people treasuring my shoes that I had just thrown in the bin; or the lesson in self-sufficiency I learnt from the CA agricultural extensionist when I was present when he changed his tyre tube for a new one the project provided – his old tube had been repaired more than 33 times and still held air (see Photo 10). This tube remains a treasured possession in my office.

**Representation and reality - my experience with the project**

It was longer than I hoped before I was able to spend much time either in the village, or supporting the extension workers and meeting with farmers. This was due to the huge gulf between what was represented to me while in Australia and what I experienced on site. This was not helped by the fact that not long after my arrival in Mozambique both the SC(US) Director for Africa, and the SCFA Program Director with whom I had negotiated the position, had left their respective organisations!
Further, I found that what SCFA and I had recently negotiated with the SC(US) Director for Africa did not appear to travel much further than his office.

**Miscommunication of the project proposal**

This fact was brought dramatically to my notice when upon my arrival in Xai-Xai I was told by Jack that I was not wanted, and if he had any say on the matter, he would put me on the next plane out. Yet half his wages were being paid by SCFA in recompense for his support for the project and me! Soon I found myself around the table with five SC(US) expatriates - Jack and Jane, the Mozambique Country director, and two others from head office in New York. They were all telling me the direction I was taking the project was wrong. I could not understand why they were saying this, until I found out that the project proposal they were working from was eleven months previous to the one that I signed up on! According to this first proposal SCFA was to remit all the project funds to SC(US) and SC(US) would manage the project how they liked. I gave them a copy of the current proposal, but it never changed their minds or their attitudes - I remained *persona non grata*.

**A new project - or the continuation of an old one?**

The project proposal (SCFA 1989) never gave any indication that the agricultural project had been running for two years in the village. This occurred over the duration the proposal was being negotiated. For the first year the project had its own SC(US) Agricultural specialist, who according to Jack and Jane did not work well; and according to the agricultural extensionists had left because of Jack and Jane’s interference in her work. For the second year Jane, the SC(US) Health Coordinator, had been directing the agricultural project according to her view of a CA. Interestingly, there were no records of any of the work undertaken during these
two years. As Jack and Jane were not willing to tell me anything about it I had to discover what happened through a gradual process of discovery.

The advantage of having an operative project was that all the extension staff, with the exception of my counter-part, had been selected, as well as all the CA staff and the CA president, and were working under the direction of Jane. The disadvantage this brought was that after two years of operating with about 15 staff they were still working with only 80 farmers, none of whom had received any tangible benefits for their participation. Further, the project had gained a poor reputation with the PDA, DDA, and other CAs, in addition to the farmers. All these groups complained of three things:

1. The project had constructed a CA building made of local materials. This was considered not suitable, as a CA built in this manner did not provide a place that was weather proof, secure from robbery, or vermin proof – all factors required for storing grain and items for sale to peasants.

2. The project had promoted the use of millet – a crop that was not suitable and not recommended by PDA or DDA for the area.

3. Contrary to local health regulations the project had kept draft animals within the village precinct.

**Major constraints for increasing peasant crop production**

The proposal states clearly the main constraints it saw as facing peasant food production:

Two main constraints have contributed to the difficulties of family farmers in the village of Julius Nyerere: 1) lack of access to training and personnel to help improve farming practices, impart management skills, and assist in organizing family farmers; and 2) difficulties in gaining access to the means of production necessary to increase their output. These two factors lie at the heart of diminishing yields and cultivated area, competition between livestock and crops, and poor use and maintenance of irrigated areas. (SCFA 1989:12)
Yet in-country, the picture presented to me was considerably different, trained agricultural staff were available. Interestingly, the Health Coordinator used all non-trained staff when trained health personnel were available. This resulted in considerable friction between her staff, who directed the trained agricultural staff – as not only were they being directed by people with less training, they were also being paid the same as them. It also became very clear from personal observation and the views of agricultural extensionists, CA staff, and peasants, supported by the results of the project baseline survey (Mattner 1990e) - that the two biggest constraints facing food production were the lack of reliable rainfall, and the lack of tractors and/or draft animals to cultivate the heavy clay soils in the valley.

This former problem arose through the rainfall in the area being divided relatively equally between the two seasons each year. This resulted in two marginal seasons, rather than one good season and one not-so-good season each year. This lack of rainfall made itself felt over the project period, with only one in four seasons having sufficient rainfall to obtain a harvest. Even that season had two false starts, with opening rains not being followed up, resulting in the loss of two lots of corn seed. The project only had $8,600 allocated to irrigation and drainage improvements, while the local cost of developing new irrigation land was in the order of US$15,000/ha. In any case, the water from the Limpopo River was too salty at this location, and too far from the village. Some peasants within a cooperative did have access to a small 200ha irrigation scheme that pumped water from some local lagoons. The project started negotiating to use some of their irrigated land, but this was a long term process. In any event, this activity would not provide an impact to all farmers, as the project was endeavouring to do.
The next most important problem was the difficulty of soil preparation. The clay soils in the valley were so hard as to make cultivation by hoe impossible. This problem was not helped by a shortage of draft animals, due to lack of pasture, and loss due to flooding and disease. It was very expensive to get a tractor to do the work. The project had $1,600 allocated for the purchase of draft animals, so again we could not do anything substantial in this problem area.

The third most important problem for the farmers was the lack of seed. With the many season failures it was not unusual for the farmers to plant their seed and lose it when follow-up rains didn’t come. On occasion this occurred up to three times in one season. The project had $27,000 to purchase seed and set up a seed bank. This would be something the project could make a significant difference with.

But how did the project proposal get it so wrong? How could food production in such an area ever be economic? The point is, that even though it was not economic, the peasants still tried to grow food as the country was only 10% sufficient in food production. Food was simply not available, even if you had the money to buy it. In retrospect it would have made more sense for the project to focus on emergency relief in areas where production was marginal at best, and increase food production in non-marginal areas. Another alternative would be to have looked at ways of improving irrigation using upstream water from the Limpopo River. This experience established the importance of the need for appropriate orientation, a concept that I had obtained through the notion of development as intercultural interaction. It also highlighted the need to communicate with local people in a manner that involved the transfer of meaning, rather than for the purpose of strategically manipulating others for one’s own purpose.
Project support from SC(US)

While the project support from SC(US) Maputo was good, and without it the project could not have operated, the support that was meant to be provided by SC(US) Xai-Xai was simply not forthcoming. This support specified in the proposal included management support, accounting and procurement support, office and warehouse space, and transport. By-and-large all this support was insufficiently provided or non-existent. I could give many instances, but this is not the purpose of the thesis, so I will describe one example in order to provide the reader with a sense of the context within which I was operating. In short Jack and Jane provided a hostile and negative operating environment, indicated both by Jack’s comments on the first day that he did not want me there, and by his efforts in the first two Project Coordinating Committee (PCC) meetings to discredit and tell lies about what I was doing.

The sorts of things that I began to find out about SC(US) Xai-Xai were unusual. Jack and Jane were coordinating the emergency and health sectors respectively and yet they were both living in the house that was provided by the PDA for the Agricultural Co-ordinator. Their offices were also in the PDA building. They were utilising resources for the agricultural project, while not providing the support that both SCFA and SC(US) had assured me of. Jack and Jane said that I would have to find office and warehouse space myself. When I started to look around, they said I was not allowed to shift from the building they were in. To my suggestion that we look together for office space that would suit us all, they said that they had enough office space and did not want to shift. I arranged for more office space in the PDA building by arranging to relocate the PDA lunch and recreation room. After the months of renovation required, Jack and Jane said that it was not fair I had so much office space for myself. To keep the peace I offered half of it to them. When I went to fix the toilet in the new offices upstairs, Jane said I should not do it as it would
mean the people upstairs would stop mixing with the people downstairs! Again, in order to keep the peace, I left the toilet in disrepair. There were many other similar experiences, but it is those experiences that relate to peasant participation in development on which I will now focus.

DIFFERING VIEWS OF DEVELOPMENT AND PARTICIPATION

Whether Jack and Jane had seen the new project proposal or not, or whether the SC(US) had negotiated with them in an appropriate manner in the lead up to its signing, I don’t really know. However, it was obvious that individually, and as a couple, they demonstrated their discontent towards the new project. What I found confusing was that I shared similar beliefs with them: about helping peasants in rural areas, participation, and self-sufficiency - but could not account for the huge difference in our “practice.” Following my research, I now explain this difference resulting from paradigmatic differences. Thus, I represent my emerging practice of systemic participation in Mozambique as a naïve form of systemic practice, nascent within a conflicting environment not unlike that represented by Kuhn (1970) in his notion of a paradigm war.

On the one side I represent Jane, with whom I had almost daily contact, as having a mechanistic view of participation. She acknowledged the need for peasants to be involved in the project, and this occurred through structures that she created to do just that - the Village Development Committee (VDC) – but which the Village President and the Village Executive Committee felt were a project tool for Jane to do what she liked within the village. This fitted in with other observations made by the agricultural extensionists, who posited that Jane employed unqualified staff for her health project when there were qualified staff available, as unqualified staff were
more likely to do what she said without questioning it. For Jane, the CA was a structure for integrated development within the village. It was not just meant to support agricultural extensionists as per the SCFA (1989) proposal, but also health extensionists, as well as water and educational developments. In addition there were things that she saw the CA should not do such as provide seed through credit arrangements, or sell clothes or food. Yet all these activities were promoted by the PDA, DDA, agricultural extensionists and the farmers themselves (Mattner 1990e). What distinguished her view of participation from mine, in my thinking, was that participation was something used to achieve her pre-determined objectives. That is, the expert status of the expert is retained, but the outcomes are softened through an inclusive notion of peasant participation post objective formation.

On the other hand, my concept of participation has been clearly outlined in the previous chapters. Qualities of this concept include the loss of expert status unique only to the expert and not the peasant; and an engagement with the “foreign” worldview of the peasant, from which effective development “as the extensionist and peasant see it,” emerges. The dialectic that emerges from this process is facilitated by a notion of effective communication being the sharing of meaning, rather than the manipulation of others for one’s own strategic purposes.

Orientation

After my initial response of shock to the differences between what was represented to me by the SCFA Program Director and the SC(US) Director for Africa, and what I found upon arrival in-country; I experienced a secondary shock in finding that SC(US) had been implementing the agricultural project for two years and were still working with only 80 peasants. Further, they had antagonised all participant groups, and rather than listening to them, implemented their own program.
I was faced with the problem of knowing what to do? If I continued under the direction of Jack and Jane I would gain their support, but risk continuing to antagonise the very groups that I was wishing to help. On the other hand in helping the groups I came to Mozambique to help, I risked antagonising Jack and Jane. I chose the later option, for within that option, I retained the status of a person whose opinions were significant, along with the groups I was working with. Within the former option I obtained significance only to the extent that I advanced the purposes of Jack and Jane.

Supporting my approach was a central tenant of the project as outlined in the proposal which talks of “community-based and –controlled Casas Agrarias” and that “activities and supplies provided by the Casa Agraria will be determined by the farmers themselves” (SCFA 1989:13). Further, the PCC six monthly meeting which came to include the Village President and the CA President was seen as a participatory mechanism through which the project direction could retain relevance with changing circumstances.

But I was in no rush to change things for changes sake. I had learnt from my Hawkesbury and Solomon Islands experiences, to orientate myself through submersing myself in the existing situation, and the need to be effective and relevant to extensionists and peasants. To do this I needed to develop a working structure from which I could deliver things that would be of benefit to the peasants, the primary one in my mind being the provision of farm inputs, particularly seed.

Re-orientation and the role of “turning points”

During my orientation period I was able to improve my Portuguese language skills, gain an understanding of the situation through talking to as many of the various
participant groups as possible, and establishing a good working base in Xai-Xai. But I still had not yet participated with the project extensionists in directing project activities, nor met with the eighty peasants. During this time the extensionists and CA staff were still working under Jane’s direction. However, from my previous development experiences I had come to have faith that by engaging with them, and focussing on their situation and their “vital daily interests,” that the project objectives would more than likely be achieved.

First “turning point” - taking personal responsibility and moving towards the extensionists

Following the development of physical and organisation resources that could deliver project inputs it was now time for me to work alongside extensionists and CA staff. I wanted to discuss with them what they thought the peasant’s needed, and how they thought they could assist them? They lamented the fact that they had been working with 80 peasants for two years and not been able to increase that number, that they were directed by unqualified health staff who were in turn directed by Jane – who did not seem to address their concerns. One day while assisting them with the task of the day set by Jane, I was helping them cart water in open drums. The water was for the cement brick maker who was making bricks for the new CA. It was a fool’s job, as most of the water was sloshed out of the open drums before arriving at the destination. They were as frustrated as I at doing this task in isolation from the peasants: so I asked them what they thought they should be doing instead? They said, working with the peasants to help prepare for the new planting season. I said that I would be happy to help them to do that, and that it made more sense to help the peasants when they needed it. In turn, I was sure the peasants would be more prepared to help with the CA construction, if that was important for them, in the off-season. I knew this change would infuriate Jane and Jack, but in my mind, I was in
Mozambique to help the peasants, or I should go home. From this time on the extensionists and I emersed ourselves in constant dialogue, and the enclosed utility of the vehicle we used to get to the village and back, became affectionately known as our mobile office. I had at last taken responsibility for the day-to-day operations of the agricultural project.

Second turning point - building on what we knew and moving towards the peasants

The next problem was to get closer to the peasants. Jack and Jane insisted that this be done through working with the Village Development Committee (VDC), even though nothing was said of it in the project proposal. The name suggested itself as the appropriate organisation through which development in the village should be directed, so I went along with it. We spent an inordinate number of hours under the cashew tree in the village square, waiting for the agricultural committee members of the VDC. They were always late, and often did not come. We then began to realise that most of the people on the agricultural committee of the VDC were not active farmers. Interestingly, the official village agricultural representative was not on the committee either. In these times of waiting, I was able to talk at length with both extension and CA staff. I was starting to realise that the structure within the village, where the health sector appeared to be successfully working, was completely different to the peasants working structure in the valley. The village had 3509 families located in 62 zones within 9 barrios (Mattner 1990e:3) while in the valley there were 2923 machambas (farm plots) in 16 zones. We needed to get a better idea of how the farmers organised themselves in the valley, and the VDC wasn’t helping us do this at all.
In my talks with the village President, while waiting for VDC members, I asked whether he might have a reason for the tardiness and lack of interest of the agricultural members of the VDC? He said that all village development was meant to be under the control of the village executive and himself. However, when Jane and Jack got responses from the village executive that they did not like, they set up the VDC themselves, and used it as a project tool to do what they liked. He said he would have stopped it, but having resources coming into the village was better than nothing. At this point, as a project working group we could not see any reason for continuing to work with the VDC.

During this re-orientation process, I was building my own view in conjunction with project and CA staff. That view was to work with the existing group of eighty farmers so that they would tangibly benefit from the relationship. Should we succeed in doing this, then we believed other farmers would want to start working with us. So we acted on what we knew by ordering some corn seed, and then set a time to meet with the peasants as a group. In the words of Higgins (1978:233) “Our daily practices will be more persuasive than our opinions.” The point at issue in systemic participation is obtaining a direction from what is known by the people from within the situation, rather than from some transcendent source outside of the group, no matter whether that is an ideology or an expert. That is, creating our own learning process in response the question raised by Tierney (1998:50):

How does an individual create and change educational processes rather than merely have the educational organization shape the individual?

For us, this form of education involved engaging with all participants, and working from what we already knew in dialectic with what the peasants already knew - a journey starting with a single step of mutual engagement.
Third turning point - dialectic engagement with the peasants and what they knew

The onset of the April-September 1990 cool season had commenced. The previous October 1989 – March 1990 season started before my arrival, and failed completely due to lack of rain. Very few farmers had corn to plant for the oncoming season. The project had ordered three tonne of a new variety of white corn seed called Matuba, a variety the PDA had been recommending. But as a group – extensionists, CA staff, and I - we felt we could provide more than just seed by credit. So we discussed what sort of technologies we could demonstrate with on-farm demonstration plots that were likely to improve corn yields. We decided to promote increased plant densities and better post-germination control of the corn stalk borer. This gave me the confidence to now meet with the peasants.

At our first meeting with the eighty peasants, we experienced their traditional hospitality – the provision of a meal prior to the meeting – an extraordinary event given the general lack of food. After the meal a summary of the changes within the project were related to the peasants by the project Extension Coordinator. The peasants responded by saying that talk was not sufficient. After two years lacking any benefit, they wanted action. We asked them what their main problems were, and they gave us a similar reply to what we had already evaluated. The most immediate need they saw was the supply of seed through credit arrangements. They had already lost their seed last season due to lack of follow-up rains after planting. We related to them how we also had come to the same conclusion. However, we also felt that food production increases could be assisted by utilising improved seed varieties, and some changes in husbandry techniques; such as increased planting density, and better control of the corn stalk borer following germination. Further, we thought such changes could be best demonstrated on
their *machambas* where they would look after the demonstration plot along with the rest of their plantings. The project would supply seed and any other inputs for the 10m x 10m demonstration area. It was proposed that six to eight farmers would be present at the establishment of each demonstration plot. The harvest would remain with the farmer on whose *machamba* the demonstrations plot was located. The peasants assisting in the demonstration plot, with the help of the extensionists, would weigh the harvest to determine the yield and compare it with the yield of the rest of the *machamba*. In order to calculate the amount of seed we would need to order in future, a list of all farmers, noting the area of their landholding was required. We then asked if they would like some time to consider this situation, discuss it, and come back to us. After about thirty minutes discussing the situation, the peasants came back with amendments to the ideas. The most useful suggestion, in addition to what we had already discussed, was their idea to appoint “contact people” within each sub-district in the valley. This contact person would further liaise with the extensionist working in that area. The extensionists would meet as a group with these contact people in the valley, in order to continue the development of joint initiatives.

This suddenly made work for the extensionists a lot easier. By integrating inputs with the extension program, and working within the natural working structures of the peasants, the ability of the extensionists to have a much wider impact was being realised. With the peasant paying for inputs, a performance requirement was being placed on the project - to have the right inputs at the right price, at the right time, provided under the right conditions. The project acknowledged the risk of crop failure imposed by the weather. This was done by not demanding repayment of seed if the season failed. This risk would be partly offset by the 1.5 times the amount of seed returned to the project in the case of a successful crop. In the case
Chapter 4: The paradox of increasing resistance to systemic participation

of a successful crop and the non-return of seed under contract, the project would reconsider its inputs into that particular sub-district.

The extensionists, CA President, and I all felt euphoric after this meeting. In difficult circumstances we had taken our own observations seriously. We were aware of the wider context in which we were operating, and participated in an open dialogue with the farmers. The opinions of both parties were given equal status, and a mutually negotiated outcome was achieved. The necessary communication channels to ensure future collaboration and implementation had also been established. We felt the peasants were also guardedly optimistic. A nascent process was emerging that complimented the changing project framework and structure. As it turned out the season failed due to lack of rain, so we wrote-off the seed provided by credit to the peasants.

REPLICATING SYSTEMIC PARTICIPATION

Once the extensionists and CA staff had gone through the above process and experienced its results, they needed little further assistance or encouragement to repeat the process of engagement and dialectic with peasants again, in the process of improving both the interaction and the results achieved.

In seeing how we were able to help the original group of 80 peasants, other peasants started to invite us to work with them. The extensionists in being an integral part of the first interaction we had with the 80 peasants, knew what to do themselves in developing a working relationship with the incoming groups. The project and agricultural extensionists could work with increasing numbers of peasants, to the extent that they could deliver something that the peasants
recognised as benefiting them. In so doing, it provided an incentive for peasants to take the time to organise themselves.

The warm season December 1990 to April 1991 had two false starts. Some farmers planted twice and lost both lots of seed due to the lack of follow-up rains. Most could not afford to purchase more seed. Even if they could, there just wasn’t any available. Yet they had paid for the ground to be cultivated, and it looked again as if they were not going to have a crop. We could see this happening and had ordered almost nine tonne of corn seed which we provided on credit. Both the project and the peasants were so well organised that ninety three on-farm demonstration plots were established, along with the peasant’s own plantings, with the corn we provided them. Five to eight peasants attended the establishment of each demonstration plot. This ensured around 500 of the total of 2923 village farmers participated in the demonstration plot process (Mattner 1991:17). The project provided 8,534 kg of corn seed on credit to 365 peasants, consisting of 211 women and 154 men. This seed was distributed in lots of 10kg to 50kg depending on peasant needs, and the amount of land they had prepared. It did not fulfil all their seed requirements, but any resulting harvest would be additional to what they would’ve had.

As things turned out this season was a success, the only one the project was to have in the three years it was there! The demonstration plots had a yield of 2t/ha while the farmers areas had a yield of 1t/ha. That is, with changes in increasing the plant density and using an improved seed variety, double the yield was obtained. This was significantly more than the 20% which the project had aimed for. About 500 to 700 tonnes of corn resulted which produced a noticeable “island” of production. It became well known in Xai-Xai that if you wanted corn, you could get it from Julius Nyerere.
Soon after harvest we had over 60 percent of the credit repaid and we were confident of attaining more than the 80 percent level, which would mean receiving 1.2 times the amount of corn which was given out. This seed became the seed bank stock for the newly constructed CA. During the following season the project began working with 1350 farmers from five zones in the valley. Each zone elected their representative for an Agricultural Commission, which worked under the authority of the Village Executive Council and the CA.

A local Xai-Xai photographer who took some photos of what was happening in Julius Nyerere was very impressed at seeing the corn harvest, while the surrounding areas had none. Upon visiting Maputo he suggested to the experimental TV station that they send a film crew down to Xai-Xai to do a documentary on the project. They came and did a 20 minute documentary which was shown nationally on television.

In Mattner, Packham & Bawden (2004) Geramias Mondlane, the Mozambican counterpart Agricultural Coordinator for the project is quoted from the documentary, *Sementes a Crédito* (Seed by Credit) (Television 1991). He makes three points in comparing our project with other projects, these are:

1. That the project did not grow through inviting more farmers to work with it ...the farmers saw what the project was doing and would invite the project to work with them.
2. The difference between this project and other projects was that it had no fixed methodology of rural development. For example, this season our project is selling butter beans (*feijão manteiga*) something that no other project in the province is doing. Yet all the projects would have seen last year that the butter bean crop failed, but no other project was flexible enough to do anything about it.
3. The project does not order anything like hoes or seeds without first going to the farmers and asking them what they think about it.

Here Geremias is speaking not to expatriates, but to a Mozambican audience. Answering their questions, in response to his experience with the project and the peasants it worked with. In the words of (Joseph 1994:62):
...it doesn’t matter how good cross-cultural representation is, self-representation is always going to be able to go one step further.

**PEASANT MYOPIA AND A REACTIONARY RESPONSE TO SYSTEMIC PARTICIPATION**

The three points raised by Geramias Mondlane above in regard to his perception of the project, all relate to a project in which the peasant’s knowledge and situation is significant and integral to the project structure and operation. In effect peasants became equal partners in the development process and informed the project as much as the project was able to inform them. The attractiveness of the project for the peasants is significantly demonstrated by the fact that the project did not undertake any self promotion to peasants in order to try and expand. Rather the peasants saw what the project was achieving with other peasants and would invite the project to work with them.

**Peasant myopia**

One example of the myopia towards peasant knowledge and experience that expat-centric blueprint projects exhibit, is provided in my observation of a national agricultural extension development project. This Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) sponsored project provided technical assistance along with vehicles to PDA and DDA, and motorbikes that could be purchased by extension officers and for which they would be responsible for maintaining. At the time that we were assisting peasants, through the provision of seed for the only successful season we had, this FAO sponsored project was pulling all their extensionists in Gaza Province out of the field to undergo training in Xai-Xai. The FAO project neither had seed to provide the farmers nor technical advice at this most important time in the peasant’s agricultural calendar. Their intention for the training was to teach the extensionists
how to preserve tomatoes, and other vegetables, in glass jars. Neither I, nor the agricultural extentionists within our project could believe our eyes. We could well imagine what the farmers were thinking. The agricultural extensionists in our project were invited to go as well. However, we all agreed that this was the time to be helping the farmers, putting into practice what we already knew rather than learning something new, which appeared to be of questionable benefit in any case. Being on good terms with the FAO experts in Xai-Xai, I asked them why the training had to take place during planting time? They said that this particular training was scheduled a long time previously, but the money did not come through so they couldn’t do it. Since the money had recently arrived they wanted to do the activity before the allocation of money would be taken from them. What could I say? With such different priorities, it seemed it wouldn’t matter what I said. It again highlighted the project-centric and expat-centric nature of assistance to peasants. Significantly, even local officials did not manage to say a word against such a program, or suggest an alternative approach. Projects it seemed had their own agenda, with their own objectives, which while professing and giving the illusion of peasant participation, worked against it.

Later in Maputo, I was asked by the FAO expert organising the training why our project staff did not participate? She told me how successful the training in Xai-Xai was, and how if each trained extension officer repeated the training with so many farmers, and then so many farmers saw what those farmers did, then the impact would be tremendous. I told her our project experience, and then asked her whether she thought the farmers would be interested in preserving tomatoes in glass jars considering: a) their first priority was to the provisioning of their staple food which was in complete lack, b) that there were no suitable glass jars for preserving available in Mozambique, c) and if and when the glass jars became
available how could the peasants afford them? and d) only 1% of peasants in our locality showed interest in increasing vegetable production (Mattner 1990e:Graph 7). She did not try to answer any of these questions, yet each had dramatic implications for her assumptions. It would be humorous if the situation was not so serious. She must have thought I was an impetuous sod. But I was not there to massage her ego, and she did not even attempt to respond to any of my observations. Project-centric and expat-centric development then appeared to me to result in myopia of peasant knowledge and experience, making it irrelevant. However, there was also another more sinister response that also assisted in making peasant knowledge and experience irrelevant. I describe this as a reactionary response to systemic participation.

A reactionary response to systemic participation

The reactionary response to systemic participation is initially founded with the same myopic tendency I have just described. However, it takes political action to regain its previous capacity to dictate or proscribe development. Development is not seen to occur unless it is directed by the dominant expatriates who control it. I was naïve to think that systemic participation was a neutral technical process of achieving better project results. What I was actually doing in providing a voice for extensionists, CA staff, peasants, and myself, was unbeknown to me at the time: a political process of reducing the ability of Jack and Jane to direct and control the development process. I was able to do this as the project (SCFA 1989) professed to be guided by local participation. However, because of the continual interference by Jack and Jane in my work, I had decided not to extend my contract for another year. Just prior to my departure SCFA and SC(US) had a meeting that included Jane, but no-one from the agricultural project. From this meeting a Memorandum of Understanding between SCFA and SC(US) was issued in August 1991. In this
Memorandum the viewpoint of Jane, who had recently won funding for a US$2.4 million three year project, was put into effect. In effect the CA was returned to the direction of the VDC and in turn Jane, who had not achieved any success in the agricultural project during the previous two years prior to my arrival. At the pinnacle of our success: we had just opened a 100m² CA of concrete and steel construction (see Photo 8) with ten tonne of corn seed in two seed silos, and 28t of butter beans in the warehouse for the following season; we were working with 1350 farmers with the same number of extensionists the project had previously used for 80; we had sold more than 4000 items of farming inputs; produced the only corn in the district over the previous two years; we had demonstrated an effective and efficient extension process that was accepted locally – new extensionists as part of their training by the provincial training centre were sent to work with the project extensionists for two weeks; the farmers, the CA staff and president, the Village President, the Village Agricultural Commission, the extensionists, the Directors of DPA and DDA and the governor were all more than happy with what had been accomplished – we became the victims of a successful coup d’état initiated by Jane.

CONCLUSION

What I found from my experience in Mozambique was how easy the previous failures of development could be turned around. It was easy, because the extensionists, CA staff, village administrators and peasants, already had ideas on how to improve their position that reflected their culture and reality - a culture and reality previously foreign to me. By responding to their vital daily interests their motivation was innate and project growth was inevitable due to the personal growth upon which it flourished and in-turn encouraged.
While these ideas were not at all complicated for me to understand, it seemed impossible for dominant expatriates with whom I associated to comprehend it. Out of their incomprehension and non-acceptance of what I was able to achieve with extensionists and peasants, they did everything within their power to reverse what had been achieved. It appeared to me that Jack and Jane were continually trying to bring the agricultural project back under their control where they presumed it belonged, even if they could not proffer that this state would result in an improvement for peasants.

I, along with the extensionists and CA staff were devastated by the effective coup d’état. I felt I could not ignore my growing concern that development with peasants was not so much a problem about the peasants, but a problem about the institutions and dominant expatriates that sponsored development. If I was to proceed with my original desire to help hungry peasants and redeem my sense of humanity, I knew I had to not just be able to demonstrate systemic participation, but explain it. To highlight the travesty to peasants when encouraged by mechanistic projects to participate in a counterfeit form of participation – participation in project-centric and expat-centric development that exhibits myopia to the peasant’s knowledge and situation, and which in the end results in failure. This participation is counterfeit, as it is founded upon the privileging of the expert and expat-culture, and results in the alienation of the peasant from their experience and culture. By participating in this process the peasant is at once confirming a sense of humanity upon the foreign expert and their ability to act, as they deny this same sense and ability within themselves. Malthus (1986) hints at this when he said:

We tell the common people that if they will submit to a code of tyrannical regulations, they shall never be in want. They do submit to these regulations. They perform their part of the contract, but we do not, nay cannot, perform ours, and thus the poor sacrifice the valuable blessing of liberty and receive nothing that can be called an equivalent in return. (Malthus 1986:102-103)
I sensed a need to balance the conflicts experienced in practising systemic participation with reflection, an approach recognised in Reason and Heron (1986:469).

Collaborative inquiry involves both action and reflection, and somehow these need to be brought into appropriate balance. Too much action without reflection is mere activism; too much reflection without action is mere introspection and armchair discussion.

I felt as if I had unsuspectedly turned into an activist, but before I could do anything I would need some time to heal and regain composure. Thus I returned to Australia without extending my contract for another year.

Photo 8: Newly constructed Casa Agraria with CA, village and project representatives, Julius Nyerere, Mozambique
Photo 9: Children “sharing,” Julius Nyerere, Mozambique
Chapter 4: The paradox of increasing resistance to systemic participation

Photo 10: Tube from an agricultural extensionist’s personal bike showing at least 33 puncture repairs, Julius Nyerere, Mozambique
CHAPTER 5

DON’T CALL ME STUPID! REJECTING OLD PARADIGM THINKING FOR EXPLAINING THE EMERGING NEW PARADIGM

Communications failures that feel like faculty ineptitude or student stupidity often can be viewed another way - as epistemic differences that are potentially, though not easily, reconcilable.

(Salner 1986:231)

The greatest danger we face is a refusal to face reality, be it out of conformity or fear. Whatever the reasons, can we allow values put forward as ways of making the world a better place remain disassociated from the practices they lead to?

(Rist 1997:258)

It is ironic to me that extension is made up of change agents, and yet is, in my experience, one of the organisations most resistant to change I've ever encountered.

(Patton 1993)

WAS I REALLY STUPID?

A context of stupidity

In her seminal work on systems education, Salner (1986:231) contends that: “Communications failures that feel like faculty ineptitude or student stupidity often can be viewed another way - as epistemic differences that are potentially, though not easily, reconcilable.” Reflecting critically on the international development experiences that I am exploring in this thesis, I can now extend that same argument to explain the tensions I experienced as a perplexed agent feeling stupid, and those
for whom I was working in the different agencies, who I was all too quick to label as inept.

At the time, when unaware of Salner’s insight, there were many occasions when I did indeed feel stupid, especially when that feeling was reinforced by others in the agency. I felt stupid, for instance, upon arriving in Mozambique to find that the reality on the ground was far removed from the assumptions adopted in the project blueprint. I felt stupid after working so hard with local organisations, extensionists and peasants to achieve something that we were all proud of, only to find a simple edict by SCFA and SC(US) overturn our participatory efforts, and return the project structure and process to the form I found it upon my arrival. I felt stupid achieving much more than what had been envisaged within extremely difficult circumstances, only to return to Australia to be called stupid by the very organisation for which I worked. Perhaps I was indeed stupid, or perhaps this sense of stupidity had its origins with the ineptitude of my employers: perhaps my greatest stupidity was to work for them in the first place? In any case, it was during these experiences, that I all too often seemed to be facing situations that I was unable to explain.

**Stupidity of dominant expatriates and their institutions**

Throughout the experiences I am narrating here, I could never account for the lack of morality or professionalism that I perceived in the actions of dominant expatriates, and expatriate institutions with which I was associated. Such actions included:

1. The repeated use by the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) of inappropriately qualified staff: like the builder who implemented the tropical fruit orchard in my first Solomon Islands experience, or the biology teacher they employed as an agronomist in a project that I reviewed in
Cambodia (Mattner and Shams et al. 1994) following my Mozambique experience.

2 The consistent lack of historical records of activities in all my experiences.

3 The sexual involvement of a UNICEF staffer in my second Solomon Islands experience with a peasant women with whom the project was working. Further, his refusal to support either the mother or child.

4 The payment of starvation wages by SCFA and SC(US) in Xai-Xai Mozambique in a blatant transgression of their stated ideology of sustainability and social justice. This contrasted with the extravagant payments they made to the staff in their Maputo office.

The dominant people within these dominant institutions, appeared to me, as if they did not need to justify themselves to anyone. Yet somehow, it was me who was made to feel as if I had done the wrong thing. I was the one who was being isolated and who was putting my career at considerable risk, for as Keynes (1936:158) points out in his General Theory:

Worldly wisdom teaches us that it is better for reputation to fail conventionally than to succeed unconventionally.

**Not accounting for expatriate failure**

Drawing from my overseas project experiences I have formed the view that the dominant expatriate institutions did not account for their own failure, much less see their complicity in project failures. Easterly (2006) reaches a similar conclusion for Western aid generally. The problem is not that they made mistakes, but that they did not do anything to rectify them, preferring instead to transfer the blame to those they were trying to help. How many times have I heard from dominant institutions about the stupidity, laziness, and superstition of the local institutions and of its peasants? In no case did the dominant expatriate institutions ever seem to paint a
better vision of the future, or show any awareness of examples of local success in development.

With time, I came to see that these problems could be resolved through a breaking of the fixed cultural gaze through the process of “boundary walking.” In breaking my own fixed gaze through critical reflections, I saw how I needed to change my own perspectives and ways of operating. But in my “crossing over” to privilege the local, I also entered the “stupid category” of the fixed cultural gaze of the dominant expatriate. I had failed in my ability to communicate with them about the new paradigm that was emerging for me.

**Overview of the stupid situation**

A whole range of feelings invaded my peace in the post-Mozambique moment of stupidity. On the one hand I could see the stupidity/ineptitude of the organisation that called me stupid, of the working environment they placed me in, and of the specific conditions which they mandated. I could also see the general stupidities in all the dominant expatriate institutions in the experiences related in Chapters 2-4, through their denial of failure, their inability to put forward a vision of a better future, and their inability to see the achievements and capacities of peasants.

I could see the benefits of the approach that I took, for both the project and for the peasants. I could also see how I was placing peasants and extensionists in a difficult position, through their association with someone who was in the “bad books” of the dominant expatriate institutions. But I could not account for the insights in development, progression in epistemic learning in development, and physical development achievements, being all but lost on the dominant expatriate institutions that held the purse-strings of development. Why could they not see what I could?
Chapter 5: Don’t call me stupid! Rejecting old paradigm thinking for explaining the emerging new paradigm

Why could I not explain it to them in a manner they could understand? I could also see that in having confidence to critique the situation that we were in, in envisioning a better future, and in working towards achieving it together - extensionists, peasants, and I - we were reducing the ability of dominant expatriates to direct us, or to use our participation strategically for their own benefit.

And there were three particular personal stupidities which I sensed but could not explain for some time: a) my entrapment within the dominant paradigm, of trying to explain my action within the paradigm which my actions and theory critiqued, b) my sense of participation, which as an ideal allowed opposing criticism to sit side-by-side with my contrarily held values (This is illustrated by the question, “What if the Executive Director of SCFA was right in stating I was stupid?” Somehow I felt an obligation to keep everyone happy.), and finally, c) although I had progressed in action, to contextual relativism, intellectually, I seemed stuck in dualism whereby my initial research ambition was to find the onto-epistemological position which ensured that I was right, and that my detractors were wrong!

SOME EMERGING THEMES

Several themes that emerged from the above experiences, in conjunction with my research, include the notions of paradigmatic entrapment, utopian vision, participation, and the difficulty of moving from an epistemic position of multiplicity to contextual relativism.
Chapter 5: Don’t call me stupid! Rejecting old paradigm thinking for explaining the emerging new paradigm

Paradigmatic entrapment

At the time of my overseas experiences, I did not know what a paradigm was or anything about the nature of epistemic learning. Changes in my approach were guided essentially by changes in my value-driven perspectives. These reframed my actions and changed my role, which developed to become a “collaborator” with peasants and extensionists. While successful actions seemed to emerge from such a shift in perspectives, there was no concomitant development of my intellectual abilities to explain what was happening. Intellectually I was still trapped within the old paradigm. While I found epiphanies helpful in providing inspirational leads in my understanding, these still did not provide rigorous conceptual foundations upon which to base my explanations. The insight that I gained from my reflections, at the end of my Mozambique experience, was that I had mistakenly (in the view of contemporary development), conflated my commitment to the peasant with my commitment to the project and to the sponsoring institution. This insight further developed into a realisation that contemporary development was creating the very conditions it was trying to resolve - a state of undevelopment – it was iatrogenic. I came to see that what was required of me by contemporary development was a commitment to project and institutional reality and integrity, as representative of commitment to the peasant. I see this latter approach reflecting Busch’s (2000) claim for the eclipse of morality. The purpose of my research came to be a search for a manner of thinking that resonated with, and could help me explain my emergent paradigm in its own terms, and not in the terms of the paradigm it was critiquing. According to Hiley (1984):

…the framework of repression does not provide a basis for liberating critique, but is itself part of the problem… (Quoted in Valero-Silva 1994:220)

Bawden (2000:3) says something similar:
...I am acutely aware of the paradox that I cannot adequately address and overcome any inadequacies in my current praxis through the framework that it itself presents.

In an earlier work, he provided an example of “paradigmatic entrapment” at Hawkesbury, where they replaced the teaching of disciplinary subjects with the “teaching of systems” (Bawden and Packham 1993:8). At this point of paradigmatic entrapment it becomes important, in the words of Bateson (1972:462), “to learn to think in the new way.” Fell and Russell (1994a:32) refer to something similar to paradigmatic entrapment in their reference to the notion of a category error which they see as arising in the confusion of a “system internal with a system-external view.”

In my situation I had become entrapped within the explanatory structure of the old paradigm, in the process of trying to explain the new paradigm. This paradigmatic entrapment is different to the paradigmatic regression that I had experienced at the beginning of my first experience in the Solomon Islands, where I had wanted to forgo the demands of my new paradigmatic learning and to return to the comfort of the old paradigm: a sense of which is evoked in Perry’s notion of “functional regression” (Perry 1999:xvii).

**Utopian vision**

To move beyond paradigmatic entrapment requires a process of transcending that which determines us. This is facilitated, in the first place by a utopian vision that is inherent in Freire’s onto-epistemology.

The cardinal principle of that philosophy is man’s vocation to be more - more, that is, than what he is at any given time or place. ... In other words, the characteristic of the human species is its repeated demonstrated capacity for transcending what is merely given, what is purely determined. (Freire 1970a:preface)
The motivating vision driving my desire to end unnecessary hunger is utopian. It seeks what which currently is not, and unlike scientific vision, its path to get there cannot be known in advance. Checkland’s (1981, 1988) Soft Systems Methodology (SSM) and its fourth step of developing an ideal or conceptual system, is utopian. This is what appealed to me about SSM, as it allows one to create a possible future and move towards it in a way that is not bounded by the past. By being unbounded by the past, or the known, we are provided with an onto-epistemic possibility. It also provides greater risk, and this is why participation is so important, so that each individual can choose what level of risk is appropriate under the circumstances that are prevailing. I started off with an individual utopian vision. At Hawkesbury I experienced a utopian vision that could imagine the possibility of an agriculture that was not parasitic on society or on the environment. In my first Solomon Islands experience, I had a utopian vision of collaborating with local peasants and extensionists from which a common utopian vision emerged. This emergent vision constituted development as the sharing of information, or in-formation, as is nicely expressed in Polkinghorne (2004). In my second Solomon Islands experience, a common utopian vision was built on the successful implementation of pilot projects based on the vital daily interests of peasants and extensionists. In Mozambique, it arose from collaborating with peasants and extensionists as equal partners.

Contrary to my need for a utopian vision, I found in all cases, the failing project’s dominant institutions could not provide a vision of a better future for the locals. In my first Solomon Islands experience, the students still ate only cassava for weeks and months at a time, and the new fruit orchard project failed. In my second Solomon Islands experience no better future other than a continuing program of training, that had already failed, could be envisaged. In my Mozambique experience, no better future could be envisaged other than a continuation of expat-
controlled participation. The dominant expatriates and their organisations could not, it seemed, proceed beyond the methods and visions that had failed them. They lacked an ability to learn epistemically. Instead, all they could do was to denounce those who dared to raise the possibility of an alternative.

Utopian hope, on the contrary, is engagement full of risk. That is why the dominators, who merely denounce those who denounce them, and who have nothing to announce but the preservation of the status quo, can never be utopian…(Freire 1970a:21)

Change in the conventional approach to development is full of risk, not just because the path towards it cannot be pre-determined, but also because it is essentially a political process. It is essentially political because it has as its central action, a reclaiming of ourselves for ourselves, and its concomitant implication for others. According to Freire (1970a), liberative education moves from a process of domestication - whereby we are the primary object of someone else’s concern - towards freedom which moves beyond that which “over-determines” us, and “defines the horizon of meanings within which …further action is to take place.”

Thus, ‘salvation’ of the ‘Third World’ by the director societies can only mean its domination, whereas in its legitimate aspiration to independence lies its utopian vision: to save the director societies in the very act of freeing itself. (Freire 1970a:20)

Freire outlines the centrality of participation within his liberative utopian vision which is a participation that is “self-formative” or autopoietic.

The authors explore with an admirable insight the Utopian possibilities and practices constitutive of liberatory pedagogy: that is, the type of praxis required for people to become active participants in shaping the economic, social, cultural, and subjective formations that affect their lives and the lives of others. This means waging a cultural remapping of the boundaries of culture, and the creation of new self-formative practices and cultures of resistance that are capable of establishing new grounds of enfranchisement for all peoples (in his forward to McLaren and Leonard 1993:xii).

**Participation**

Within my overseas experiences, there was an emerging difference between the sense of participation that I understood and practiced, and the participation of
Chapter 5: Don’t call me stupid! Rejeting old paradigm thinking for explaining the emerging new paradigm

contemporary development. The contemporary sense of participation, as I experienced it, was strategic. Participation was a tool to be used for achieving a pre-determined project with a blueprint designed from within a privileged discipline by privileged experts. As such, it over-determined the participants who were not afforded the same capacity for observation and self-direction as the experts.

The participation which emerged from my participation with local peasants and extensionists, I now see as explicable through the systemic symbolism of quantum physics detailed in Chapter 1. Within this systemic symbolism transcendent reality gives way to participant reality. This arises from the joint interaction of the observer with the observed. As a result, there is a change in the horizon of meaning which guides subsequent action that is determined participatively. Blueprints and fixed methods, within this realm, are transformed into an initial condition, which can be transformed through systemic participation. Blueprints and fixed methods lose their transcendent power, as their static pre-determined reality gives way to the dynamic and ethical role of the “self-directing person.”

Rather than depend on method, we can return to the self-directing person as the primary source of knowing, and thus the primary “instrument” of inquiry, in what we had described as experiential and cooperative inquiry. This means research with people, rather than research on people … (Reason and Heron 1986:457)

The activities and behaviour of the peasants in such a transformation is thus no longer directed by a project timetable or methodology, but rather by their own purposes and reasoning within the situation in which they find themselves.

To say that persons are self-determining is to say that their intentions and purposes, their intelligent choices, are causes of their behaviour. One can only do research on persons in the full and proper sense of the term if one addresses them as self-determining, which means that what they do and what they experience as part of the research must be to some significant degree determined by them. (Reason and Heron 1986:458)

To the degree that the “horizon of meaning” was determined uniquely by Jack and Jane in Mozambique, their sense of peasant participation can be seen to be
counterfeit. Such counterfeit participation is aided by a dependence on didactic instruction that depends on the dualism of a knowing teacher and an unknowing student.

The distinction between utilitarian and self-making participation that is made above, resonates with a comparison which Ulrich (1988) makes between: the utilitarian purposes of “strategic systems management,” and the communicative purpose of “Normative Systems management.” These concepts are also discussed in Bawden and Packham (1993:12). In my own experience, this gap between systemic participation and its counterfeit, and the communicative and utilitarian purposes of Ulrich, are divided by a chasm that cannot be traversed by the genealogy in which the problem is spawned. In this respect it resonates with the observation made by Perry (1999), and supported by Salner (1986:231), of the extra difficulty inherent in moving from the epistemic position of multiplicity to contextual relativism, as compared to the movement to multiplicity from dualism.

From multiplicity to contextual relativism

In my earlier student group work at Hawkesbury, our learning group often found it difficult to move from an individual response to a problematic situation, to a group response which, more often than not, was characterized by different notions by different individuals of what was “right” and what was “wrong.” Two major options presented themselves under such circumstances: a) argumentation in attempts to discover the “right answer” as “proven” from a dualistic position (or where one person’s view was pushed more forcibly than the others), or b) acceptance that the position adopted by each different individual was legitimate, and that the situation was therefore irresolvable under circumstances where no compromise appeared possible.
At our first attempts to handle the multiple views of different participators within the student group I was part of at Hawkesbury, either of the above two responses appeared unsatisfactory. Argumentation along dualistic lines appeared inappropriate, as it disregarded the context that supported its opposing position. On the other hand, acceptance of all the various views as being legitimate left us in a quandary in regard to how this impasse should be resolved. It was not unusual during these first encounters of complexity, for simply one of the many different views to be adopted by the group. This was seen as a pragmatic response necessitated by the fast-approaching deadline for submitting our group response for the learning exercise concerned.

Since then, I have come to understand that while multiplicity allows for the apparent legitimacy of multiple perspectives, replacing the absolutism of dualism, it does not lead to a more sophisticated stance with respect to the resolution or even improvement of problematic situations. Callo (1997:65) quoting Bawden (1987b) notes the poverty that multiplicity or pluralism allows. To quote Salner (1986) again, the adoption of an epistemic position of multiplicity is “an epistemic device for minimizing the conflict inherent in a pluralistic, relativistic world” and it is this avoidance that accounts for the poverty of such relativistic pluralism. What is overlooked in accepting the legitimacy of a multiplicity of views is the “tension between opposing views [that] is a fertile area for the generation of an entirely new view.” The opportunity for dialectic is lost as pluralism becomes a greater focus than the initial motivation of emancipation found in dialectic (Maru and Woodford 2001). Dominant systems that over-determine can still remain within the category of multiplicity, making it difficult “to remain radical (emancipatory)” (Ibid:64).
Within my earlier Hawkesbury student group experiences, we were sometimes able to move beyond multiplicity to engage in dialectic through which the contextual relativism of each position was synthesised, and from which a new position emerged. This dialectic skill was further developed in my overseas experiences; where together with local participants there was a need to move beyond a multiplicity of ideas - towards one which we chose after iterative discussion and action. According to Salner (1986:231), the move from Perry’s category of multiplicity to contextual relativism (also refer to King and Kitchener 1994) cannot be forced through “didactic instruction.” It must be experienced by each person as they experience their own “epistemological dilemmas” as they arise through participating with experiences that contradict and unravel their frameworks.

To put this understanding within my overseas experiences, I started out with the understanding of one kind of development. Encouraged by the reframing of the expert as collaborator, and the concomitant move toward a local view, I came to see the development I knew, as only one kind of development that I called - expat-centric development. In my experience, expat-centric development failed the peasants, and from this, the possibility of re-enfranchising peasants as part of the process of development emerged.

But I found enfranchising a two-way process. They had to enfranchise me first, and there was no fixed method to do that. Four principles assisting me in this process were: a belief in peasants as development practitioners, the need to understand their view and its context, being relevant to their vital daily issues, and being able assist them in achieving their objectives. Once they enfranchised me, and saw my interest in them as they were, they responded with a similar interest in me. It is from this joint reflexive interest from which, following my research, I believe that dialectic
can arise, and in which contextual relativism can be explored. The peasants saw me groping, as an outsider trying to come to grips with something that was foreign to me. This resonates with the honesty that Perry (1999:239) suggests is required of a lecturer, reflected in opening up their own doubts, uncertainties, and “groping,” for their student’s to see. The peasants, in seeing how they helped me through my period of unknowing, were able to gain an insight into the role reversal that occurred when they began exploring my world, which was previously unknown to them. But this moment, when one proceeds from the “quantitative accretion of discrete rightnesses” of both dualism and multiplicity, and launches into a world where knowledge is conceived “as the qualitative assessment of contextual observations and relationships,” is most difficult and open to being misconstrued (Perry 1999:236). This is what I believe happened between me and the dominant expatriates and institutions. The dominant expatriates associated with my experiences in the Solomon Islands and Mozambique had embraced the notion of peasant participation which I shared with them. I now see how they became uncomfortable with my activities at precisely this point that Perry identifies above. This was also the turning point in which I found greater acceptance amongst local extensionists and peasants. I came to question my own fixed cultural gaze that, upon later reflection, had kept me from assuming an epistemic position of contextual relativism. As an individual expatriate practitioner, I had been looking for support from the dominant expatriate institutions with which I had been with, to assist me in what I now see as progress in epistemic learning. I was seeking support much like that which Perry provided his students. Instead, the relationship degenerated into a battle for being in the possession of “discrete rightness.” In the field, working alongside peasants, I felt confident in arguing my case for a position that I would later relate to as contextual relativism. In the office, with my expatriate colleagues and superiors, however, my arguments had about as much effect as speaking a
language that was foreign to them. I could no longer continue in this vein. So I returned to Australia to evaluate my position.

**HOW SHOULD I RESPOND?**

Following the experiences related at the end of the previous chapter, I felt completely “unravelled.” While I felt that I had achieved a remarkable change for the better in outcomes for the peasants and extensionists, I also felt that I had abandoned them in the face of SCFA and SC(US) hostility, and had failed in my attempt to explain myself through the languages and images provided by the paradigm with which I was in conflict. I didn’t know what to do next.

**Towards commitment, detachment, or escape?**

My unravelling led me to see three possibilities. The first was to continue my odyssey towards “a humanity” without unnecessary hunger and so redeem my sense of humanity. But if I was to do this I would need to find a manner of thinking that supported my experiences. In turn, I would also need new institutional forms that would emerge from this manner of thinking, with the capacity to replicate and build on, rather than ignore or colonise advancement in epistemic learning. The second was to comply with the demands of contemporary development and ignore my own experience and learning. The third was to give up on the whole idea of unnecessary hunger and just get on with my own life in my own society.

I was not in a rush to make a decision. Returning to Adelaide, Australia, I kept all three options open. In regard to the first option, I thought of the possibility of further study. In regard to the second option I had turned down three different overseas positions available to me as I didn’t want to engage with contemporary overseas
development so soon after such bad experiences with it. I did, however, half complete postgraduate studies in Agricultural Economics at the University of New England, and had half-heartedly applied for agricultural extension positions in South Australia. I also designed and built a house with an octagonal floor plan and an internal octagonal courtyard and half-completed a course in Land Conveyancing. I was drawn to these last two activities as they also connected with the centrality of housing and property issues that I saw peasants had had. In this way I saw myself as fulfilling the third option, with a possibility of switching back to the first option.

After about two years, my wife found a job in Sydney which saw the possibility of me re-enrolling at Hawkesbury part-time and becoming the primary caregiver for our two boys. Of the few people I had met, who like me had worked overseas, all had chosen option number three. However, I could not divorce myself from my original twin objectives of working towards a world without unnecessary hunger and redeeming my sense of humanity.

As I have indicated above, the work of William Perry has proven seminal in my scholarly reflections on my field experiences. Indeed, I have come to realize that the three options that I have outlined above are reflective of Perry’s schema of intellectual and ethical development. Within this schema the student’s options are seen as moving towards commitment, detachment, or escape. The most important question for Perry being:

*What environmental sustenance most supports students in the choice to use their competence to orient themselves through Commitments - as opposed to using it to establish a nonresponsible alienation?* (Perry 1999:238)

His own response to this question was to commend the teacher:

...who supports in his students a more sustained groping, exploration, and synthesis. His acts of evaluation must sub tend more than discrete rights and wrongs, and extend through time to assist discrimination among complex patterns of interpretation. (Perry 1999:237)
In order to sustain my choice of commitment to my experience, I saw the need for theories that would support my experiences arising from my reframing of a development expert as a development collaborator. Maybe following this, I thought, I could participate in constructing new institutional forms, which would facilitate my new paradigmatic thinking and action in development. I knew this would require a “sustained groping, exploration, and synthesis” (Perry 1999:237), and the first step toward this would be the discarding of the dominant paradigm as an explanatory framework for the new paradigm. Interestingly, this realisation came through my engagement with majority world authors and academics, during the early stages of my research that construed the clashing paradigms to be incompatible.

TOWARDS MAJORITY WORLD DEVELOPMENT PRACTITIONERS AND AUTHORS: FANON AND FREIRE

In my work as a practitioner, represented in the previous three chapters, my practice reflected a consistent and determined move towards a development process that was inclusive of the peasants and local extensionists – in a manner supported by the call by such scholar/practitioners as Korten and Klauss (1984) for “people-centered development.”

From my second Solomon Islands experience I had become aware that just because a person is from the Majority World does not mean that they have to adopt and indeed be captured by a Majority World perspective. But there is something special about practitioners who have their origins in the Majority World and have lived the experiences that are the plight of the peasant. Their convictions are more than just intellectual interest, and indeed, they have often paid the cost for their views, to their financial, personal, and professional detriment. Freire, for example was exiled from his country for his views on the pedagogies of the oppressed. To
hold a view in the face of peril, rather than for personal gain, makes that view inherently more interesting to me.

Fanon’s fury - a Majority World voice speaking to the Majority World

If Churchman (1982:17) feels we should start a study of hunger with a statement of “damn it all,” how can we expect to start the same study if our diminutive stature bares the genealogy of our starvation, and our minds have been etched with the loss of loved ones to its heinous cause? How will we retain our objectivity? Fanon (1963), in analysing the Algerian revolution established through the loss of 1 million Algerian lives, concluded that objectivity is seen as never being on the side of the native. Jean-Paul Satre in the preface to Fanon’s book urges those in the First World to heed this voice of the Third World talking to itself. In this manner, we can move beyond our profession of objectivity and see how our “victims know us by their scars and by their chains, and it is this that makes their evidence irrefutable” (Fanon 1963). By seeing what we “made of them” we can see what we “have made of ourselves.” It is this connection between coloniser and colonised that I found in Fanon’s views, and confirmed later in Chapter 6, that resonated with my perception of the connection between developer and the so-called undeveloped. Within this relationship our complicity in undevelopment emerges. Fannon has no doubts about his claim, that the relationship between coloniser and colonised will not be resolved until the issue of the redistribution of wealth is confronted: and as he sees it, the wealth of Europe is the wealth of Africa (Fannon 1963:98). This view was a contributing factor that led me to the chapter which follows.

The most immediate issue for me in The Wretched of the Earth was Fanon’s notion of the need for a “will-to-function.” He illustrates how the Algerian peasants gained nothing from the push towards nationalism and independence. It was they who paid
the price, in their own blood. Meanwhile it was the native bourgeois, who had earlier apologised to their French colonisers for the barbarity of the peasants, who benefited. It was thus the coloniser’s lackeys who inherited the unjust colonial systems for their personal advantage. Fanon (1963) referred to this process as “nationalizing the robbery of the nation.” He explains that this resulted from a misunderstanding of the purpose of the revolution by the peasants. They had presumed that the revolution was about winning the war and displacing the coloniser, after which they would return to their villages. In holding this view, the peasants overlooked the need to replace the coloniser with something better. They needed a notion of revolution as a “will-to-function” and of the necessity for their active participation in the new government. This “will-to-function” resonated with my own experience of the need, not to just win an argument with the failing contemporary development that I experienced and stand myself in its place, but to be part of a form and structure of a development that is better. This role for the participation of self is evoked in the following quote.

If we want to turn Africa into a new Europe, and America into a new Europe, then let us leave the destiny of our countries to the Europeans. They will know how to do it better than the most gifted among us. But if we want humanity to advance a step further, if we want to bring it up to a different level than which Europe has shown it, then we must invent and we must make discoveries. If we wish to live up to our people’s expectations, we must seek the response elsewhere than in Europe. (Fanon 1963:315)

A similar argument can be made for overseas development in general, and the need for peasant participation, if there is any desire to make their countries after their own vision, rather than the vision of the development expert.

**Freire’s process of conscientização**

Freire is different to Fanon in that he:

...invites the hitherto silent sectors of the affluent world or at least the more awakened members of those overmanaged, overconsuming societies to a rediscovery of the world in which they live and of their own vacation in that world, in dialogue with its pariahs. (Freire, 1970a:v)
Freire’s notion of conscientização provided me early in my research, and again later in my research as I returned to re-read his books, with a model that suggests that I can, and should resist the colonising influence of others, and in turn resist the urge to colonise others. In so doing I am able to break from the foreign frameworks that would seek to have me remain voiceless. In the process of attaining a voice for myself I also assist others in attaining a voice for themselves. I am able to leave aside my preoccupation of explaining myself in terms of foreign frameworks and endeavour to grow within my own framework that is relationship-focussed and socio-ethically oriented. It assists in facing the incapacitating ambiguity of self-doubt in the face of a dominant and contradictory paradigm.

Conscientização - a model of change

The process of consciousness-raising emerged from Freire’s (1970a) work in Latin America where he assisted adults to read and write. In his view, pedagogy is the process whereby people as knowing subjects rather than as objects or recipients, achieve a deepening awareness both of the socio-cultural reality that shapes their lives, and of their capacity to transform that reality.

In describing the process of consciousness-raising I will, following Freire himself (Freire 1970a), refer to three states or levels of consciousness. The first level of consciousness is the semi-intransitive state. In this state a person is almost immersed in reality and does not have sufficient distance from it to be critical. Human endeavor is directed toward survival, to the meeting of biological needs. The landscape of this world is largely shaped by the terrain of values interjected into the culture of silence by those with a voice (the dominant culture). The second level of consciousness is the naïve transitive state that arises as a result of structural transformation within a society. This is an uneasy state, as for the first time the
people previously without a voice, begin to seek one. Simultaneously, the elite begin to realize that they are being unmasked. This is a culture of transition that may move back to its previous state or advance to the third state of critical consciousness within a culture of permanent revolution. In this state a person finds their voice and maintains a dialectical relationship with the world. Here they are no longer at the behest of any person, theory, or doctrine. They are people in their own right.

Unfortunately, the pathway to emancipation is fraught with many complications, not the least being the confrontation of entrenched power. In such a case peasants often choose to avoid emancipating themselves via the direct confrontation of power, but rather instead choose survival and opt for a process of everyday resistance as is explicated well in Scott (1985 and 1986). It was this everyday resistance that I also experienced from dominant expatriates in the project I worked in, as they sought to maintain their power to direct events, even if this was at the expense of peasant participation and improving the peasant’s conditions of living.

However, within Freire’s (1970a) three levels of consciousness, two dynamics are described. The first dynamic is cultural action for freedom. This dynamic uses dialogue and critique in a process of consciousness-raising. It is regarded as biophilic as it values life in all its forms. Others are seen as subjects rather than as objects for the benefit of another. It is transformational as the self transforms itself as a result of the dialectic relationship that it builds with the world. A better future is envisaged through idealism, and so it is a utopian enterprise. Dialogue and critique deconstruct the ideology of the status quo and the vested interests that it administratively preserves and transmits. This dynamic follows the movement of
consciousness from the semi-intransitive through the naïve transitive to the level of critical consciousness, or permanent revolution.

The second dynamic, *cultural action for domination*, is the opposing reactionary force to consciousness raising. This is achieved through a process of massification which trends in the opposite direction to that described above. Here the ideal state is the *culture of silence*. The individual loses his or her uniqueness as he or she becomes an object for the benefit of a few in a process also described as sectarianism. This takes on the characteristics of *leading to death* as it embraces intolerance and bigotry. The object of this ideological enterprise is for the *status quo* to be maintained. No better future is elaborated, outside of a return to the past where the lives of the many benefit the few, and no system needs to be overthrown - simply the discrediting of those who would discredit the status quo. Freire (1970a) provides two mechanisms of cultural action for domination. The first is that of *irrational consciousness*, resulting from the bureaucratisation of the revolution (the move toward critical consciousness) where the illusion of a greater voice is provided, but this voice is directed and proscribed by the power elite of the *status quo*. Secondly, should this not be sufficiently successful in curbing the move toward critical consciousness, the *status quo* may implement a *coup d'état*.

An interesting dynamic in this picture is that in order to maintain dominance over the local population, the local Third World elite are dependent upon the First World, and are thus themselves still dominated. In Freire’s view, equal relations between Third World and First World are not seen to be possible until equal relations are first obtained within the Third World.
Conscientização and my experience

João da Veiga Coutinho makes some powerful observations of Freire’s work in suggesting that “divergent images of man” are in contention, and result from:

…an already established image which its keepers are attempting to prescribe for others and a new image which is struggling to be. (João da Veiga Coutinho in Freire (1970a:v-viii)

This is very similar to the dialectic that arises between self and society in autoethnography as I evoke in Part 1 of this thesis. My cultural disposition as a learner dependent upon others, although persistent, is not sufficient for my strong desire to improve the situation that I am part of – to “be more.”

…the characteristic of the human species is its repeatedly demonstrated capacity for transcending what is merely given, what is purely determined. (Freire 1970a:v-viii)

Within this model of conscientização:

“Education is either for domestication or for freedom.” It either makes us the object of someone else’s concern or assists us in participating in and better understanding our experiences and our thoughts. It brings us in contact with our perceptions and the ‘perception of our perceptions.’ The ‘perception of our perceptions’ being the ability to reflect on what is conditioning us. It provides us the ability to bring into question, or see that which is problematic, that which we previously accepted without question. We ‘objectify’ our own experience instead of simply living within it… (Freire 1970a:v-viii)

In using the notion of “education of freedom” above as a metaphor for “development for freedom” we objectify our own experience rather than objectifying others (the peasants). In objectifying our experience we may then choose to become critical of it - and see its inter-subjective form, a form that we can mould for ourselves in ways previously we could not due to the “self imposed” (Zukav 1979:36) blindness aided by the prescribed reality of the dominant other.

Upon reflection, I was working with institutions and dominant expatriates that held to an objectivist/reductionist framework and used approaches that that proscribed reality for others, whose participation was allowed only at the convenience of, and
for the purposes of, the expatriate expert. The greatest insight that was provided for me by Freire, interpreted through the eyes of João da Veiga Coutinho was that “there can be no dialogue between antagonists” (Freire 1970a:v-viii).

The antagonism represented by the clash of frameworks between Jane, the Health Coordinator for SC(US) in Xai-Xai and I, was not my responsibility to resolve; and nor was it within my competency at that time to even address. Our frameworks were incommensurable. By focussing on Jane’s framework and her arbitrary demands, I was missing out on the opportunity of engaging with something special that provided for freedom and was relatively easy to achieve. To thus ignore Jane as, in the event I did, freed me to speak in my own voice and led to a focus on “easy development” and to seek structures that would support it.

In assuming a Freirian perspective for this thesis, I have come to write it not in a “voice of representation, petition or remonstrance,” but rather a voice that “had found itself and was speaking to itself...not concerned with the master world” (Freire 1970a).

In throwing off the master narrative provided by my understanding of contemporary development, I am trying to allow for the possibility of a new narrative to emerge that is founded in my engagement with the pariahs of contemporary development. Within this process, depicted by Fanon (1965:19-20) as “counter-acculturation” and Freire (1970a) as conscientização I would come to draw from my own experiences with the world in relationship with others, and the newly emerging categories and processes resulting from that relationship. In my epistemic learning provided by theory and practice, a generic outline of which is provided in the beginning of Chapter 3, my first step was to acknowledge a fundamental failure of the known.
Chapter 5: Don’t call me stupid! Rejecting old paradigm thinking for explaining the emerging new paradigm

Applied to my overseas work an emergent view of a new paradigm of development is raised at the beginning of this chapter. I drew from these understandings in the process of epistemic learning in research. I lost the desire to seek the answers for my problems in either the theory of contemporary development, or my theoretical understanding of systemic thinking. I would do in my research what I found had also worked in my practice. I would boundary-walk, and engage the unknown. I would forgo the comfort of traditional disciplinary categories, and the tendency for reductionism and mechanism, and create a path in walking (Horton and Freire 1990). As a result of this iterative series of meanderings, four emerging themes arose which will become the focus of the remaining four chapters of this thesis.

The first theme is that of an absence of history or an absence of the views of the peasants, the hungry, the pariahs of society in the telling of the history that was told. This provides a different genealogy which can avoid the necessities of the status quo. This theme also arises in Wolf’s Europe and the people without history (Wolf 1997). The second theme is a critique of science and technology and the emergence of alternative scientific understandings that resonate with my experience. Theme three is my re-engagement with systemic thinking and the resonance from my experiences that I found with this re-engagement. Lastly, I provide an overview of my epistemic learning that I depict as three sequential phases: the systemic reframing of action, thought, and institutions. It is the last phase that I take to be my focus following completion of this thesis. The four themes above become the themes for the four remaining chapters. Prior to starting on these themes, however, I would like to provide some concluding remarks for this chapter.
Chapter 5: Don’t call me stupid! Rejecting old paradigm thinking for explaining the emerging new paradigm

CONCLUSION: AN EMERGING PARADIGM OF SYSTEMIC PARTICIPATION

Upon reflection, I did not feel that my contribution to development was ever stupid. Together with extensionists and peasants, I had been able to redirect projects that had been regarded as failures, and facilitate activities that had led to self-acknowledged benefits to the peasants.

Again upon reflection, I can identify a set of principles that I came to accept as central to what I was trying to do through my experiences in the field:

1. Creating a utopian vision that motivates participation.
2. Negotiating a mandate in the beginning to allow for participation, based on what is already known.
3. Resisting the propensity to act according to the status quo, or according to one’s own exclusive view.
4. Developing a reasonable base that will enable action that can deliver results for peasants.
5. Engaging within the context surrounding the existing problem situation to build a rich picture and being aware of any problematic issues arising, or project complicity in poor results.
6. Seeking to implement the project through the existing structures according to existing strategies, and being prepared for turning points at which changes of direction can be made through systemic participation.
7. Moving concomitantly towards the local (unknown), extensionists and peasants, in a process of boundary-walking in order to break the fixed cultural gaze of the status quo that exists in both society and self.
8. Engaging with all participants based on what you do know and don’t know, and what they know and don’t know.
Engaging with the vital daily issues of the peasants and the project, individually and together, and build on these successes.

Restructuring both processes and structures, to enable iterative and dynamic systemic participation that is appropriate to experienced reality as seen and experienced by participants.

More briefly put, this approach involves resisting the tendency for immediate action. In its place, time is taken to experience and understand the existing context of the problem situation while building an operative base from which to work. Once this has been attained, in practice I worked along with the existing situation until turning points arose due to the failure of the existing structures, processes and understandings. Within these turning points I applied what I already knew along with what others already knew, and resisted status quo approaches. Amanda Sinclair outlines a similar approach in a business environment where she sees organisations as entities that resist change.

Even if the new person is a ‘change agent,’ the risks are that the organisation will trap, tame and discipline to ensure that nothing will change. (Sinclair 2005)

She suggests steps similar to the three that I have outline in the above paragraph, as a means of avoiding an organisation's propensity for inertia.
CHAPTER 6

RECONSTRUCTING A GENEALOGY OF HUNGER - A HISTORY OF JUSTIFYING THE NECESSITY OF UNNECESSARY HUNGER

Do you know …what the trees say when the axe comes into the forest? ….When the axe comes into the forest, the trees say: 'Look! The handle is one of us!'

John Clare quoted in Neeson (1993:328)

It will be seen then that our historical excursions have as their main purpose the establishment of a design base, namely, an inquiring system which is open as to its beginnings and which has control over all the material it processes.

(Churchman 1971:20)

All domination involves invasions - at times physical [sic] and overt, at times camouflaged, with the invader assuming the role of a helping friend.

(Freire 1970b) quoted in (Maren 1997:25)

INTRODUCTION

I have earlier critiqued Checkland (1981, 2000) in his oversight of the role of power in his Soft Systems Methodology, only to find that I also made the same mistake of ignoring the role of power in development in relation to my expatriate colleagues. Far from development being the neutral application of technology and economics, I came to see it as being intimately political (Ferguson 1994). It was through my reading of the work of Michel Foucault that I came to better understand the relationship between truth and power.
A Foucauldian turn in my development

I have read the work of Foucault, both directly, and through the interpretations of others. His work has helped me gain a better understanding of the differences between; dialogue and polemic, the relationship between power and truth, and of the role of creating a genealogy of a problem situation that allows one to undo the necessity of the present that is provided by others.

Dialogue and polemic

Freire’s observation that dialogue cannot occur between antagonists, provided an explanatory relief to my frustrating persistence in trying to allow for the continuing participation of Jack and Jane in my work described in Chapter 4. This was matched with the attempts I made at trying to justify myself according to their worldview. Foucault’s work helped me to find additional meaning for this incommensurability, in his portrayal of the relationship between dialogue and polemic. According to Foucault (1984), two people in dialogue accept a relationship that “is tied to the questioning of the other.” This contrasts with polemics, where the polemicist never accepts the questioning of the other.

The person he [the polemicist] confronts is not a partner in the search for truth, but an adversary, an enemy who is wrong, who is harmful, and whose very existence constitutes a threat. (Foucault in Rabinow 1984:382)

The relationship between people involved in polemic provided me with a good explanation of the tension that I felt, as my practice of systemic participation emerged, with those who practiced what I am calling expat-centric development. This insight gained further traction with Foucault’s explanation of the relationship between power, truth, and a constituent ontology.
Chapter 6: Reconstructing a genealogy of hunger – a history of justifying the necessity of unnecessary hunger

Relationship between power and truth and the emergence of a constituent ontology

In *Surveiller et punir: naissance de la prison* (Discipline and punish) Foucault suggests that truth and power are co-constitutive.

We are subjected to the reproduction of truth through power, and we cannot exercise power except through the production of truth. (Foucault translated in Rossenau 1992:78)

As my own development experiences grew, I came to hold the view that expat-centric development used power to prescribe the meaning of participation and development for others. This was achieved through the use of polemic that relied on a transcendent notion of truth - a truth of their own making. In so doing, the extensionists, peasants, and I alike were actually being subjugated by becoming “subjects to someone else by control or dependence” (Foucault in Rabinow 1984:21). This process, according to Foucault, is achieved through a process of division and exclusion within oneself, or with others. The subjugated become excluded from the truth which remains transcendent to them. They are cut off from the production of truth, and it is only through their ability to participate in the production of truth that they can regain their power as equal subjects with others.

It was a realisation of this situation that eventually allowed us (as those who I viewed as being previously subjugated) to reject the “necessity” of the transcendent ontology, and begin creating our own necessities for “how we are constituted as subjects of our own knowledge, as subjects who exercise power, and as moral subjects of our own actions” (Foucault 1984:49). This constitutive ontology is seen by Foucault as being critical:

... in which the critique of what we are is at one and the same time the historical analysis of the limits that are imposed on us and an experiment with the possibility of going beyond them. (Foucault 1984:50)
Chapter 6: Reconstructing a genealogy of hunger – a history of justifying the necessity of unnecessary hunger

**Undoing the necessity of expat-centric development through creating a genealogy of hunger**

Valero-Silva (1994) provides a useful insight into what he refers to as Foucault’s main project - “the critical ontology of ourselves,” or a critique of “what we are.” This has two important components; “working on ourselves” in a process of inventing ourselves rather than seeking “hidden truths” to direct us, and “responding to one’s time.” This latter attitude results from a choice that rejects “universal conditions” as being too simplistic and institutional necessities as too authoritarian. This rejection of authoritarianism is seen by Valero-Silva (1994) and Kant (Rabinow 1984:34) as a continuation of the project of Enlightenment that called for us to use our own reason rather than accept “someone else’s authority.” In today’s parlance the acceptance of the authority of another could be called the outsourcing of reason and morality, where we cede the need to make difficult choices to the professions, disciplines, and institutions of our society. This trend acts to mitigate democratic participation through a “Culture of Technical Control” (Yankelovich 1991), where:

All of the advanced industrial democracies of today, especially in the United States, are firmly committed to the control way of life and to using expert-driven technology to achieve it - whatever the cost. (Yankelovich 1991:8)

What is sought from this critical ontology is to “show us what is not indispensable for the maintenance of ourselves as autonomous subjects.” In so doing it reflects on how we can move beyond the limits we are currently operating within. Hiley (1984) also holds a similar position in regard to this last point:

…the framework of repression does not provide a basis for liberating critique, but is itself part of the problem....

Emerging from this critical ontology that seeks to move beyond the existing “framework of repression,” is the creation of a genealogy of how people become subjugated by others. This genealogy becomes a “genealogy of problems” as distinct from a history of solutions. It is more attuned to a sense of danger than to
an apathy engendered by a solution focus. A sense of danger provides for an activism that accepts the need to make ethico-political choices (Dreyfus and Rabinow 1982). Such choices are not “value-free” in the sense of being neutral or objective. Neither can they be “normative” in the sense of having a “criteria or a meta-story to tell the better from worse,” as it is caught within the present (Hiley 1984:197).

Within its post-modern context Foucault’s genealogy does not seek to demonstrate causality, truth, or to interpret the past through the beliefs of the present, but rather a:

...history of the present in the sense that it finds its point of departure in problems relevant to current issues and finds its point of arrival and its usefulness in what it can bring to the analysis of the present. (Henriques et al. 1984:104)

The quest is for a different present which emerges from the reasoning of self in participation with it, and in a reconstruction of the past looking at the relationships between people and the “ethico-political” tension that they face in making choices, to ensure they remain producers of a local and a personal truth. In so doing they retain the power to remain autonomous of universal and directive thought emanating from within such social institutions that include economics, science, the state, and religion. According to Davidson, a genealogy of such a problem situation shows that:

...the origin of what we take to be rational, the bearer of truth, is rooted in domination, subjugation, the relationship of forces - in a word, power. (Davidson 1986:225 cited in Valero-Silva 1994:213)

In brief, the responsibility of personal reason is to participate in the construction of knowledge and moral action. This produces an “ethical and intellectual integrity” that is not founded in methodology, policy, rule of law, or doctrine - but rather in
“imagination, lucidity, humour, disciplined thought and practical wisdom” (Dreyfus and Rabinow 1986:121).

A “WESTERN” GENEALOGY OF UNNECESSARY HUNGER AND “PARASITIC DEVELOPMENT”

Foucault’s thoughts linked with my own sense of history and participation in developing self and interacting with the problem situations I confronted. My purpose was to realise a different present, founded on personal engagement, participation and critique, rather than uncritically following someone else’s prescriptions. Such a present rejects the epistemology of “cognitive authoritarianism” where “the rationality of thinking for oneself diminishes” (Fuller 1991) as society vests the expert “with exaggerated authority” and so assist its citizenry to avoid constituting their own “moral and political orientations” (Gadamer 1975:312).

But before I could move on from this position, I felt a need to re-interpret how unnecessary hunger arose in the first place. This concern for explanation is reflected in my overseas work, in my development of a sense of history of interaction between peasants, extensionists, and projects. Now I had a similar question in regard to unnecessary hunger. How did the majority world get into a position of having so many starving people? The representation of the position by expat-centric development in the overseas projects in which I was engaged, that there is a need to focus on the growing of more food and on “expat-centric economic development” - seemed an entirely inappropriate response. Such a viewpoint largely overlooks: a) the fact that enough food is currently produced in the world to meet everyone’s needs, b) the views and experiences of the Majority World, and c) the relationship between the Minority World and the Majority World in history.
Chapter 6: Reconstructing a genealogy of hunger – a history of justifying the necessity of unnecessary hunger

The genealogy that follows, results from my reading of the history of Western Civilisation, particularly the interacting periods of colonisation, industrialisation, and globalisation. From this reading I posit that the above oversights of expat-centric development hide the very processes and structures that have generated the problem of hunger in the first place. Of these, one of the most important is the inequality existing between people and between states (Wallerstein 1975), a problem that Wallerstein (2004:xi) sees as “so politically central to our current times.” This inequality is sometimes observed within Majority World countries. This is done by Calderisi (2006) who then uses it as an opportunity to ignore or reject the long-term legacy of inequality between the Majority and Minority Worlds. Frank (1969:4) argues against such an approach when he says:

It is also widely believed that the contemporary underdevelopment of a country can be understood as the product or reflection solely of its own economic, political, social, and cultural characteristics or structure. Yet historical research demonstrates that contemporary underdevelopment is in large part the historical product of past and continuing economic and other relations between the satellite undeveloped and the now developed metropolitan countries.

The problem of inequality

The problem of inequality between people is not a new topic: French philosopher and writer, Jean Jacques Rousseau, for instance, wrote a wonderful discourse in 1754 in regard to the "origin of inequality" (Rousseau 1952). In this discourse he addresses the Lords of the Republic of Geneva, and reflects on the equality of humankind ordained by nature, and the inequality that has been introduced by humankind. In a manner echoed centuries later in Checkland's SSM, Rousseau starts with an “ideal system,” which for him is a country where Sovereign interest and the interests of the people are identical. For Rousseau such a possibility was contradicted in the notion of a love for one’s country implying a love of its soil and territory, rather than its citizens. I also identified with this sentiment as a metaphor for the contradiction resulting from the assumption that a commitment to peasants
can be equated with a commitment to project implementation. In my own approach to development, I too sought the ideal of a development where the interests in any project were identical to those of the peasants, and of all of the other people it was intended to help. However, my experience of expat-centric development projects in the Solomon Islands and Mozambique, suggests that this kind of development is quite alien to those “in control.”

In the preface to Rousseau’s discourse he notes the difficulty, when studying humankind, in distinguishing "between what is original and what is artificial" (Rousseau 1952:329). In seeking the original - that prior to reason - he highlights two factors, those of self preservation and the repugnance of seeing another in pain. He then holds this “original” nature in contradistinction to society, or any form of organised humankind, and notes the "violence of the powerful and the oppression of the weak" (Rousseau 1952:331). Rousseau notes two kinds of inequality: the natural and physical on the one hand - like inequality of age, health, and gender; and moral and political inequality - like rules, power, and honour that are "established, or at least authorised by the consent of men." It is the latter to which he directs his attention, as being the most amenable to change.

Rousseau then compares "civilised man" with "savage man" as a means of identifying the moment whereby inequality arose. Inequalities of civilised man are seen in the "manner of living" where some are excessively idle and others excessively overworked. The same goes for the inequality of food and transport such that give rise to sicknesses, not resulting from tragedy or disease, but are in the main part "of our own making" (Rousseau 1952:336). In making this comparison between the civilised and the savage Rousseau highlights: reason, property, division of labour, and the emergence of ego as outstanding factors of inequality. Reason is
seen in relation to a philosophy that allows the turning back of the savage’s natural response to reduce the pain of another.

It is philosophy that isolates him [humankind], and bids him say, at sight of the misfortunes of others: ‘Perish if you will, I am secure.’ (Rousseau 1952:345)

It is through reason that Rousseau seeks to expose this tragic turn of humanity, which is self-created, and therefore amenable to change. In his analysis of emergent inequality, a virtual “state of war” is seen to arise between the two antagonistic classes that result: the rich who sought unjustly to justify their wealth, and the “treacherous” poor who robbed to survive. Pacification arose through an appeal to “the rule of law,” which according to Rousseau, the rich used to their own advantage and:

…converted clever usurpation into unalterable right, and for the advantage of a few ambitious individuals, subjected all mankind to perpetual labour, slavery and wretchedness. (Rousseau 1952:355)

It is this "clever usurpation" transformed into "unalterable right" that we may see as a common theme in my portrayal of the epochs of colonisation, industrialisation and globalisation, which follow. Rousseau explains this transformation of usurpation to right of law as resulting from the people’s desire to give power to the rich and powerful, as a means of guarding against the threat of foreign tyranny. And so "oppressed from within" they find themselves in the worst position of finding themselves "at the mercy of another." Such a situation is hard to become aware of due to the dependence of social man upon the views of others.

…social man lives constantly outside himself, and only knows how to live in the opinion of others, so that he seems to receive the consciousness of his own existence merely from the judgement of others concerning him. …always asking others what we are, and never daring to ask ourselves… (Rousseau 1952:362)

Rousseau’s view is not unlike that promoted by Foucault, where he looks at the genealogy of humankind to try and see where inequality arose. Foucault’s project on inequality is directed toward finding out how a “subjugated self” came to be. In
Chapter 6: Reconstructing a genealogy of hunger – a history of justifying the necessity of unnecessary hunger

this he is coincident with Rousseau in believing that the status quo remains, until we start to lose our dependence on the views of others and “dare to ask ourselves” who we wish to be.

Both Rousseau and Martin Luther King junior, in words spoken over 200 years apart suggest that we should be suspicious when the rich Minority World seeks to show benevolence to the poor Majority World.

Let us penetrate, therefore, the superficial appearances of benevolence, and survey what passes in the innermost recesses of the heart. (Rousseau 1952:363-364)

Philanthropy is commendable, but it must not cause the philanthropist to overlook the circumstances of economic injustice which make philanthropy necessary. (Martin Luther King junior quoted in Hewson 2004)

I would now like to turn to an emergent genealogy of hunger coming from my research of colonisation, industrialisation, and globalisation, as it relates to peasants and hunger.

COLONISATION

“Framing” the other as foreign

The difficulty of changing the status quo includes the difficulty of proceeding past the self-imposed boundaries of the present. In this thesis so far, I have tried to illustrate that my own epistemic development started with a reframing of the situation that I was experiencing in a manner that I characterised at the time as “a change in perspective.” It was this reframing that led me to develop my practice of systemic participation, and now my research has led to an emerging cognitive understanding of it. But the same process of reframing is also available to those who seek to gain personal advantage through reframing the ontology of organic connection to that of mechanistic separation.
According to (Rousseau 1952:344-345) primitive society exhibited the same characteristic of primitives - not wanting to see another suffer unnecessarily. This correlates with Polyani’s (1944) claim, that social organisation in most so-called primitive societies, including European societies up to the sixteenth century, precluded individual hunger.

The principle of freedom from want was equally acknowledged in the Indian village community and, we might add, under almost every and any type of social organization up to about the beginning of sixteenth century Europe, when the modern ideas on the poor put forth by the humanist Vives were argued before the Sorbonne. (Polanyi 1944:163-164)

It is Polyanyi’s claim that societies in India and Africa were often as well or better developed than those in Europe at those times, while Hayter (1981) has argued that societies in a host of countries “from Benin to India and China” were “satisfied with their state of living.” This is illustrated in a letter written by the Emperor of China to King George III of England in 1793.

As your Ambassador can see for himself, we possess all things, I set no value on objects strange or ingenious, and have no use for your country’s manufactures. (Hayter 1981:29)

While I make no endeavour to paint a picture of civilisations as being uniformly sophisticated, or without regressive practices such as slavery and human sacrifice, this view is in contrast to the image of un-development as an original condition. The state of development and lack of unnecessary hunger in foreign societies is also evident in their exclusion as reasons for colonisation. In fact the difficulty that the European colonisers faced was in knowing how to justify the plundering of a foreign and remote country that was of no menace. Two other important justifications that needed to be addressed in the process of colonisation relate to how: a) the provision of compliant colonised labour for the colonisers could be assured, and b) how enslavement of the peoples of other countries in the world could be justified.
Chapter 6: Reconstructing a genealogy of hunger – a history of justifying the necessity of unnecessary hunger

The “other” as “fit for plunder”

In his book on pre-Columbus exploration and colonisation from 1229-1492, Fernández-Armesto (1987) uses the phrase “mental horizon” in a way that reflects a sense that I have tried to portray by the notion of “reframing.” In his book he chronicles events that led to a change in the “mental horizon” of the time that could justify the unjustifiable – the conquering of remote peoples who posed no threat. This chronicle starts with the conquest of Majorca, an island off the coast of what is now Spain, by King Jaime 1 of Aragon (1213-76). This conquest of a kingdom “in the midst of the sea” was seen as “chivalric adventure par excellence.” But the Catholic Church of the time had to been seen to operate on a more lawful basis than this.

Of the jurists, humanists, and missionaries who wrote accounts of these first adventures of domination of remote kingdoms, the jurists, with their concern for the science or theory of law, came to be most dominant. It was they who were most aware of canon law created through papal authority, and of Pope Clement’s VI interest in conquering the Canary Islands. It was this Pope’s sermon in 1344 that represented one of the first and most comprehensive attempts to establishing canonical precedent for “legitimate war against pagan primitives.”

He essayed the assertion that ‘pagans ought to forfeit sovereignty, by virtue of paganism,’ for which, not surprisingly, he asserted no proof: few, if any, other canonists would have admitted such a crude generalisation. ...Clement’s main argument ... derived from a debate among thirteenth century decretalists and rested on the proposition that sins against natural law invalidated a society or deprived a polity of sovereignty. ... Sexual perversion was the commonest ground cited ... but blasphemy and idolatry were commonly held to be unnatural...(Fernández-Armesto 1987:231).

Thus the act of refusing missionaries could also be seen as an unnatural act, rectified by the loss of sovereignty to a foreign power acting under common law! It was these initial moves in the “mental horizon” of the time that provided the eventual basis of the Papal Bulls and Patents of the State, that gave authority to adventurers
to “discover,” “possess,” and trade with foreign peoples in foreign lands. The wealth that resulted provided for the birth of industrialisation and came from the gains of overseas trade. Overseas trade is seen by Hayter (1981) as a euphemism for “conquest, piracy, and plunder.”

As Marx summarized the process in the first volume of *Capital*: The discovery of gold and silver in America, the extirpation, enslavement, and entombment in mines of the aboriginal population, the beginning of the conquest and looting of the East Indies, the turning of Africa into a warren for the hunting of black skins, signalized the rosy dawn of the era of capitalist production. (Hayter 1981:36)

Hayter continued by quoting Adam Smith:

The pious purpose of converting [the inhabitants] to Christianity sanctified the injustice of the project. But the hope of finding treasures of gold there was the sole motive which prompted them to undertake it … The first English settlers in North America … offered a fifth of all the gold and silver which should be found there to the king, as a motive for granting them their patents. (Hayter 1981:41)

**Compliant labour**

Following the easy wealth gained through plunder, was the problem of ensuring that local labour was sufficiently compliant for the purposes of the foreign interloper. It is the absence of the threat of individual starvation which makes primitive society, in a sense, more human than a market economy and at the same time less economic.

Along with disease, another colonial introduction to the colonised, was an introduction to the scourge of hunger: either through the destruction of local self-sufficient sources of food in order to create an artificial food scarcity, or the imposition of a hut tax on the native to force them to barter away their labour. The substitution of food crops for plantation crops for export “back home” was the third strategy invoked. In the all-too-frequent view of the coloniser, traditional social organisation that mitigated hunger needed to be broken down if colonisation was to be successful: For why would indigenous persons want to undertake the menial tasks imposed by a foreigner under any other circumstances? They would have no reason to, unless they were forced to, through hunger or the penalties of taxation.
Hayter (1981:38) corroborates the view that colonialism “introduced hunger where it did not exist before.” A tragic example is provided by Bengal in 1943 when it was still part of the British Empire. The British taxed the Bengali peasants up to two thirds of the crop they produced, and in the famine that resulted, about 3.5 million people died of starvation. After the famine some peasants rallied around the idea that they should keep two-thirds of their harvest - with punitive repercussions:

In the village of Thumniya, the police arrested some peasants who resisted the theft of their harvest. They were charged with “stealing paddy.” (Peter Custers, Women in the Tebhaga Uprising, Calcutta: Naya prokash 1987:78 in Shiva 2000a:6)

An insidious example of maximising the notion of compliant labour can be found in the 250 year history of European-sponsored slavery, exemplified in the “development” of the “international” sugar industry in the 16\textsuperscript{th} Century. The practice of slavery extended the notion of compliant labour to disposable labour, a more complete picture of which is provided in Aykroyd (1967) and Hobhouse (1987).

Social and personal costs of the colonised

In addition to the initial plundering of wealth, enslavement, and death by diseases carried by the coloniser, the personal and social environment of the colonised was radically changed. According to Rodney (1982:xvii) this was assisted by the schooling and values that the colonists brought with them that “destroyed social solidarity and promoted the worst form of alienated individualism without social responsibility.” The personal dilemma the Algerians faced with their French colonisers is illustrated by Fanon (1963:15):

If he [the native] shows fight, the soldiers fire and he’s a dead man; if he gives in, he degrades himself and he is no longer a man at all; shame and fear will split up his character and make his inmost self fall to pieces.

Yet the relationship between colonisation and industrialisation was to lead to further efficiencies in extracting wealth from the colonies. This was achieved through the
destruction of local industry and the creation of a dependent market for the benefit of the coloniser.

**INDUSTRIALISATION**

**Industrialisation and colonisation**

The epochs of colonisation and industrialisation are not completely distinct and separate: each assisted the other in a process of establishing a more powerful minority, who were evermore effective in exploiting the majority for their own benefit - through the use of law, capital, and science that were increasingly at their behest. Mumford (1947) provides an example of the parasitic nature of colonisation and industrialisation on peasant lives and society in India.

In the name of progress, the limited but balanced economy of the Hindu village, with its local potter, its local spinners and weavers, its local smith, was overthrown for the sake of providing a market for the potteries of the Five Towns and the textiles of Manchester and the superfluous hardware of Birmingham. The result was impoverished villages in India, hideous and destitute towns in England, and a great wastage in tonnage and man-power in plying the oceans between: but at all events a victory for progress. (Mumford 1947:185)

The colonies provided initial wealth through plunder, plus dramatically increased the resources the colonising country could draw from. This included labour, land, food, and minerals.

The process of two centuries of colonial expansion, the slave trade, cheap food from abroad and British governments dedicated to the accumulation of capital, made possible both an increase in markets for British manufactured goods as well as the accumulated investment necessary to employ wage workers to produce these commodities. (Albury and Schwartz 1982:9)

Wright (1923) points out the huge range of commodities supplied from the colonies. This included: cotton, indigo, jute, tobacco, sugar, slaves, palm oil, tin, graphite, tea, rubber, coal and other minerals. The British Empire, through its colonies, controlled almost two thirds of the world’s supply of many of these commodities. It is no wonder then to find that Wright (1923) and Williams (1994) associate colonisation
Chapter 6: Reconstructing a genealogy of hunger – a history of justifying the necessity of unnecessary hunger

with the industrial development of Britain itself. Others such as Wolf (1997:200) and Wallerstein (1989:145), while not going quite so far, admit at least that colonialism and the slavery of the period provided a principle, or important element, in the industrial development of Britain.

**From machine to industrialisation and a market society – conflating human values with pecuniary values**

Mumford (1947) interestingly points towards cultural change rather than the existence of the machine as the central factor of industrialisation, and I would suggest that it was a function of tacit epistemic change. The machine had existed for 700 years prior to the Industrial Revolution of England. Mumford (1947:4) suggests it was the degree to which the coordinating elements of “mechanization and regimentation” had “been projected and embodied in organized forms which dominate every aspect of our existence,” that became the catalyst for industrialisation to occur.

The organisational structures and values of organic society gave way to a society whose ontology was embodied in the machine. Life-values, and the informal relationships between people, gave way to the “freedom” provided by formal relationships focussed on pecuniary self-interest. The reframing of society in which people not only became the tool’s of their tools, but the tools of a transcendent other who defined what progress was for those they subjugated, is evident in the claim by Mumford (1987:185) that:

Life was judged by the extent to which it ministered to progress, progress was not judged by the extent to which it ministered to life.

Polanyi (1944) describes this change in “cultural environment” and values of the peasant as even being pre-eminent to “economic exploitation” in its ability to impoverish. In his description, the grand theme of progress gives way to a
problematic account as to how it was achieved and the representation of the economics of self-interest as the only form of economics.

Two questions arise from my reading of the Industrial Revolution in England: 1) How did the business and governing classes obtain a compliant labour force that was available to do the bidding of capital? – the often miserable and quintessentially dehumanising work in the factories and the mines, and 2) How can the impoverishment of one’s own people be justified? In my reconstruction of industrialisation, the answer to the latter question is also seen to be the answer to the former. For Polanyi (1944:34), this dehumanisation of the peasant was done through cultural change that separated labour from its association with life as part of organic society. This cultural change was achieved by “public improvement” defined by the rich, but from which they profited privately. A focus on economic progress ensured that the cost of social and physical dislocation of the peasant was ignored. The resulting Enclosure Act, that was a part of this, was seen to be “a revolution of the rich against the poor” that was achieved in an England where, at the time, only 15% of the eligible population could vote. Yet the Enclosure Act represents only a small part of the process of the “systematic robbery” of communal lands said to have started as early as 1500 (Duchesne 2003:130-131).

The reframing of labour as a purpose in and for itself in the new culture, would be unconstrained by the previous informal commitments of “kinship, neighbourhood, profession, and creed” (Polanyi 1944:34). Though couched in the terminology of freedom from informal commitmtry by economic liberals, this move reflected an exchange of one prejudice (the community prejudice), for another (the extant market society). The loss of human creativity resulting from work becoming an “all-important end,” rather than a part of life, is expressed by Mumford (1947:176):
Chapter 6: Reconstructing a genealogy of hunger – a history of justifying the necessity of unnecessary hunger

The gospel of work was the positive side of the incapacity for art, play, amusement, or pure craftsmanship which attended the shrivelling up of the cultural and religious values of the past.

This loss of creativity was also associated with physical and social degradation. Air pollution, the “incense of the new industrialism” became rife. Labour became a resource to be exploited along with everything else. The one-time peasant, now industrial labourer, experienced poor housing and food that was often adulterated - like flour being supplemented with plaster - while alcoholic drink became the “religion of the poor.” It was no wonder that the life expectancy of the labour classes of that time was 20 years less than for the middle class (Mumford 1947:176).

From commons to factory – from labour providing self-satisfaction to labouring for the satisfaction of others

The experience of colonialism was that the “carrot” of high wages was never as effective as the stick of compulsion for the inducement of labour. Further, the ultimate in compulsion came to be the scourge of hunger. In order to allow hunger, the values and structures of organic society needed to be annihilated.

The allurement of higher wages was never a strong enough force to create a labor market. ‘Here also colonial experience has confirmed theirs. For the higher the wages the smaller the inducement to exertion on the part of the native, who unlike the white man was not compelled by his cultural standards to make as much money as he possibly could. The analogy was all the more striking as the early laborer, too, abhorred the factory, where he felt degraded and tortured, like the native who often resigned himself to work in our fashion only when threatened with corporal punishment, if not physical mutilation. The Lyons manufacturers of the eighteenth century urged low wages primarily for social reasons… Only an overworked and downtrodden laborer, they argued, would forgo to associate with his comrades and escape the condition of personal servitude under which he could be made to do whatever his master required from him. Legal compulsion and parish serfdom as in England, the rigors of an absolutist labor police as on the Continent, indented labor as in the early Americas were the prerequisites of the “willing worker.” But the final stage was reached with the application of “nature’s penalty,” hunger. In order to release it, it was necessary to liquidate organic society, which refused to permit the individual to starve.’ (Polanyi 1944:164-165)

The market mantra of individual gain became equally effective “to the most violent outburst of religious fervor in history,” subjugating the previously held values of organic organisation such as reciprocation and redistribution. And it is the
destruction of such values and the “cultural environment” of the labourers that was seen by Polanyi (1944:157) as pre-eminent to “economic exploitation” in regards to the causation of impoverishment.

Of all the various approaches taken to break the social values and structures of organic society in the lead-up to the Industrial Revolution, none is more prominent as the enclosure movement. “Enclosure” occurred in the seventy years following 1750, during which time 30 per cent of agricultural land in England was expropriated from its “common” title and transferred to private title. This largely occurred through the action of one user of the commons who enclosed it for personal use. In effect it enabled the wealthy to deny common-use access. This permitted a move from subsistence production, to excess production that could be used to support an industrial labour force. In the view of those who profited from the process, enclosure enabled greater efficiency in food production. To the peasants, however, it was a process of being expropriated from what was rightfully theirs (Neeson 1993:329-330). Informal rights of a community over land held in common were expropriated for the benefit of an individual, who was then free to exercise his or her now unique and formal rights over the land for personal enrichment, regardless of the state of affairs of the neighbours.

From an ethnographic perspective, the significance of this brief historical exploration lies with the fact that it’s telling was profoundly different depending on whether it was told from the view of those who benefited from it, or from the view of peasants who lost their whole way of life, being involuntarily turned into labourers and vagrants. An example of the former case can be found in Mingay (1968:23) who suggests that “parliamentary enclosure represented a major advance in the recognition of the rights of the small man.” Such an approach also seeks to show that any rights that
the peasants lost were relatively insignificant (Chambers and Mingay 1966). For Neeson (1993) however, such a perspective reflects its distance from the peasant’s cause, and the difficulty of a society based on exclusive property rights understanding the concept of “common-use” land.

The historians’ excuse is distance, coupled with too great a respect for the achievements of modern agriculture and English landlords. The eighteenth-century enclosers’ excuse was the national interest. In its name they deplored the insubordination of commoners, the unimprovability of their pastures, and the brake on production represented by shared property. (Neeson 1993:7)

For the commoners, the common rights afforded them by the “commons” allowed them an independence and quality of life not available to those wholly dependent upon labour. These benefits ceased following enclosure, while the benefits of enclosure – increased agricultural production - was never purely about labour, but was essentially about the restructuring of rural England (Neeson 1993). Critics of the commons had a vision of improving society and agriculture, with particular emphasis on how it could support the growing British interest in its navy, merchant marines, and manufacturing. Neeson provides two contrasting views with respect to the question regarding what was in the best interest of the nation: the first paints a picture of late eighteenth century government authority and personal liberties being best advanced, where “the bulk of the people may support themselves and their families,” while the second posits that “the province of ninety-nine out of an hundred was to receive, not to give orders” (Neeson 1993:15). Such differences represent the distinctions between an organic worldview on the one hand and a mechanical hierarchical view on the other. In the end it was the latter argument that became the one privileged, with contrary views labelled “hostile to the national interest.” The sense of moral duty forgone by the rich in accepting enclosure is acutely evident in a letter sent to the Marquis of Anglesey.
‘Where is now,’ ran a letter sent to the Marquis of Anglesey, ‘the degree of virtue which can resist interest?’ … Should a poor man take one of Your sheep from the common, his life would be forfeited by law. But should You take the common from a hundred poor mens sheep, the law gives no redress. The poor man is liable to be hung for taking from You what would not supply You with a meal & You would do nothing illegal by depriving him of his subsistence; nor is Your family supplied for a day by the subtraction which distresses his for life! … Ye the causers of crimes are more guilty than the perpetrators. What must be the inference of the poor? When they see those who should be their patterns defy morality for gain, especially when, if wealth could give contentment, they had enough wherewith to be satisfied. And when the laws are not accessible to the injured poor and Government gives them no redress? (Neeson 1993: 326 & 327)

This sense of betrayal, especially by the rich landlords who used to be considered part of the common-rights community, is avidly presented by a villager in the first epigraph of this chapter. However, such sense of betrayal was correlated with the lack of any moral sense of connectedness the powerful had to the plight of the petty-landed class and associated common rights.

The improvidence of the poor was a law of nature, for servile, sordid, and ignoble work would otherwise not be done. (Polanyi 1944:117)

As organic society was replaced by a market society, the notion of the “right to life” - specifically the freedom from hunger and its recourse to royalty or feudal superiors - was lost and labour came to be held in as much disregard as the environment.

... labor was a resource to be exploited, to be mined, to be exhausted, and finally to be discarded. Responsibility for the worker’s life and health ended with the cash-payment for the day’s labor. (Mumford 1947:172)

Social control of the machine?

Mumford (1947) suggests that the victory of incorporating values of the machine into society was not a clean victory. The residual institutions and cultural orientations contrasted the role of honour and friendship, and the newly created central role of money and profit. The response to the “machine society” by people who still upheld these old values is represented in the following responses: 1) reacting to the mechanical urban routine some became sentimental and regressed to a romantic notion of the primitive, 2) others like the Luddites attempted to overthrow the machine, but had no hope against the power of law and capital, and 3) the
emergence of organised labour (Mumford 1947:286). Mumford however, goes on to suggest all three of these reactions to the “machine society” fail because they stop short of participating in the productive process of production. In his view political labour organisation should be functional.

The victory over the possessing classes is not the goal of this struggle: that is but a necessary incident in the effort to achieve a solidly integrated and socialized basis for industry. The struggle for power is a futile one, no matter who is victorious, unless it is directed by the will-to-function. (Mumford 1947: 418-419)

Such a will-to-function requires industrial workers to take their place in guiding the process by which their labour is used. Other locations of resistance are also seen through consumer organisations that promote desirable commodities and small investors retaining autonomy and control in large organisations.

GLOBALISATION

Colonisation declined as the issue of maintaining entire nations in a colonised state, for the benefit of a “mother-country,” became increasingly difficult to defend morally and politically. Now, in contradiction to the gaining of industrial supremacy through “heavy protectionism,” the industrialised nations of the West – the majority of which had been active and extensive colonists - promoted “free trade” (Chang 2002:5).

This situation continues to be facilitated through organisations such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which give the appearance of being internationally representative even while their critics see them as merely “the mouthpiece of the rich.” In the words of (George 1988:253):

Politics is not about who has the best arguments but about who has the most money, and power, to achieve unfailingly unaltruistic aims.

This is all too often translated for business as the use of ruthless force against weak countries, bribery of “backward administrations,” and indeed the use of any “underhanded means of gaining advantage” (Polanyi 1944:13). The effect of this
seemingly ruthless force of globalism in relation to hunger will be analysed through the work of Susan George in relation to world debt and through Vandana Shiva in relation to patents.

A new colonial taskmaster - global capital and the force of debt

George (1977, 1984, and 1988) is at the forefront of the position that the problem of hunger specifically is a function of powerful institutions and people that maintain them. In A Fate Worse than Debt (George 1988), she explores the role that debt has played in generating poverty and hunger. She pays particular attention to the result of petro-dollars from oil producing countries being deposited in Western banks. The Western banks, flush with deposits for which they had to pay interest to the depositors, lacked debtors from which to obtain income to pay this obligation. The response to this, according to George, led to a frenzy of lending to Majority World countries. Secured by government guarantees, these banks paid no attention to how the money was spent. Majority World politicians, with little accountability to their people, syphoned off money to the personal bank accounts they and their cronies had. They also spent money on “white elephant” projects such as nuclear power stations on earthquake fault lines, and increased military spending. As a result only a miniscule amount of these “investments” would provide an economic return. So when it came time to repay the loan - and the risk of defaulting was possible - the tax dollars of Minority World countries provided the IMF with resources to reduce this risk which the commercial banks lending the money, should have carried. In addition, the IMF implemented a series of “austerity measures” that had the poor people paying the price for the loans, from which they received no benefit. To take the case of Zaire, as narrated to George by an NGO worker:
Economic repression is so great that among ordinary people, no one can live on his salary, so everyone has to rely on ‘Article 15.’ The first Congolese Constitution after independence had fourteen articles – thus ‘Article 15’ is any activity, legal or illegal, that helps you look out for yourself. …Zaire today means 2,500 immensely rich families and 27 million who are desperately poor. (George 1988:110)

So the wealthy retain their wealth or increase it, while the poor lose their wealth and much of what was “good” in society, as it falls into chaos and crime. George in the conclusion of Bennett (1987:213) points out that:

… when the concept of ‘freedom’ is bastardized to the point that it becomes the ‘freedom’ of unlimited accumulation by an individual, a corporation or, for that matter, a nation or group of nations at the expense of others' survival, something is deeply wrong with our system.

She suggests that those with the freedom to abuse others should have it taken away. However, this is much easier said than done: debt represents power and that will not be relinquished with ease.

The debt crisis is a symptom - one among many - of an increasingly polarized world organized for the benefit of a minority that will stop at nothing to maintain and strengthen its control and its privilege. (George 1988:263)

Furthermore:

Elites do not generally sponsor challenges to their privilege. It does not pay scholars or development officials to challenge the powerful. Such temerity results in decreased budgets, insecure tenures, a drying up of research funds. Few have accepted the risk. (George 1984:xiv)

As the role of debt is gradually becoming recognised as an insult to the lives of the Majority World populace and is being partially redressed, another global element is emerging that seeks the right to exploit the Majority World anew, through the use of patents.

A new colonial taskmaster - global capital and patent force

Hopkins and Wallerstein (1996:225) point to the five hundred year history of capital accumulation and the concomitant externalisation of enterprise costs that has resulted in considerable ecological degradation. Shiva (1997, 2000a, and 2000b) highlights the growing trend to commodify nature at the expense of subsistence
farmers in post-colonial countries. She uses two different metaphors to reflect the

different approaches represented in her position; of framing the biology of life as part

of an “earth family” on the one hand, and in contrast, the viewpoint of global capital

that depicts ecology as a “genetic mine” on the other. Her ecological paradigm is a

view:

... which views humans as one among many species – as part of an Earth Family in which

all members have intrinsic value and are linked to each other in webs of reciprocal life

support. It views all living organisms as complex, self-organized and constantly changing
dynamic systems. (Shiva 2000a:27)

This is then compared and contrasted with the “paradigm of the Genetic Mine.”

It views species, including human beings, merely as deposits of genes to be exploited by the

new tools of genetic engineering. This paradigm is based on genetic reductionism, which

reduces biology to genes and turns genes into commodities, ignoring the complexity of

internal and external interactions that shape living systems. The hype for the ‘genome map’
is an example of the Genetic Mine idea – maps are made for prospecting for minerals, and
the genome map is a guide to genetic mining. But, like maps of territory, genome maps do
not tell the full story about life or biodiversity. To refer to the ‘working draft’ of 3.1 billion
chemical letters of the human genome as the ‘Book of Life,’ or to say with Bill Clinton ‘Today
we are learning the language in which God created life’ is no longer science; it is a new
mythology for reorganizing the biological world into raw material for the biotechnology
industry. This reorganization also leads to the pirating of Third World resources and of
indigenous knowledge, which are considered to acquire ‘value’ only when ‘processed’ into
patentable commodities. It robs nature and cultures of their creativity. Diverse species and
diverse cultures and knowledge systems are therefore destroyed, and they are pushed into
extinction even as they are mined for the building of corporate empires. (Shiva 2000a:27)

Interestingly Shiva (1997:104-109) sees colonialism, development – a category
similar to what I have described as industrialisation and the “free market” – and
globalisation, as three faces of a common globalism. All are unified in a common
motivation of “the creation of property through the piracy of other’s wealth” (Shiva
1997:2), and she suggests that deception is central to the process. Rather than the
image created by the term “free trade,” she posits that “coercion and force” are the
true characteristics of “free trade.”

Among the exemplars of violence in the free trade era is the U.S. Trade Act, especially the
Super and Special 301 clauses that allow the United States to take unilateral action against
any country that does not open up its market to the U.S. corporations. (Shiva 1997:109)
Chapter 6: Reconstructing a genealogy of hunger – a history of justifying the necessity of unnecessary hunger

Shiva suggests that the freedom that transnational corporations claim via the Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) in the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) in regards to the Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS), is similar in nature to the “freedoms” that Columbus was provided in claiming the lands of other peoples. The rights developed in TRIPS were developed by the three major groups of transnational corporations based in the US, Europe, and Japan that have particular interests in seeds, chemicals, and agricultural bio-technology. The commercial interest of these groups has been to patent “life forms” and so claim “seeds and plants to be their ‘inventions’ and hence their property” (Shiva 2000a:16). An example is given in regard to Basamati rice. This rice variety has been grown for hundreds of years in India and Pakistan. However, a US company, RiceTec, has been granted a patent of a particular variety of Basamati rice. At some future time they may be able to use this patent to suggest that Indian and Pakistani farmers infringe upon it and so seek royalties from them (Shiva 2000a:86). Two other examples are provided in this push to capitalise on the control and commodification of life forms - that of controlling fertility and herbicide resistance through genetic engineering.

The perspective of our ecology as a “genetic resource to be mined” sees the generosity of natural reproduction as a “thief” of the profits of seed producers. In 1998 a patent for the “Control of Plant Gene Expression” was issued to the US Department of Agriculture and a transnational corporation. It allowed for the creation of “sterile seeds by selectively programming the plant’s DNA to kill its own embryos.” If the farmers save seed from plants that have this attribute, those seeds will not germinate. Dubbed “Terminator Technology” the possible risks of such an attribute passing across to non-intended plants could be catastrophic (Shiva 2000a:82-83).
However, although the terminator technology has not come to pass, given the partiality of science described earlier in this chapter, along with the history of exploitation of the majority world, it is hard to be too dismissive of Shiva’s approach. Genetic modification (GM), whereby genes are artificially inserted rather than acquired by a plant sexually (Butz and Wu 2004:4), is a technology largely used by private companies who are focused on agricultural development in the Minority World and so can be of limited use in the Majority World (Ibid:50; The Nuffield Council on Bioethics 2003:xiii). However, both the previous two references are cautiously optimistic that some benefits could be achieved using genetic modification, and this could include the development of micronutrient-enriched GM crops.

In addition to the problem of knowing how the costs of developing such crops would be offset, genetic engineering presents another challenge to Majority World farmers in the form of herbicide-resistant crops which, to date, has been perhaps the major focus of genetic engineering. Herbicide resistance does not lead to higher crop yields but does greatly encourage mono-cropping and, of course, increased use of herbicide. There are questions still not resolved in regard to what would happen if such resistance spread to the so-called weeds? Even the so-called Improved Yielding Varieties (IYVs) of the Green Revolution are claimed to be inappropriate for subsistence farmers. In fact even the name is considered inappropriate.

In a 15-nation study of the impact of the seeds (UN Research Institute for Social Development), D. Palmer concluded that the term ‘high-yielding varieties’ (HYVs) is a misnomer since it implies that the new seeds are high-yielding in themselves. Their distinguishing feature is, in fact, that they are highly responsive to certain key inputs such as fertilizers and irrigation. Palmer therefore suggested the term ‘high-responsive varieties,’ HRVs, in place of HYVs (quoted in Lappé and Collins, Food First, 1982). The gain in yield is insignificant compared to the increase in inputs. (Shiva 2000b:55-56)

Shiva describes how the measurement of plant output is also restricted to its “marketable part” and does not include other essential characteristics required by
the subsistence farmer. The dwarf varieties do increase the amount of grain produced, but this is at the expense of the straw that is a very important product for the subsistence farmer for feeding cattle and for enriching the soil with organic matter. The dung from the cattle grazed on straw is also used as a source of fuel and soil fertility. In addition subsistence farmers may grow legumes along with the principal crop, but these practices are not taken into account.

The trend in all of these developments is the creation of a marketable product and the discounting of farmer innovation. Farmers who, for thousands of years have been responsible for the genetic improvement of crops in relation to their local environment, are now replaced by “professional breeders,” and ecologically sensitive practices are discounted as they are replaced by “ecologically destructive methods” that enhance the marketability of other farm inputs (Shiva 2000b:54).

TWO THEMES EMERGING FROM MY GENELOGICAL ENGAGEMENT WITH UNNECESSARY HUNGER AND PARASITIC DEVELOPMENT

Two central themes emerge from my representation of a Western genealogy of unnecessary hunger. The first is a view of wealth creation as a usurpation of other’s rights. The second is in addressing this problem of unjustly created wealth, there is a need to proceed beyond seeking justice, to having the will to participate in creating a just society. It is to these two themes that I would like to briefly talk.

Wealth creation as “clever usurpation” transformed to “unalterable right”

The above title reflects Rousseau’s 18th century view of the origin of inequality which resonates with the contemporary position also held by Shiva (1997), Hayter (1981) Fanon (1963), and Tudge (2003b:385) - that “the rich minority create wealth through
the legalised robbery of the wealth of others.” We have seen how this “piracy,” or theft, is created under a profession of a public good which is later seen as a construction of those who privately benefit from it. Like all “piracy,” it is undertaken by force. In colonisation, mandates were provided by the Papal Bulls of the Church and the charters and patents of “Christian” kings to claim “non-Christian” territory. In industrialisation, mandates were created by minority governments and their laws. In globalisation, mandates are created by force of law fostered by minority-controlled organisations. Such mandates are triggered respectively by the refusal of missionaries, the gospel of the control of industrialisation, and the ownership of natural resources by capital, or the gospel of free trade as defined by the Minority World. Once these mandates are challenged, those that challenge them become exposed to the retribution of a powerful minority, who are convicted of their transcendent right to plunder their “unfortunate” fellows for personal gain.

The development that has occurred in the minority world through the three epochs of colonisation, industrialisation, and globalisation - can be seen to have been undertaken at the expense of the Majority World.

We cannot hope to formulate adequate development theory and policy for the majority of the world’s population who suffer from underdevelopment without first learning how their past economic and social history gave rise to their present underdevelopment. (Frank 1969:3)

Underdevelopment is not seen by Frank (1966) or Sansak (1996:18) as an original condition, but rather resulting from development undertaken elsewhere. The developed and underdeveloped parts of the present capitalist section of the world have been in continuous contact for four and a half centuries. The contention here is, that over the period Africa helped to develop Western Europe, Western Europe helped to underdevelop Africa (Rodney 1982:75). The profession of concern by the rich Minority World for the poor Majority World, seen in this light, suggests that the
Minority World replicates and maintains the very poverty they profess to alleviate in the Majority World. Within this view unnecessary hunger can be seen as a created condition, not an original one. This development is undertaken through the initiative of the First and Second Estates that represent the powerful elite. Initially consisting of State and Church, but now increasingly of State and experts, continuing along this trajectory can be considered to be retrograde for both the peasant and the environment. It was within this context that the call for a better world was seen best to occur at the hands of the Third Estate or the ordinary commoner or peasant. This was seen to be central to the term Third World (Sauvey 1952) and the romantic notion that a more just social order could be brought about through those who formally were colonised (Carmen 1996:26).

**Proceeding beyond injustice with a will-to-function**

Rodney (1982:xxi) brings out the importance of resisting the temptation to live as “permanent victims, angry accusers or fawning imitators of Europe.” What this suggests is the vital need for new forms of human organisation and struggle that starts with where people find themselves. The central point is to avoid mere rhetoric and real coercion. This viewpoint is aptly reflected in Mumford's (1947:419) concept of a “will-to-function” that does not stop at overcoming those who seek to subjugate us, but encourages the positive participation of all in developing a society that does not depend on subjugation. I find this similar to the position of Perry (1999:241) and his admonition for commitment that confirms personal conviction in a contextually relative world and so forgo despair, opportunism, or absolutism.
CONCLUSION

This genealogy has rejected history as the property of the victors, and through its reconstruction, via those who remain in dialogue with peasants, seeks to analyse the conditions and relationships that led to the emergence (Henriques et al. 1984:104) of unnecessary hunger. In so doing, hunger is no longer seen as an initial condition, but as a created one. A condition that I suggest was created by an unconscious change in epistemic learning by the elite who were able, over centuries, to reframe organic society as a market society. This allowed for the possibility and probability of individual starvation that could be used as “nature’s penalty” (Polanyi 1944:164-165) for those who refuse to accept the necessities relative to each epoch of colonisation, industrialisation, and globalisation. Under the necessity of theses transcendent realities that are the creation of the elite, it is the vocation of the people to “be obedient till the end of time” (Fanon 1963:168). Foucault’s notion of genealogy permits a reconstruction of the past to allow for a present in which we can participate in the making of our own truth. It allows us to escape the egoism of the elite in which our value is judged by our use to them (Higgins 1978:237). For me, an emerging truth from this process of learning from history, in addition to the need for the quest for social justice, is a commitment to reframing “market society” as “organic society,” and reframing “expat-centric development” as “collaborative development” with peasants, who are seen as development practitioners in their own right. These are epistemic challenges and it is towards a science that permits participation and eventual transformation that I now turn to in the next chapter.
CHAPTER 7

FINDING THEORETICAL SUPPORT FOR SELF-MAKING

“I had always figured when I was a sales guy and sales manager working at IBM that some of the decisions that I saw coming down I thought were stupid and I always figured it was because I didn't see the big picture," he says. "So when I went to work in Paris and I did see the big picture I realised that there wasn't one and it just shattered my world.”

Jim Hassell after leaving IBM’s European head office in Paris to become the new MD of Sun Microsystems Australia
Boyd (2001:43)

INTRODUCTION

If there is one emerging theme that I would like to progress in the writing of this thesis, it is the epistemic learning evident when changing paradigms of development. In this epistemic learning, I portray myself moving from a paradigm of “mechanistic relationship” toward an emerging paradigm of systemic participation. In the former, the self is directed by the reality of another, assisted empirically through the media of power and/or money. In the latter, the participators take on a Foucauldian (Cooper 2002, Foucault 1982, Valero-Silva 1994) quest of exercising their own power in creating truth. Habermas’s (Brand 1990, Habermas 1984 and 1987) theory of communicative action sees this as being made possible through communicative action. In communicative action meaning is understood through shared understanding, an approach that brings the specialist and their utilitarian approach of bureaucracy into question. Within communicative action, the demise of unnecessary peasant hunger can only be achieved through systemic participation.
The *mechanistic paradigm* arises through the process of objectification, which results in alienation and dehumanisation as the facts come to dominate the subject.

In this mechanist relationship, man becomes the slave of the master who is information, or, rather, the slave of the observer-of-the-subject, because the ‘world’ of the inquirer is a creation of an observer-of-the-subject. […] Here is true alienation of the self and fact; the self is the slave of the master fact created by ‘another’ observer. (Churchman 1971:160-161)

Feyerabend and Terpstra (2000) point to how this abstractive process dehumanises us, and results in us losing sight of the perennial problems that confront humanity such as hunger, violence, and environmental degradation. Our lives are emptied because our experiences must be guided by the “facts” as determined by another, more objective, observer. Polkinghorne (2004:3) highlights this dilemma in his portrayal of the controversy arising from the debate about whether a practitioner’s actions should be technically-based or judgement-based. In the former, it is “the program or technique that produces change, not the caregiver.” While in the later, the practitioner is seen as the central “factor that produces change.” But the more I have moved from the view of hunger as being a problem of the lack of food, to the view that the problem of hunger arises from our own socio-political constructions (Tudge 2003a), the more I see change coming through the hands of the hungry themselves. They need to be supported in this by those who have sufficient empathy with their cause. This empathy is seen to include a realisation of our own lost sense of humanity that needs to be rectified. This kind of motivation is evoked by the words of an Australian aboriginal woman quoted by Korten (1992).

If you have come to help me you can go home again. But if you see my struggle as part of your own survival, then perhaps we can work together.

I move beyond Polkinghorne in embracing the centrality of the peasant-and-I as *collaborative practitioners*, in bringing change individually and together. As such the role of taking executive decisions, no matter whether they are technical or judgement-based, becomes superfluous, as I reject the transcendent truth claims
Chapter 7: Finding theoretical support for self-making

eemanating from a foundational epistemology (Salner 1986:228). In its place I assume the Foucauldian necessity to make my own truths in a process of working on myself and responding to the unique situation that I find myself in (Valero-Silva 1994). I reject the authoritarianism of the “fact” and the “expert” as I subjectify their reality, which I come to see as another opinion; an opinion that knows so little of me, my experience, and my situation. I am then faced with the initially daunting task of creating my own constituent ontology. It is initially daunting because for so long I have depended upon others for this task, but now I must muddle through this process myself.

I had learnt to muddle through with peasants in trying to improve the situation that confronted us, and to critically analyse my role in such a situation. This was helped by the failure of expat-centric development and reframing my role from expert to development collaborator with peasant. Now I was doing something similar in my research. Throughout my research I have felt an ongoing sense of the failure of discipline based mechanistic science and ideologically based economics. Both offer “easy alternatives to moral responsibility” (Busch 2000:2). Busch (2000) suggests that we ignore the self-serving claims of “scientism, statism, and marketism” to be guardians of our development through their superior wisdom. He uses the words of essayist Wendell Berry to illustrate how partial and selective they are.

The specialist puts himself in charge of one possibility. By leaving out all other possibilities, he enfranchises his little fiction of control. Leaving out all the ‘non-functional’ or otherwise undesirable possibilities, he makes a rigid, exclusive boundary within which absolute control becomes, if not possible, at least conceivable. (Wendell Berry quoted in Busch 2000:149)

Re-enfranchising ourselves comes through the realisation that outside of their specialism, the specialist is but a layperson. It is thus in the contextualisation of specialism that the instrumentalist position gives way to “networks of democracy” that can achieve “socially desirable ends” (Busch 2000:187).
What resulted from my giving up of mechanistic and discipline based science, and of clinging to systems theory, were forays into four domains that will form the basis for the rest of this chapter. The first is a very brief illustration of different perspectives on the power, control, and purpose of science and technology. This has a similar objective to the previous chapter. Secondly, Uphoff (1992) provides an explanation for peasant altruism and its implications for sociology. The third explanation is provided by Maturana and Varela (1992) in regard to the self-making origins of life and a constitutive ontology that arises from it. It was this explanation that led me to abandon my project of finding the onto-epistemology through which I could direct and correct others. Lastly, through the explanation of Habermas’s philosophy (Habermas 1984, 1987 and 1988; Brand 1990), I was able to gain a better understanding of what it meant to be critical. These four explanations allowed my research to accept the possibility of organic society regaining control of bureaucracy; or in my particular research context, of the peasant gaining control of bureaucratic development, ideas that I expand upon in Chapters 8 and 9.

**DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY IN RELATION TO DEVELOPMENT**

In *The fragility of goodness*… Nussbaum (1986) draws from the Greek notion of luck, or *tuche*, in regard to the fragile relationship the fifth century BC Athenians had with nature. Nature, rather than humans, seemed to be in control, as they found themselves responding to catastrophic natural events such as droughts, sickness, and storms. If humans benefited from nature it was seen to be “a matter of luck (*tuche)*” (Polkinghorne 2004:10).

But through *techne* humanity no longer had to be “entirely at the mercy of nature.” *Techne* was the Greek term attributed to human skills and knowledge to hunt for
food, construct housing, clothe, and provide transport; a generic attribute that provided human respite from the fickleness of nature. Through *techne*:

...human existence became safer, more predictable; there was a measure of control over contingency. (Nussbaum 2001:155)

The development of these technical skills has provided a sense of mastery that Torbert (1991:59 & 71) would suggest has gone too far. In his view, in losing a sense of vulnerability, humanity can lose its sense of awareness of the present. And that present, for the peasant, appears to be increasingly hostile as they lose out on the benefits of technology. Science, rather than helping all humanity, appears to be specifically at the behest of power and profit. Suzuki (1987:25) says that more than half of the scientists in the world work “directly for the military” and the majority of the remainder work for private industry. Meanwhile important problems and areas of interest for the Majority World, such as malaria or self-sufficient dry land agriculture, are overlooked. I have come to see, along with Albury and Schwartz (1982:179) that science is not “morally neutral” and that scientists are not completely objective. As Busch (1984:309) has noted, science is partial, and in my view this partiality has worked against the peasant.

In the rest of this section I would like to draw from science and technology studies, using the example of the Davey safety lamp to show how science works for the rich, and to use the example of the Green Revolution, to show how it works against the peasant. These are themes that also resonate with the genealogy of unnecessary hunger in Chapter 6. These two examples from science and technology highlight differences in outcomes from the developments of science and technology, and the development of human character and human society that we construct as progress (Mumford 1947:184). To ignore such difference is to ignore the human degradation associated with much technical progress:
It was, however, generally agreed among eighteenth century thinkers that pauperism and progress were inseparable. The greatest number of poor is not to be found in barren countries or amidst barbarous nations, but in those which are the most fertile and the most civilized, wrote John M’Farlane, in 1782. (Polanyi 1944:Chapter 9)

The Davey safety lamp

In spite of the human degradation associated with technical progress noted in Polanyi (1944), the myth remained that science and technology “stood above social conflict and social divisions,” and acted “for humanity as a whole” (Albury and Schwartz 1982:2). These authors go on to suggest that our current view of scientific research as being a “disinterested search for truth” that is morally neutral, is woefully out-of-date. Using the development of the Davey safety lamp as an example, they show that what is good for capital is not necessarily good for everyone else.

The problem leading to the invention of the Davey safety lamp was that coal mines provided an environment for the release of odourless and colourless methane gas. This gas, without warning, would be ignited by the miner’s candles used to illuminate the underground mines. It took considerable loss of life before the coal industry was prodded to do something about it. Of particular note was the worst mine explosion in 20 years that killed 92 men and boys on 25th May 1812 in Durham, England. This was not helped when another explosion occurred at the same mine on 15th December 1813, not long after a “prominent citizens” committee was formed (called the Sunderland Committee) to investigate the first explosion. It was this committee that called upon several people, including Davey, to assist with the problem. Davey had been briefed by the mine inspector, whose advice he appeared to take at face value that:

... ‘as far as ventilation was concerned, the resources of modern science had been fully employed; and that a mode of preventing accidents was only to be sought for in a method of lighting the mines free from danger.’ (Albury and Schwartz 1982:19)
On the first day of 1816 Davey tested his first safety lamp at the Hebburn Colliery and it proved successful. By surrounding the candle with wire gauze, the incoming methane gas that has a high ignition temperature was cooled sufficiently before reaching the flame, so avoiding an explosion. Davy was duly rewarded by colliery owners at a presentation on 11\textsuperscript{th} October 1817, where he was presented with a silver plate valued at 50 times the annual miner’s wage.

The safety lamp problematised

Albury and Schwartz (1982) problematise this rather straight-forward history with the entwining of the problem, participants, and process. The problem was defined by the mine owners as one of how to extract coal from “crept-workings” that exhibited high methane levels. Crept-workings were previously mined sites where the mine walls, like the supports of a multi-level car park, buckled under pressure. The resulting work environment was made dangerous by methane gas that could explode, carbon monoxide that could poison, and carbon dioxide that could suffocate (also called choke damp). From the miner’s perspective they wanted safe working conditions, and so their emphasis had been on mine ventilation. Ventilation had the advantage of disbursing the methane gas, and the other gases, that poisoned and choked the workers. In some cases, the effect of carbon monoxide and carbon dioxide were more deadly than the explosion itself. Yet this was seen by mine owners as an option that was too expensive. By not including the miners in defining and resolving the problem, the mine owners were able to maintain the direction of the research according to their own wants and needs, above the needs of those whom the research most closely affected - if you count miner’s lives above mine owner’s profit.
The defining of the problem solely from the perspective of the mine owners resulted, ironically, in an increase in miner’s deaths in the eighteen years following the introduction of the Davey safety lamp (Albury and Schwartz 1982:14). This occurred because the Davey safety lamp enabled the mine owners to send the miners to work in what was previously considered too dangerous conditions.

Albury and Schwartz (1982) also note how George Stephenson (later to become famous as a locomotive designer) had actually tested his own safety lamp on 27th October, 1815 more than two months earlier than Davey. Coming from humble origins however, it seemed the colliery owners were more interested in dealing with one of their own class like Davey.

Interestingly, on 18th March 1979 an explosion in the Goldborne Colliery in Britain caused 10 deaths. The resulting UK Health and Safety Executive report noted the cause of the explosion to be “a spark produced by the work of an apprentice electrician” (Albury and Schwartz 1982:24). This drew attention to the behaviour of the worker, rather than to the behaviour of the company in allowing such a dangerous working environment that lacked both ventilation and methane detection equipment. Activists called for a public enquiry that was “open to everyone, not just experts to give evidence.” They had observed how experts appear to typically work on management problems that are often dismissive of workers needs and circumstances.

This example demonstrates how science and technology is influenced largely by those who sponsor it, and the “class” of people from which the scientists come. In this particular case it was driven by “capital,” with the scientist being provided and accepting the terms of reference given by “capital” and the industrial ruling class.
My hope, along with many others, is that through greater participation, science and technology can benefit all, and not just one particular group of society.

Green revolution for the minority

When I read the following in Conway (1997:12):

In this book I set out an approach and an agenda aimed at satisfying the aspirations of the poor by bringing the power of modern technology to bear on the problem of providing food security for all in the twenty-first century.

…it was hard not to associate such a grand agenda with the representations of the mine owners and Davey in regard to the safety lamp. Interestingly Conway’s “doubly green” revolution that would increase production and improve the environment contained little critique of the first green revolution, in spite of a good number of authors who have done so, for example: Collingridge (1981), Dahlberg (1979), George (1977), Griffin (1979), Lloyd and Morrissey (1994), Nair (1979), Niazi (2004), Pearse (1980), Reijntjes et al. (1992), and Shiva (1992).

It is not my purpose to complete an exhaustive analysis of the Green Revolution. Rather, I note with concern, that at a time when agricultural production in the Minority World is becoming problematic (Vanclay and Lawrence 1995) the same model is being used for the Majority World. In addition, along with Shiva (2000b), I note the continuing exclusion of the perspective and understanding of the peasant. In assessing agricultural innovations of Niger farmers McCorkle (1994:32) draws from field notes that reflect this perspective. She notes that the perception Niger farmers had of their extension service:

“Everything the service brings us needs to be grown in fertilizer. But who can afford this? It costs more than 3000 FCFA a sack. The extension service is not 'honest' because it refuses to work with the realities of our village.”
Pretty and Hine (2001) address some of the above issues in their report - *Reducing food poverty with sustainable agriculture: a summary of new evidence*. There is a great need to begin to look more closely at the degree of self-sufficiency which peasants have already achieved, and to which the Minority World should consider more closely in order to address the problems of Western agricultural production. This preliminary move toward the reality of the peasant requires more than just including their technology, but including them. This now takes me to the work of Uphoff (1992) who critiques sociology on the basis of his experiences of the realities of Sri Lankan farmers.

**THE CENTRALITY OF PEASANT EXPERIENCE - CHALLENGING SOCIOLOGY**

Science has been shown above to have excluded the perspective and understanding of those who lack power and money, something that became apparent as relevant to my development experience as well. One science theory I found that could help explain my experiences was that of Uphoff (1992).

**A changing sociological framework**

The traditional sociological framework that Uphoff had used was one where self-interest held a hegemonic position. Uphoff sees this position as focussing on “external structural influences on behaviour.” Uphoff, however, came to experience charitable behaviour between the Singhalese and Tamil farmers in his work in Sri Lanka, something he never planned for or expected, and something that his sociology could not explain. These charitable acts were reflected in farmer’s comments, such as:

There are no Sinhalese farmers and no Tamil farmers – only farmers. (Uphoff 1992:101)
Chapter 7: Finding theoretical support for self-making

Within this mind-set the farmers begin to critique the position of the behaviour of decision makers, such as politicians.

Politicians should do things not just for individuals or groups but for the community as a whole... If a politician has helped the community, he need not ask for our vote. He will get it. (Uphoff 1992:100)

In trying to find an answer to explain these charitable acts and the farmer’s greater socio-political awareness, Uphoff drew on support from “New Physics,” particularly as is described by Zukav (1979).

A changed frame of mind

A frame of mind appears to be a more appropriate description for Uphoff’s learning approach to development than the methodological blueprint of most projects.

We did not have a blueprint to implement but rather an approach that would be modified as we learned more about the situation and our task. (Uphoff 1992:77)

This approach is more flexible, acknowledging both peasants as autonomous beings and the fluidity of events, two things not recognised in “blueprint” projects. In reading Uphoff, the principals of this frame of mind emerged through changed notions on; what was effective, the source of motivation, the role of the expatriate, and the handling of setbacks, power, and critique.

Effectiveness

For Uphoff, the issue of effectiveness was one of the most important notions that changed for him, particularly his move toward adopting and using the farmer’s perspective, a process that he described as “bottom-up.” In so doing he goes further than analysis and explanation, seeking also to improve the human condition.

The aim of social science is seen here as opening up possibilities for improving the human condition, not simply explaining it... (Uphoff 1992:24)
Effectiveness in assisting farmers is seen as essential, even more important than efficiency in project delivery - “A program cannot be efficient without first being effective” (Uphoff 1992:168). Thus project effectiveness is obtained through an approach that links structure and process.

Groups of ten farmers worked with Irrigation Officers (IOs) whose initial task was to: get to know farmers and their problems, develop a sense of unity through concrete actions like group irrigation channel clearing, work out water rations, do what they could to resolve farmer’s problems, and if necessary seek outside assistance from farmer representatives and government departments. The work of the project thereby became primarily the assistance of farmers to coordinate themselves around everyday issues, and to seek the necessary support to improve their own situation. This approach sounded similar to my understanding of successful development from my work in the Solomon Islands and Mozambique.

Five other factors that Uphoff saw as increasing the effectiveness of his work include: a) the balance between incentives and performance, b) the balance between collective-interest and self-interest, c) prioritising the direction of effort, d) a learning approach, and e) friendship. A combination of these allowed for the development of social energy and idealism - what today would be called “social capital” (Putnam 1995) - that offsets the entropy of self-interest alone.

Farmer’s ideas such as, “water has no colour,” expressed their view of the need to keep politics out of the water allocation processes, and also gave legitimacy to helping the disadvantaged. The most active people were observed to be the most idealistic. Friendship was seen to be the most important factor that led “people to
mutually value each other’s welfare.” Yet these were factors overlooked in the traditional sociological approach (Uphoff 1992).

Motivation - internally rather than externally generated

The effectiveness of the project was reflected also in the kind of motivation that was harnessed. Rather than being outwardly directed, the farmers showed an ability to direct themselves and handle crises. Rather than depending upon project rules and government regulation, they came to sort through their problems normatively through their own values and perspectives. In so doing, tremendous group energy was generated within farmer groups. This made it possible to negate outside forces that had previously exploited them when they had acted individually (Uphoff 1992:373). They did not just want to share these ideas with international visitors, but they also wanted to visit other irrigation schemes themselves, to gain new ideas (Ibid:252).

The role of the outsider

In the Solomon Islands I was portrayed by locals as an “outsider.” Uphoff also is cast in this light by those wishing to disparage his role with the people he was working with.

One of the women IOs says our farmer organisations have been criticized by some opposition party members for being involved with outsiders. Someone said that our program is just intended to help foreigners write dissertations and will end when the research is finished. (Such knowledge of the outside world, even if quite incorrect, is remarkable?). [bracketed comments in the original] (Uphoff 1992:151)

Uphoff struggles to come to grips with this view, but as a reader I sense very much he is an outsider, particularly in his lack of understanding of local situations. This is reflected in the following two quotes.

I tell them I hope to see a variety of activities when I visit them next time. Tall Punchibald says with a laugh, ‘Maybe you won’t see us after six months,’ referring to the threat of terrorists, very much on their minds. (Uphoff 1992:248)
Chapter 7: Finding theoretical support for self-making

One IO says they have been working under very difficult conditions. I tell him I understand this, but he says I don’t know the full story. (Uphoff 1992:255)

Expatriates never know the full story, and that is why they need to depend more on local experience and understanding. What I find remarkable in Uphoff’s case, is unlike many expatriates, he exposes his ambiguous circumstances with locals, for others to see. He makes an effort to become aware of the self-imposed limitations of his own sociology and do something about improving it.

Uphoff saw his role as: a) *taking initiative* and encouraging others to do the same, b) keeping the *spirit of mutual trust* alive, and c) illuminating some *structural relationships* between incentives and performance (Uphoff 1992:50-56).

Setbacks and critique

Like my experiences in the Solomon Islands and Mozambique, Uphoff (1992:168) found *adversity* an “unwitting ally.” It brought forth effort, invention, and idealism that nobody knew was there. Farmers found that by coming together and sharing their problems, as a group, and discussing them in public forums, they could make it difficult for those who took unfair personal advantage of public resources. Such a view is explicit in a farmer’s observation of these people:

They may be selfish in private, but it is hard to be selfish in public. (Uphoff 1992:85)

Uphoff found the limiting notions of either-or assumptions, which he became aware of through Zukav (1979), useful in assessing the degree to which his actions were self-limited to zero-sum outcomes. His project experiences were also able to provide him with a critique of both sociology and himself. This gave him a basis for arguing against the conflation of intellectual analysis with the complex reality of the farmers.
Chapter 7: Finding theoretical support for self-making

We need not abandon or derogate all our present theories and concepts. That would be either-or thinking. Rather, we should dethrone those methodologies and assumptions that restrict positive-sum outcomes in the name of rigor, by equating the closed systems we create analytically through our minds with the multiple open and overlapping systems that exist all around us. (Uphoff 1992:410)

Discussion

Uphoff provided me with an example of using the experiences and understanding of farmer’s realities as the basis for intellectual investigation. The ability to embrace farmer experience in a “both-and” process, along with the concepts of sociology, saw the opportunity for beneficial change in the face of adversity. For Uphoff this changed the focus of his work from one primarily of gaining project efficiencies, to one where project efficiencies were seen to arise through project effectiveness in improving farmer’s lived experience. Through engaging farmer experience, the entropy of focusing on farmer self-interest alone was seen to be surmountable. Within this change in view, farmer motivation was seen to arise internally, and the role of friendship was central to facilitating engagement with and between farmers.

However, I found it difficult to explain the ethics whereby Uphoff highlighted the political activism and risk-taking of farmers in improving their position, while he remains largely within the domain of sociological analysis and does not appear to display the same attributes within his own domain. Yet there appears to be ample opportunity for taking a more activist approach in the face of some alarming problems within the project that he documents, such as: 90% of rehabilitated infrastructure was substandard, project staff turnover was 95% with six different project supervisors over three years, and the project did not have a permanent local institutional home.

I acknowledge Uphoff’s focus was particularly in sociological analysis. But in my view this resulted in his “side-stepping” of important philosophical and moral
dilemmas. Such dilemmas include the degree to which “expert” outsiders should ignore, or become actively engaged in local issues, as they impact on their domain of international development. As a result, while I see Uphoff making a very important contribution to building a platform for farmer participation within projects, and using farmer experience to challenge contemporary sociology, I think that he overlooks the more radical implications of how the structure of a project could change when farmer participation is included in its very design and implementation.

Importantly Uphoff’s (1992) work introduced me to the work of Zukav (1979) and the paradigm of quantum physics. It was this new paradigm that attracted me to the work of Maturana who within the domain of biology, seeks to explicate an onto-epistemology of self-making.

A BIOLOGICAL EXPLANATION OF DEVELOPMENT AS “SELF-MAKING”

Introduction

I initially found the ideas of Maturana and Varela (1992) circular and intense, arising from the nature of their project in which we are:

…using the instrument of analysis to analyze the instrument of analysis. It is like asking the eye to see itself. (Maturana and Varela 1992:24)

That is, we are asking ourselves to explain ourselves, or provide an explanation of the origin of life from within the process of living. Zukav (1979) also echo’s this point.

We are a part of nature, and when we study nature there is no way around the fact that nature is studying itself. (Zukav 1979:55-56)

But I persisted in spite of this intense circularity for three reasons. Firstly, Maturana and Varela’s (1992) ideas resonated with the onto-epistemology I had begun to
explore within quantum physics. Secondly, like Uphoff (1992), Maturana (1994) had a commitment to experiencing and seeking explanations for experience, rather than trying to fashion experience in order for it to conform to the explanation, or ignore experiences that are not covered by the explanation. Thirdly, I felt my project was in some ways parallel to Maturana and Varela’s, in that I was trying to explain development from within the process of developing.

I was also encouraged by the range of other people’s interest in Maturana and Varela’s ideas, and the implications these ideas had for such a wide range of interests. Fell (1994) used Maturana and Varela’s work to inform his interest in the study of pain in animals. Geyer (1992), Fleischaker (1992), and Kay (1999) applied the concept of autopoiesis to social systems and organisations. Other applications are exampled in agricultural education (Röling 1995), social ecology (Murray 1994, Russell 1987), family therapy (Simon 1985) and in a philosophy of critical realism (Mingers 1989, 1990, and 1992).

Of particular interest to me were the different onto-epistemologies that Maturana (1994) sought to explain, and the description of the process of living that arises from this. It is towards these two interests that I would now like to turn.

**An explanation of two different onto-epistemologies**

Maturana (1994) distinguished between two different forms of explanation founded within two different onto-epistemologies. He referred to them as “objectivity” and “(objectivity).” Fell and Russell (1994a) provide an explanation of Maturana’s categories of reality referring to “objectivity” as “**objective** reality” and “(objectivity)” as “**personal** reality.” Both explanations reflect the difference in the relationship between the observer and her/his environment occurring within their respective
Chapter 7: Finding theoretical support for self-making

onto-epistemology. These differences are distinguished by Maturana (1994) as being centred on our response to the question, “How do we explain as observers?”

How do we explain as observers?

According to Maturana (1994), if we don’t accept this question, then we can be seen to accept our environment as independent of what we (the observer) do and are. This implies we can be objective, and therefore “reality” exists outside of us. Maturana suggests this is the domain in which we carry out most of our living. However, if we accept this question and hence our observer status, whereby the reality that is observed is affected by the observer - then how can we explain this situation?

Before endeavoured to answer this question I would like to briefly characterise the different ontologies arising from the two different responses. I would like to draw again from Fell and Russell (1994a) who describe the ontology arising from not accepting our observer status as a “transcendental ontology,” whereas a “constitutive ontology” is seen to arise from accepting our observer status. Within a transcendental ontology there is only a singular and universal reality which results in the loss of freedom to imply other conclusions. Truth, knowledge, and reality - the products of a transcendent ontology - no matter whether they arise within the domain of science or religion, deny reflection (Maturana 1994). They also imply the person making these claims has a privileged access to reality, to observe objectively, and implicit within the reality of the claims made, is that the hearer will act in compliance with this reality. If the hearer does not, then they may find themselves being labelled blind or resistant. This kind of ontology, I see as having many similarities with that of classical physics described in Chapter 1 (refer to
Tables 1-3) and objectivist research described from an autoethnographic viewpoint in Chapter 2 (refer to Table 4).

However, a constitutive ontology that arises from the _forgoing of an outside reality_ is seen by Maturana (1994) to result from _coherence with experience_, or by Fell and Russell (1994a) as something brought forth in the process of living. Equally a constitutive onto-epistemology has similarities with the characteristics of quantum physics and autoethnographic narrative, also presented in the tables previously mentioned. An example of the functioning of a constitutive onto-epistemology was provided by Maturana (1994) in an experiment whereby a frog’s eye was rotated 180 degrees. Thereafter, upon seeing a fly, the frog shot out its tongue with a deviation of 180 degrees from the fly. Further, the frog could not correct its aim, and the concept of “correction” was seen to be a misleading question - as informationally, living systems were seen to be closed systems. That is, an outside reality could not be seen to determine the actions of a living organism as one would expect within a transcendental ontology, rather it was the structure of the organism that determined its response - reality was self-constituted.

**Explaining the process of living from within a constitutive ontology**

My experience in coming to understand the concept of a constitutive ontology did not occur immediately, rather it grew over a period of several years. What was immediate, however, was my sense of shock in the loss of my dependence on a transcendent onto-epistemology. But my understanding of what it meant to live within a constitutive ontology did not come through just reading the words, or listening to people speak about the subject. I also experienced a sense of confusion, as I felt in some ways I already knew what I was reading - as it resonated with my overseas experiences that I now picture as a process of epistemic learning -
and in other ways I felt hopelessly lost and unable to make my implicit actions overseas, explicit in my thinking and explanations.

The shock of losing transcendent onto-epistemology

The following example drawn from my participation in Maturana’s (1994) three-day seminar, supports Salner’s (1986) observation that epistemic learning requires the learner to experience their own expistemic dilemmas. During the first half of the seminar Maturana stated that the seminar participants were of no more value than a fly on the wall! This sent my mind spinning as it went completely against my conservative religious heritage. For the rest of the day and night my mind was in complete turmoil as such a claim, I thought, contradicted the focus of my whole career in wanting to help the unnecessarily hungry. If Maturana’s statement was true then my career had all been a great mistake! It was extremely painful to have to even consider this. This confusion was largely resolved during the remainder of the conference, through the realisation that Maturana’s communication was a constitutive validity claim, made within the domain of biology, which I mistook for a transcendent fact of reality. Fell and Russell (1994a:32) refer to this as a “category error” and in Chapter 5 I discuss a similar notion, that of “paradigmatic entrapment.”

For the next several years part of my research became an investigation into cosmology, in the process of trying to come to grips with the loss of my sense of security that I had previously experienced within a transcendent ontology. I had been humiliated by dominant expatriates in my overseas experiences, and part of the motivation of my research was founded in my desire to find the onto-epistemology by which I could correct them. The sense of loss I experienced in the giving up of a transcendent ontology was painful and drawn out. It left me with the
problem of wondering how I could know what was right and what was wrong? In
time I came to the realisation that Amezah (1998) also arrived at in his thesis:

There are no answers ... every answer is the basis for more questions.

Without wanting to dwell too long on this subject, I would like to briefly provide an
example from my experience in relation to my search for a foundational cosmology.
The two cosmologies that I drew from, which inform Western civilisation’s response
to questions on the origin of life, were centred on the notions of God and the Big
Bang. I came to see that these notions did not provide answers to the question of
the origin of life, as an explanation of the origin of the answer is not provided! That
is, neither the origin of God, nor the origin of the forces or materials involved in the
Big Bang, are explained. The challenge arising for me in the loss of transcendent
reality was that I was left to choose for myself. I had to become responsible both for
my choices and my actions, as I no longer had recourse to a transcendent reality -
which upon reflection was of my and my society’s making. Drawing from Perry
(1999) I see this also as following a path of commitment towards the participation of
self with its experiences and choices, and avoiding the temptation to retreat or
escape from this. Fell and Russell (1994b) highlight the retreat from commitment
reflected in the pursuit of objectivity.

…objectivity is a subject's delusion that observing can be done without him. Invoking
objectivity is abrogating responsibility; hence its popularity. (Heinz von Foerster quoted in
Fell and Russell 1994b:16)

An explanation of the emergence of autopoiesis “self-making” within a
constituent onto-epistemology

With the loss of transcendent onto-epistemology I gained the freedom to “make”
myself. I was assisted in this process through the explanations of Maturana and
Varela (1992), Maturana (1994) and Fell et al. (Eds) (1994). The central idea within
my understanding of a constituent onto-epistemology was that of autopoiesis,
literally meaning self-making. This idea of self-making is central to Maturana and Varela’s (1992) explanation of biological life within a constitutive onto-epistemology. Autopoiesis becomes central, as the transcendent onto-epistemology and the deterministic role played out in a process of cause and effect, becomes redundant as an explanation of biological life. This change is constituted within the nature of living things to be autonomous and structurally determined, such that instructive interactions characteristic within a transcendent onto-epistemology no longer provide a suitable explanation.

Self-making is seen to arise as a result of the interaction of an organism and its environment that may also include other organisms. The relationship between the organism and its environment, within a constitutive onto-epistemology, has already been alluded to above: in specifying that the autonomous and self-making nature of an organism precludes the ability of the environment to instructionally achieve specific responses in an organism. Instead the environment is seen to “trigger,” or “perturb” the organism, with the response ensuing, emanating from within the organism, as it seeks to maintain the relationships within its structure to ensure the stability of its class.

In seeking to explain this self-making process Fell and Russell (1994a) focus on two main concepts within Maturana and Varela’s ideas: a) organisation and structure, and their relationship of “complementarity,” and b) operational closure. Structure is a conventional notion that refers to the parts, components, or physical properties of which an organism is seen to be constituted. However, the concept of organisation emerges from a systems perspective that suggests an organism is more than simply the sum of its parts. This systemic identity results from the relationships (Ison 2005:280) exhibited between the parts and between it and it’s environment.
Organisation and structure are seen to be both “mutually dependent” and “distinctly different” - concepts inherent within the notion of complementarity. The distinctness and dependence arising between organisation and structure within an organism is exemplified in the contrasting view arising between the cybernetic perspective construed from an organism’s structure, and the operational closure that Maturana and Varela (1992) observe of an organism’s nervous system. Operational closure is a system’s notion that does not permit instructional inputs from the outside (Varela 1979). Rather, the identity of an organisation that exhibits operational closure is:

…specified by a network of dynamic processes whose effects do not leave that network. (Maturana and Varela 1992:89)

The function of an operationally closed system is not directed by instructive stimuli. Instead, the changing environment of the organism is seen as providing perturbations, with the organism self-determining its own actions through correlating “changes in relations of activity between its components” (Maturana and Varela 1992:164). Varela (1979) explains it a little differently by suggesting that the cognition arising from the nervous system imposes itself on the environment - “not picked up from it.” Skolimowski (1994:139) supports this position when he says “epistemological order is superimposed on the ontological order.” These ideas support both autonomy and self-making within an organism, which occurs such that the relationship between the structures is maintained, ensuring that its organisation remains within the same class; for example, the organism maintains the characteristics of a cow. It is precisely this notion that Fell (1994) takes note of in his study of stress in feedlot cattle. In his study he moves from the notion of stress being objectively determined, to a notion of cattle stress being observed through a reduction in the range of functions that an animal of a particular class can undertake. That is, stress arises from within an organism in an environment that does not permit, or reduces its ability to participate in, the process of self-making!
Chapter 7: Finding theoretical support for self-making

An explanation of the interaction of the autopoietic self with its environment

So far the explanation has mainly focussed on what is happening inside an autonomous self. Now I would like to focus more on the interactions between this autopoietic self and its environment, which includes other autopoietic beings. We have already seen that the significance of organisation, of the relationship between structures and the informationally closed nervous systems, does not permit the concept of information transfer from environment to organism. That is, we have eschewed the idea of representationalism and from this we may expect that the compliment of representationalism, that is solipsism, exists. Maturana and Varela (1992), however, point out that due to the operational closure of the nervous system; its operations are “neither representational nor solipsistic.”

It is not solipsistic, because as parts of the nervous system’s organism, it participates in the interactions of the nervous system in its environment. …Nor is it representational, for in each interaction it is the nervous system’s structural state that specifies what perturbations are possible and what changes trigger them. (Maturana and Varela 1992:169)

In other words, while the environment cannot provide instructive stimuli to an organism, the organism, in subordinating “all changes in the environment to the maintenance of its organisation” (Fell and Russell 1994a:33) must none-the-less develop in congruence with its environment if it is to survive, that is succeed in maintaining it’s organisation. This relationship between an autopoietic organism and its environment that does not permit “information transfer” is called structural coupling.

We speak of structural coupling whenever there is a history of recurrent interactions leading to the structural congruence between two (or more) systems. (Maturana and Varela 1992:75)

From this recurrent interaction in which structural congruence continues, and the organism and its environment change together, the becoming of a living system arises (ontogeny). This is referred to by Maturana (1994) as a process of ontogenic structural drift, a simple example being provided in the relationship between a foot
and a shoe, whereby both change together until either of the respective structures experiences a loss of unity.

In the case of human-to-human relationships this notion is referred to as social coupling. A coupling between the social structures of individuals where information is “formed within” (Varela 1979). Within this onto-epistemology, self-respect of our self-making selves is concomitant with a similar respect for others. It is within this biological ethic that love is seen to emerge, where another arises as a legitimate other, in coexistence with oneself (Maturana and Varela 1992:247, 1994). Love is seen by Maturana as expanding intelligence and consensuality, and permitting conversation, in which meaning is not located within the gesture of languaging but in the flow of interactions.

Discussion

I found the ideas of the biology of Maturana and Varela engaging as they resonated with my interest in understanding a constitutive onto-epistemology. This in turn resonated with the onto-epistemologies arising from quantum physics and autoethnography. During my engagement with the concepts of a constitutive onto-epistemology and the concept of self-making or autopoiesis that arises within it, I experienced first-hand the loss of my dependence upon a transcendent ontology. This experience was not unlike the loss I experience when first going to the Solomon Islands where I decided I needed to lose my “expert” status. The adventure arising from this loss of expert status was one of creating the successful practice of development from within the perspective of “expert with peasant.” The creative adventuring, within the loss of a transcendent onto-epistemology that instructively guided my actions and thoughts, resulted in an emerging concept of self-making occurring within a constitutive onto-epistemology.
I found the notions of a constitutive onto-epistemology provided succour and understanding of my overseas practice of systemic participation. As with my interaction with the work of Uphoff in the previous section, I found that experience was again central. But the work of Maturana and Varela made the actor, and the ethics that arises from others as equally competent actors, also important. I felt I was beginning to be able to explain development from within the process of developing. Of explaining development as a process whereby all participators were involved in a dynamic of self-making, which could not be instructively directed, and recourse to the transcendent categories of expert and blueprint projects was not necessary. The generative process of self-making evoked in the work of Maturana and Varela, requires the participation of each participant and their commitment to their situation. It is each participant’s participation in the process of self making, that when occurring congruently with the self-making of project workers, that allows for social coupling to arise. Interestingly, these notions are similar to those inherent within my notion of development as intercultural interaction, elaborated in Appendix 1, and which provided a useful perspective for guiding my initial overseas actions.

Using the ideas of Maturana and Varela, I now construe my Mozambique experiences as a process in which the organisation and structure of the project changed to reflect the participant’s organisation and structure. This congruency which resulted in the flourishing of project-peasant consensuality, such that the number of peasants who we worked with increased from 80 to 1,350 in the space of eighteen months, I explain using the notion of social coupling. Within this social coupling, participants between and within the class distinguished by “project” and “peasant” were both distinct and dependent, reflecting the concept of complementarity. What distinguished this process of structural coupling as systemic participation, as a class distinct from that of counterfeit participation, which I use to
categorise the work of Jack and Jane, is the relationship that arises between the structural elements of systemic participation that permits self-making to flourish. This is in contradistinction to the relationships that I observed as arising between the structural elements of counterfeit participation, in which self-making is proscribed by another and is transcendent in respect to the self, rather than constituted within the self.

However, while these concepts helped me explain why I found systemic participation so easy in gaining benefits for improving the peasant’s situation, I could not explain the institutional response to this success. Why did the dominant expatriate institutions in all of the three overseas experiences I have elaborated upon in Chapters 2, 3, and 4, largely ignore, or seek to overturn what I saw to be examples of successful development with peasants - examples which they themselves could not provide? It is with this question in mind that I now embrace some ideas from the work of Habermas.

HABERMAS’S PHILOSOPHY - MAINTAINING SOCIAL CONTROL OVER BUREAUCRACY

Introduction

Maturana’s notion of self-making, arising within structurally determined organisms, and explained through a constitutive onto-epistemology, provided me with a justification for working with peasants as development practitioners in their own right. The individual, in relationship with their environment, creates a constitutive ontology from within. Projects and experts using a transcendent reality to determine the actions of others can be seen as resulting from a category error. However, within this new domain of self-making I still could not explain why others wished, and why society’s structures were set up to determine the actions of others? Techne
applied not just to control a fickle nature, but also to control a supposedly fickle human nature. And so I was drawn to the philosophy and work of Habermas.

Habermas, following World War II (WWII), was part of a group known as the Frankfurt School, trying to come to grips with the monstrously heinous events of WWII - such as the holocaust. Some, saw in these events the failure of Enlightenment, and regarded rationalisation as the steady progress towards meaninglessness and the “loss of freedom” (Brand 1990:3). Not having experienced the horrors of WWII, Habermas endeavoured to show how things got better after the war, and suggests that a focus on “goalrationality,” and its strategic use of instrumental reason, represent only one form of rationality - not rationality per se.

Habermas develops a philosophy of communicative action that, while allowing for the possibility of progressing the Enlightenment project, did not see it as inevitable. In what follows I seek to explain the Habermasian (Habermas 1984, 1987) view of how: a) the “System” comes to rationalise the “Lifeworld,” b) how the System then turns on the Lifeworld, colonising it, and c) how communicative action is seen as an antidote to this colonising and rationalising process such that the Lifeworld regains control of the System.

**Rationalisation**

Rationalisation for Habermas (1984 and 1987) is a process by which the implicit is made explicit. This occurs within the context of the dual tasks of society - symbolic and material production. Symbolic production has to do with the transfer of meaning and purpose in society, while material production concerns itself with the “production and distribution of goods and services.” Habermas gives the task of symbolic
production to what he calls the *Lifeworld* that is constructed as having a “*performative attitude*” whereby expression and action are one. The task of material production occurs in what he calls the *System*. The *System* has an “*objectivating attitude*” focussing on the functional relationships of externally observable phenomena. According to Habermas (1984) *the process of rationalisation is to render the meaning of implicit symbols of the Lifeworld explicit*. This occurs through the emergence of the specialised institutions of law, economics, science, and religion that together constitute the *System*.

The evolution of the *System* is seen as occurring in four stages from the archaic society of kinship, to tribal society, to politically stratified class society, and finally to the economically constituted class society of today (Habermas 1987:155-197). In our society the “market,” coordinated via money, splits from politics, effectively reorganising society along the lines of “bourgeois civil law,” directed by the medium of power and money. Here the *System* that emerges from the *Lifeworld*, in order to rationalise the symbolic meaning and purpose inherent in traditional culture and myth, comes to direct society. This Habermas refers to as the “colonisation of the *Lifeworld*,” exhibited in the *loss of freedom and meaning* felt by individuals as participant actors. This is seen by Habermas (1987:355) when “*Everyday consciousness* is robbed of its power to synthesize; it becomes fragmented.”

An example of the results of this process of rationalisation, are provided by Habermas in regard to morality. He believes that morality starts off as a guide to private and public behaviour, and is symbolically replicated through culture and myth. In the process of trying to make this symbolic knowledge explicit, as an aid for social integration, the “symbolic” becomes codified and imposed externally by the *System* upon the *Lifeworld*. 
Morality gets deinstitutionalised and limited to a place in the personality system where it functions as an internal control on behaviour. Law becomes an externally imposed power, dependent on abstract obedience and disjoined from the moral motivation of those subject to it. (Brand 1990:43)

This disjunction between “morality and formal law” is reflected concomitantly with the “disjunction between social and systemic integration.” While the System is justified in principle and anchored within the Lifeworld, specific actions are justified through procedural correctness as defined by the system.

In morally neutralised action systems, such as the economy, single actions are justified by the correctness of procedures prescribed by a body of law which is only legitimated as a whole. (Brand 1990:44)

The development of the System can be seen as a relief mechanism for the Lifeworld and communicative action. This relief is provided through the process of rationalising, or the seeking of explicit understanding, of the implicit knowledge of the traditions of culture. As the previously formal structures of culture are questioned and opened to “dissonant experiences,” the renovation of culture becomes increasingly dependent upon the individual, concomitant with the decline in the role of the previously formal structures of culture (described as pre-understanding or implicit knowledge). This results in increasing difficulty in coordinating behaviour via language as common pre-understandings give way to many disparate views that are too complicated to traverse in the carrying out of everyday functions. Relief is thus gained, according to (Habermas 1987:181) via two mechanisms which “either condense or replace mutual understanding in language.”

The condensation of validity claims in communicative action is undertaken by “value generalisation” via the social roles like “influence and prestige,” demonstrated via professionalism. To the extent that the professional’s prestige or influence is seen to be obtained via their “supposed ‘knowledge’,” the person depending on a
professional view can be seen to be rational. If, however, a person’s “influence and prestige” is gained though their ability to reward or punish, then this is seen as being empirical in nature and replaces linguistic communication. The role of power and money, and the State and market that direct them in empirically replacing linguistic communication, cannot be underestimated. In turn they become independent of the *Lifeworld*, and as they are not understood by it effectively, they are “dropped out of language.”

Integration does not take place here through the process of reaching shared understanding, in an exchange of more or less explicit, more or less criticisable validity claims, but ‘behind the backs of actors.’ Action coordination (which should be distinguished from the integration of the System as such) comes about, in the first instance, through ego motivating alter empirically, rather than rationally (via validity claims), to perform certain actions: in the market through offering a certain sum of money and, in the sphere of the government, through the implicit or explicit threat with sanctions. Action consequences are intertwined in the System on a level which is not directly accessible to everyday social ‘pre-understanding.’ Agents relate to such action systems as they would to a piece of nature. (Brand 1990:47)

These structures, with growing independence from the *Lifeworld*, eventually cannot be controlled by it. It was the sort of feeling that I got in Mozambique when SCFA and SC(US) issued their Xai-Xai Memorandum. This memorandum conflated inter-institutional ideology with what was happening on the ground with the farmers. Using Habermas’s philosophy as discussed above, I see such events as coordinating the actions of others empirically via power and money as opposed to the coordination of action rationally through dialogue.

**“Colonisation of the Lifeworld”**

The process whereby the System that emanates from the *Lifeworld* colonises it, is not seen by Habermas as inevitable. There are other possibilities that could arise by increasing the dimension of focus from the individual, to the individual-and-the-System; and by distinguishing between actual circumstances of development and the logic of development. So far not much has been said of the logic of this development that can be depicted in terms of a learning process.
The first step of this learning process is seen as the gaining of critical distance from the mythical or metaphysical-religious worldviews, in which people are “inextricably intertwined.” This “intertwining” of people and myth inhibits or immunises myth against criticism, as it is implicit knowledge. The emerging critical distance interferes with the cultural reproduction of values and purpose, and is gained via the increasing rationalisation of the mythical world, leaving it open to further criticism and an increased need to maintain mutually coordinated validity claims. Such a change for Habermas represents a change in the “structures of world views” (Habermas 1984:68), whereby:

The transition from one world view to another is a matter of changes in fundamental categorical concepts. With the transition from one such system of concepts to another the interpretations of an earlier epoch lose, as it were, their entire foundation. (Brand 1990:52)

These changes, Habermas hypothesises “…are connected with transitions to new levels of learning,” (Brand 1990:53) in each of the three - external, social, and personal - dimensions of learning shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Different dimensions of Habermas’s learning dynamics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DOMAIN</th>
<th>LEARNING DIMENSION</th>
<th>LEARNING DYNAMIC</th>
<th>ROLE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>System</td>
<td>External “objective” world (extra-personal)</td>
<td>“objectivating thought” – cognitive</td>
<td>functional/material reproduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lifeworld</td>
<td>Social world (inter-personal)</td>
<td>“moral-practical insight” – normative</td>
<td>“communicative action” – cultural reproduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>Internal/personal “subjective” world (intra-personal)</td>
<td>“aesthetic-expressive capacity”</td>
<td>purposive/meaningful action</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Developed from (Brand 1990:53) & (Habermas 1984:68-69)

But such learning changes in logic are not dependent on logic alone but also on the dynamics or “historically contingent factors” of the situation. It is this extra
dimension that can be otherwise, that permits resistance to be born in the prospect that actual outcomes may represent pathological development rather than its only possible form.

Hence Habermas can regard the ‘colonisation of the Lifeworld’ as not of necessity inherent in historical development (a view to which … early Frankfurters tended) but as a pathological development against which resistance is possible. (Brand 1990:53)

In such a view the domination of cognitive/objectivating thought that occurs in the “colonisation of the Lifeworld” as a process of the rationalisation of the mythical is not seen as the only possible outcome. In a more balanced view of development between the cognitive, normative, and expressive domains of knowledge and learning, it is possible for cognitive/objectivating thought to be normatively controlled. And this forms the basis for Habermas’s critique of the reification of objectivating/cognitive thought that undermines “…the rational foundations of communicative action in the Lifeworld” (Brand 1990:54). An example of such a situation is provided in the earlier forms of education as “cooperation between masters and students” becoming “increasingly subject to the imperatives emanating from the economic-administrative system.”

The process of “Juridification” (Habermas 1987:356ff) in law provides another example of the “colonisation of the Lifeworld.” In the case of family law, intra-family relations that were once “communicatively structured,” are now judicially controlled. This comes at the cost of coherence with the individual contexts of each case.

This ‘emancipation’ of the members of the family in relation to each other is paid for with an increased dependency on the state. Family conflicts are ‘solved’ by resorting to formal criteria which can, by their nature, not do justice to the specifics of each case. Parental care is ‘replaced’ by bureaucratic measures which, under the pressure of economic imperatives, often take a totally impersonal administrative form. (Brand 1990:55)

This process results in the formalisation of relationships that “can only be integrated via communicative action.” Personal experiences are forced into “abstract terms” to facilitate administrative processing. Difficult situations that cannot be re-labelled
“consumption” are maintained via social services that promote dependency. Via the medium of law, core parts of the Lifeworld “…are split off from action coordination via shared understanding and reintegrated via the media of money and power” (Brand 1990:57). *Legitimation is obtained via following correct procedure* rather than communicative action, from which view the legitimation process appears not just impossible but also meaningless (Habermas 1987:365). Juridification allows the strategic manipulation of the social world for the functional purposes of the System, leading to the *loss of creativity* in the social and personal worlds (Brand 1990:57), and separating itself from “the consensual mechanisms that coordinate action” which are replaced by media such as “power and money” (Habermas 1987:364).

An overview of the “colonisation of the Lifeworld” is described by Brand below:

The ‘colonisation of the Lifeworld’ comes about, as we saw above, when the steering media money and power penetrate, for reasons which we will look at below, into Lifeworld areas which require symbolic reproduction and thus remain dependent on communicative action. Everyday practice is then rationalised in such a one-sided fashion that a specialist-utilitarian style of life is established, in which consumerism and the individualism of property, achievement motivation and competition are predominant, and moral-practical elements have been forced out. The functional necessities of the systemically integrated realm are, if necessary, fulfilled at the cost of the ‘technification’ of the Lifeworld. This also implies that economy and state cannot be submitted to normative restrictions from the Lifeworld. (Brand 1990:60)

The question arises as to why the process described above appears to be so unclear to people in society? Why do they seem to be unaware of it? Habermas (1987:355) suggests this is due to the *false consciousness* arising within an undifferentiated reality, mythical beliefs, and ideology. This false consciousness is removed in part through the process of rationalisation, and replaced by *fragmented consciousness*.

The differentiation of the realms of science and the humanities, morality and art has brought about expert subcultures which are cut off from everyday consciousness, and which no longer have a basis for unification, even in the form of false consciousness fed by ideology. Fragmented everyday consciousness is a functional equivalent for the preceding false consciousness, in the sense that it too is not able to clarify the thingification of the Lifeworld brought about by the predominance of systemic imperatives. (Brand 1990:61)
Chapter 7: Finding theoretical support for self-making

There is a difference between false consciousness or ideology, and fragmented consciousness. The former results in a "wrong interpretation" the latter has no felt need to make an interpretation as “The diffused perspectives of the local culture cannot be sufficiently coordinated to permit the play of the metropolis and the world market to be grasped from the periphery.” (Habermas 1987:355)

This gives rise to the possibility of conflict between the System that was created by the Lifeworld, but now directs it, steered by the medium of power and money. The intervention of the welfare state is to pacify the conflicts that may arise. However, this pacification is never sufficient as it does not touch the “structural inequalities” that produced the problem in the first place (Brand 1990:62-63).

It is these very structural inequalities that became very apparent over time in the periods of colonisation, industrialisation, and globalisation, as discussed in Chapter 6, that resonate with Habermas’s view here. Development which does not change the structure of the system cannot change the system at all, no matter how radical it appears. Chambers is a case in point who, while claiming to be radical, specifically does not wish to be seen as revolutionary.

The changes are radical. For they are not just to put the last first, which is altruism; they are to put the first last, which is disempowerment. …But what is sought is not revolution. it[sic] is reorientation, retaining some hierarchy while loosening constraints and freeing actors. The final theme of this book is that reversals are not stupid but sane, not improbable but practicable, not low ground, but the high. (Chambers 1997:211)

What then does he wish to change if it is not just methodology and area of interest? Chambers stays with the same framework of development, reinforcing the structure of the status quo and participating in the irrational consciousness of Freire’s explanation of conscientização that provides farmers with a vision of emancipation, the limits of which are already prescribed (see Chapter 5).
In Chapters 3 and 4 I made a similar mistake of not wanting to “upset the applecart” so to speak. I complied with executive decision, or to use Habermas, *strategic action*; even though it contravened the Lifeworld arising between myself, peasants, and extensionists. Through philosophy, Habermas critiques strategic action and suggests the use of *communicative action* as a means of correcting the colonisation of the *Lifeworld*.

**Communicative action**

In this section I seek to understand Habermas’s concept of *communicative action*, and its role as an antidote to the *strategic and instrumental action* of the System that colonises the production of meaning and values within the *Lifeworld*. The loss of being critical will be examined in the process of the colonisation of the *Lifeworld* by the *System*. The role of communication will then be examined within two different paradigmatic contexts that respectively result in: *communicative action* and *strategic and instrumental action*.

**The loss of “being critical”**

Within the *Lifeworld* the metaphysical-religious worldview was controlled by the “superego of the socialised individual” (that was informed by a cosmology and emergent purpose) and reflected in “cultural reproduction.” This produced a “reality which the wide-awake and normal adult simply takes for granted in the attitude of common sense” (Habermas 1987:130). Through the process of rationalisation that has been previously discussed, the *System* attempted to make the implicit assumptions of the *Lifeworld* explicit within the System. In so doing, behavioural control of individuals came under the domain of “the planning agencies of social organisations.” Devoid of cultural context, human relationships reflected in their work, became commodified in the form of labour. In this process of “thingification”
or “reification,” the object within the System was given precedence to the person within their web of relationships within the Lifeworld - the System came to determine “the way in which human beings dealt with each other and themselves.” Science as an ideology conflated “its own mode of cognition with cognition as such. True knowledge was scientific knowledge…” (Brand 1990:5). But along with the ability to dominate nature came the domination of humans themselves. Humans as subjects came to be dominated equally along with nature, as objects. The subject became the object of its own creation - the System - and so lost its ability to be critical.

**Two paradigmatic contexts of communication and their impact on “being critical”**

The renewal of the ability to be critical became central for Habermas in the move for the Lifeworld to regain control of the System. This is represented in a paradigm change from communication as a strategy to direct the actions of others, to communication as mutual understanding. The two different ontologies reflected in these different paradigms arise through two forms of subject-object relations. These two different paradigms are very similar to those evoked in Simon (1985:43) which describes Maturana’s concepts of objectivity and (objectivity) that are alternatively described in the words of Fell and Russell (1994a:26 & 27, 1994b:16) as objective and personal explanatory paths.

Cognition arising from a subject-object relationship is seen to result in a realist sense of objects being represented as they really are, and action as a necessary consequence of the cognition of material reality. Driven by materialistic determinism, instrumental reason loses its capacity for being critical. This “blind alley” can be sidestepped, according to Habermas through communication theory. In this theory of the philosophy of consciousness, the two subject-object relations of
cognition and action are replaced by a central subject-subject relationship. This Habermas sees is inherent in the theory of communicative action.

The key element is here the achievement of shared understanding of what certain acts of cognition and manipulation of objects mean. Such understanding is reached in the interpretive efforts of individuals who coordinate their action through criticisable claims to validity. (Brand 1990:6)

Interestingly this subject-subject ontology arises in Maturana’s biological views in regard to the notion of a constitutive ontology. In Habermas’s theory, instrumental action is not only analysed but the analysis is broadened to include action that is “based in the achievement of shared understanding” - *communicative action*. This suggested paradigm change appears to be reinforced by changing perspectives in the philosophy of science that can be summarised as: a) Habermas’s description of “positivistically truncated reason,” where reason changes from that which self limits the “quest for truth” to “sense impressions” of reality that can be observed and quantified, b) “Scientism” that conflates its own singular form of cognition with cognition *per se*, thus escaping supposed non-rational discourse such as the question of “right action,” and c) Positivism - the proposition that reality consists of “objectively given and causally linked things and events” (Brand 1990:7). According to this view, cognition is seen as the “(correct) observation of an objective reality which can be approached from the outside as it were.”

It was this kind of positivism that had me doubt my experiences, as they were “objectively” denied by those I thought knew better than me. Concomitantly it also resulted in my lack of ability by which I could critique these critical views. It is positivism that allows for “outside” specialists to gain a privileged position regarding reality. This allows them to dismiss the views of others who have a different experience. It is the suspicion of positivism that allows an “inside” view to be taken, which Habermas has done in his theory of communicative action, and that resonates
with Maturana’s constituent ontology in the previous section that emerges through
the correlation of experiences arising from subject-subject relationships.

Reason, says Habermas, is not to be situated in any one particular subject at all but rather in
subject-subject relations. Rationality is “communicative rationality.” This means that, for the
analysis of the evolution of society, the knowledge and the putting at our disposal of an
objectivated nature are no longer the central phenomena needing explanation. Rather it is
the intersubjectivity of shared understanding which now becomes the core phenomenon.
(Brand 1990:10)

Social action in the new view is the coordination of action achieved through shared
understanding. That is, a rationality communicative in nature and not just
instrumental or strategic. Instrumental and strategic rationality have an egoistic
(singular dimension) focus for success. When applied to subjects, Habermas calls
this strategic action and when applied to objects, instrumental action.
Communicative action is focussed on shared understanding through dialogue, in
which the validity claims made by the self are criticisable by the other. In strategic
and instrumental action this is not possible and so action is seen to be empirical,
arising from an undisputable truth or fact reinforced through sanction and/or
gratification provided by force and/or money (Brand 1990:15-16). In communicative
action, action is not empirical, but arises through “sincerity and authenticity” with
claims to “(normative) rightness” rather than to truth. Strategic and instrumental
actions are seen to be “parasitic” of communicative action (Brand 1990:23).

Communication as the coordination of action

Habermas’s communicative action, like Maturana’s notion of communication, is not
simply an act of speech, but rather a coordination of action. This is illustrated by
distinguishing three elements of coordinating action. First comes the understanding
of a claim made in a speech act. Then a response to the claim is formed. Finally,
action is taken on the response which may include the delaying of action or further
discourse for clarification. The effect on these three elements change depending on
the situation and who is involved. In the case of Jack and Jane in Chapter 4 issuing directives for me to follow, the communication can be seen to lie within an objective world requiring an empirical motivational response. Habermas calls these *constatives* that refer to the objective world without offering a “criticisable validity claim” and are linked to sanctions or rewards.

Habermas also coins the term “regulative speech act” that relate to *expressives*, referring to the internal world of the individual, an example being “they don’t like eating fish,” which is rationally based as it relates to a normative request that reflects an “expectation of a certain behaviour of the speaker” (Brand 1990:28). Expressive speech acts then are collaborated by a consistency with the behaviour of the speaker, that leaves the listener with the opportunity to dispute or criticise the validity claim made by the speaker.

Thus in communicative action, speech acts serve to renew and repair interpersonal relations, the representation of situations and events and the representation of self. (Brand 1990:29)

We can choose any of the three worlds inherent in speech acts, when discussing validity claims. The form of communication changes with each different world, distinguishing between the “constative speech acts” of the objective world, the “expressive speech acts” of the internal world, and the “regulative speech acts” of the social world (Habermas 1984:309).

With Habermas’s focus on shared understanding rather than on achieving strategic results, interpretation from the “point of view of an external observer” has to be given up in favour of a “performative attitude of the participant in action.” That is, it is important to “take the validity claims of the acting agents seriously in order to understand them” (Brand 1990:31). The closer the listener is to the speaker’s context the greater the possibility of understanding (Brand 1990:32).
This correlates with the notion in the domain of development, of the need for the expert to be as close as possible to the farmer’s situation, if they intend to understand what the farmer is saying. In so doing the agent finds they are further away from their own viewpoint, and more likely to be able to proffer the reasons for validity that the speaker is likely to claim for what they said. The understanding, agreement, and discussion of validity claims takes place within Habermas’s *Lifeworld* that itself is renewed and changed as it is used. This *Lifeworld* does not just rely on “explicit knowledge” but also on an endless array of implicit knowledge that can never be seen in its entirety, but rather as an ever-changing horizon.

The *Lifeworld*, says Habermas:

...is constitutive for mutual understanding as such, whereas the formal world concepts constitute a reference system for that about which mutual understanding is possible: speaker and hearer come to an understanding from out of their common Lifeworld about something in the objective, social, or subjective worlds. (Habermas 1987:126)

**Discussion**

I postulate that Habermas’s strategic and communicative action explain the basic philosophy of communication for the two different types of development that I had experienced in Chapters 3 and 4. The contemporary development of dominant institutions and expatriates utilised strategic action in their egoistic focus on success for the project. A success achieved through the direction of others as objects through the empirical media of power, money, and objective knowledge, making claims of truth and rightness argued via polemic. This compares with what I call systemic participation that arises through communicative action that achieves success in dialogue with others as equal subjects. As a result the communicators are involved in a process of mutual simultaneous shaping within an atmosphere of
sincerity and trust, from which normatively determined directions emerge. The former type of development has a parasitic relationship with the later.

Central to Habermas’s views is the role of critical thinking in a process of learning that is liberative in the sense that it can free us from assumptions about which we were not previously aware.

In *Knowledge and Human Interests* Habermas says that an exercise of reason is 'critical' precisely when its impact frees us and others from the interests that constrain us and others from arriving at a greater degree of liberation. (Simons 1995:125-6)

**OVERALL DISCUSSION**

The purpose of this chapter was to seek theoretical support that would assist me in explaining and supporting my experiences of systemic participation in the Solomon Islands and Mozambique. It commenced with an observation from Science and Technology Studies that science is partial and largely at the behest of capital and power, resulting in many of its benefits being lost to peasants and the poor. From this context I embrace the work of Uphoff, Maturana, and Habermas seeking the resonance of organisational and structural congruence between their theories and my experience. I would now like to draw together some emerging similarities within their work.

Uphoff, Maturana, and Habermas all give credence to the importance and centrality of experience as the starting point of their investigations. Uphoff in his observation of non-selfish behaviour of upstream irrigators and its implications for changing sociology; Maturana in his observation of the self-making nature of life forms and the need to seek an explanation outside of a transcendent onto-epistemology; and Habermas, who in observing the sense of anomie and death of Enlightenment
resulting from the horrendous experiences of WWII, seeks to change philosophy so that the experiences of WWII do not need to be seen as inevitable.

Drawing from their experiences they all reject the paradigm of mechanism as the only paradigm. Uphoff does this through his use of the paradigm of quantum physics to support his observation of altruistic farmer behaviour. He notes how farmer motivation was generated from within, in a relationship of friendship. Maturana suggests a constitutive onto-epistemology is more appropriate in explaining the living of living organisms. He goes on to use the concept of structural determination to reflect the self-making nature of living organisms that do not respond to instructive stimuli. Habermas rejects the instrumental reason of the System and seeks to regain normative control of it through the process of communicative action. All these paradigms regain the human ability of critical reflection, and result in a change of relationships to one of subject-subject relations expressed as friendship, love, or the opening up ones validity claims to the critique of the other in a normative process of communicative action.

Finally, in gaining theoretical support for my experiences of systemic participation, I now wanted to be able to explain the process of epistemic learning whereby I was able to move from the mechanistic paradigm of development to one of systemic participation. This is now considered in the next chapter.
CHAPTER 8
FROM MECHANISM TO SYSTEMIC PARTICIPATION - AN AUTOETHNOGRAPHIC EVOKING OF EPISTEMIC LEARNING IN DEVELOPMENT

First, it should be reemphasized that ‘input’ has a very specific meaning here, in terms of where the control of the origin of the system’s material lies, within the system or outside.

(Churchman 1971:20)

INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 1 I outline the three part nature of the thesis. In this chapter I seek to correlate the three thesis parts with a concept that has emerged from the thesis, which I distinguish as three phases of my epistemic learning. Part 1 (Chapters 1-4) of the thesis coincides with Phase 1 of my epistemic learning that I refer to as naïve practice. This naïve practice arises from a systemic reframing of action whereby the expert and project are reframed with peasants. The action that arises is intuitive. Part 2 of the thesis (Chapter 5) is a watershed between Parts 1 and 3 of the thesis, in which my unravelling that resulted at the end of Part 1, is explained through the notion of paradigmatic entrapment. The work of Part 3 (Chapters 6 and 7) of the thesis is to escape this entrapment through developing theoretical and philosophical perspectives that can both support and explain my experiences of naïve practice. Part 3 of the thesis is seen to correlate with Phase 2, or secondary epistemic learning that arises from a systemic reframing of explanation. Part 2 (Chapter 5) of the thesis is seen to be the turning point between Phase 1 and 2 of my epistemic learning. The final phase of my epistemic learning that I call tertiary epistemic
learning, is seen to arise from a systemic reframing of institutions. Its focus is on systemic replication, which seeks to avoid institutional entrapment, and is envisaged as being the focus of my work following the completion of this thesis.

It is the depiction of my epistemic learning as the consecutive systemic reframing of action, explanation, and finally of institutions, and my progression through these successive systemic reframings, that I will now seek to elaborate upon within the rest of this chapter. I will do this via a brief recount of my understanding of epistemic learning, and an endeavour to evoke a sense of each of the three phases of my epistemic learning.

**EPISTEMIC LEARNING**

Epistemic learning, as described in Chapter 1, was not seen as a different element of learning; such as the propositional, practical, experiential, and inspirational elements described in Bawden (2001) and Reason and Heron (1986). Rather, it was seen as a change in the way learning is defined. Drawing from Kitchener’s (1983) levels of cognition, epistemic learning was seen to occur when a change in the “systems of alternatives” which guided the lower levels of learning - learning and meta-learning, occurred. This was depicted as a change in onto-epistemology whereby the values and assumptions of learning change.

I have come to depict the onto-epistemological change occurring in my learning in development with peasants, and in the research that followed, as a movement from a paradigm of mechanism to that of systemic participation. The difficulty of moving from one paradigm to another arises from the fact that it is not a linear process that can be easily explained. This is demonstrated in: a) Kuhn’s (1970) description of
scientific revolutions, b) Zukav’s (1979) account of Einstein’s role in the development of quantum physics, c) Perry’s (1999) observation of the problematic learning process inherent in students passing from dualism to contextual relativism, and d) Salner’s (1986, 2001) description of learning evoked in the concept of “unravelling,” rather than one of “expanding the boundaries.”

So how can we learn about something that is not easily explained? Salner (1986) suggests this is achieved through personally experiencing and reflecting upon the epistemological dilemmas we face. Perry (1999) observes the pathway of student commitment to contextual relativism was facilitated through academics sharing their own epistemological uncertainties with the student. In Perry’s schema, the student’s move towards commitment, contrasts with a student’s escape or retreat from commitment. Within Perry’s concept of “escaping,” the student is depicted as rejecting or denying the implications for growth inherent in commitment to contextual relativism, and the notion of “retreat” is seen as a denial of the legitimacy of the other that arises within contextual relativism. Ellis and Bochner (2000:735) seek to evoke a sense of their experience as a means through which the reader may consider how “their lives can be made a story worth talking,” not as something that can be transmitted or transferred to others. Within the domain of systemic participation, making our learning someone else’s, is not possible.

The approaches above are cognisant of meaning being located within the learner, not in an outside reality: of being constitutively formed, not transcendentally directed. This notion I see evoked in the epigraph of this chapter. It also arises within the systemic imperative inherent within Quantum Physics - where the assumption of unbroken wholeness, existing between the observer and the observed, implies that within certain constraints reality is what we choose to make it (Zukav 1979:314-326).
This is due to the knower and the known being observed as interactive and inseparable, whereby causation arises through a process of mutual simultaneous shaping (Williams 1988:124-138). The notion of structural coupling provided by Maturana and Varela (1992) and Maturana (1994) suggests the need for congruency to be maintained between organism and environment. This view sees reality arising from within our experience, not from without whereby we become its instrument. This later view is the view of the paradigm of mechanism in which we become directed by an outside reality, facilitated through the medium of power and money (Habermas 1987). What was once our instrument inverts itself upon us, colonising us, and so we become strategically directed by those who use it to their advantage.

An explanation of my epistemic learning in development

Drawing from Salner’s (1986) position that epistemic learning occurs when a student experiences and reflects upon their epistemic dilemmas, I would like to expand that to include ontology as well. This is reflected in my use of the term ontoepistemology since Chapter 1 as a means of reflecting the inseparability of ontology and epistemology (Bateson 1972, Skolimowsky 1994). Thus we could say ontoepistemic learning occurs when a student experiences and reflects upon their ontoepistemic dilemmas.

For the purposes of this chapter where epistemic learning or onto-epistemic learning is the focus, I would like to structure the discussion in line with the three phases of epistemic learning that I began to characterise in the introduction of this chapter. In this multi-phased view, onto-epistemic learning is seen in relationship to individuals willing to act critically and intuitively in relationship to their experience, in conjunction with groups of individuals within society who have done likewise, and inturn with
society at large. Such evolutionary commitment can only continue in the face of a persistent social problematic that is capable of unravelling and revealing the very premises and values of society. But such an evolutionary trend may only succeed if it also occurs in society at large. It is an exploration of this multi-phased view of epistemic learning that I would like to devote the rest of this chapter to.

**PHASE 1: NAÏVE EPISTEMIC LEARNING - THE TRANSFORMATION OF ACTION THROUGH SYSTEMIC REFRAMING**

I have called this phase of epistemic learning naïve because it is done intuitively, prior to having any substantive explanation for action. I now construct the naivety evident in my critical analysis of my overseas work that is elaborated in the latter part of Chapter 2 and in Chapters 3 and 4, as arising from the problematic of acting within a new paradigm, but still judging myself and trying to explain my experiences using the values and vocabulary of the old paradigm. In so doing I found myself with an irreconcilable split in my praxis, between thought and action. However, my actions were not completely naïve, as they had a foundational explanation for departing from the paradigm of mechanism: due to its failure in my domain of work, and an iconic systemic reframing which provided a guide to action.

In seeking to evoke an understanding of my experience of naïve epistemic learning, I would like to guide the discussion using the four categories drawn from the generic elements of epistemic change characterised in Chapter 3. These are: a) a fundamental failure of the known, b) immersion within the unknown, c) emergence of new categories, and d) resistance shown to the emergent paradigm - which I apply sequentially to my pre-overseas and overseas experiences.
Chapter 8: From mechanism to systemic participation - an autoethnographic evoking of epistemic learning in development

Pre-overseas experiences of systemic reframing

My pre-overseas experiences apply mainly to my undergraduate Hawkesbury experience and the first professional position I gained in Australia. It was the systemic reframing of development that I experienced at Hawkesbury, which resulted in my move overseas to work closely with peasants. This was in spite of the rather comfortable position I gained in Canberra following my graduation. In this position my role in development was assisting the development and implementation of international agricultural development projects.

Fundamental failure of the known

In Chapters 1 and 2 I explained my experience of rejecting the explanation of unnecessary hunger provided by the paradigm of mechanism, and the continuation of unnecessary hunger that results from the mechanistic paradigm. At Hawkesbury a similar approach was taken whereby there was a rejection of the mechanistic explanation of environmental and social degradation that was occurring in the process of agricultural development. At Hawkesbury, not only was the mechanistic paradigm considered a problem, but also its inability to acknowledge the problematic situation arising from its practice. The problematic nature of Australian agriculture was seen to arise through placing considerable pressure on the long term stability of the physical and social systems that it operated within. In the case of contemporary development, the problematic arises between the practice of contemporary development and the apparent chronic nature of unnecessary hunger.

Immersion in the unknown - learning as unravelling

When what is known is seen to have failed, like my observation of unnecessary hunger in a world with sufficient food, or the Hawkesbury observation of failing physical and social environments within agricultural production, how does one go...
about learning? This comes about according to Kuhn (1970), Zukav (1979), and Franz Boas (Mithun 2003) through an immersion in the category of the *unknown*. The *unknown* according to the administrators of the Hawkesbury course was the experience of the community, the farmers, and the students. This was contrary to the conventional focus on the known - disciplinary knowledge. This immersion in the unknown is not a new kind of learning, as it is evident in the Mythology of Dante’s *Purgatorio* (Binyon 1938:Canto xxvii) and Homer’s *Odysseus* (Homer 1946). These authors reflect the difficulty of moving away from the previous values and concepts that were once reality, but are gradually seen as “self-imposed limitations” (Zukav 1979:36) that can be changed.

In this process of rendering an implicit and apparently unalterable reality explicit, and thereby alterable, mistakes and “false consciousness” (Freire 1970a) are inevitable. This *false consciousness* within my experience is illustrated in my decision to get an agricultural degree so I could assist in the production of food, even though I was unravelled by my observation of unnecessary hunger in a world with sufficient food for everyone. At the time of focussing my career on food production, I was not aware of the form of false consciousness I was participating in. It was only through further problematic experiences overseas, and the application of critical thought and the understanding of theories that supported such engagement, that an awareness of my previous false consciousness became apparent. A similar kind of false consciousness was observed by Bawden and Packham (1993:8) in their observation that the initial approach at Hawkesbury was to teach systems, when they had just philosophically argued against the concept of teaching disciplinary oriented subjects. These forms of false consciousness provide evidence to the degree to which we have been thoroughly enculturated within the mechanistic
Chapter 8: From mechanism to systemic participation - an autoethnographic evoking of epistemic learning in development

paradigm, and its concepts, that dog the footsteps we take towards new epistemic learning.

Emergence of new categories and processes from ad hoc experience within the unknown

Three central new categories that resulted in my participatory learning experience at Hawkesbury were the concepts of agricultural systems, autonomous learning, and communication as the sharing of meaning. These were highlighted in Chapters 1 and 2. I found these three concepts positively reinforcing, each contributing to a praxis that countered mechanistic learning. Agricultural systems introduced the contextual relativism of each system, autonomous learning encouraged engagement with everyday experiences and the role of the learner in making judgements, and communication was seen as a means to shared understanding. Checkland’s (1988) Soft Systems Methodology (SSM) permitted me to develop ideal conceptual systems that allowed for the possibility of a future that could break from simply being a repetition of the past. The conceptual system arising from the application of Checkland’s SSM to development was seen as a process emerging from intercultural interaction (refer to Appendix 1). Another more recent application of Checkland’s SSM to development can be found in Luckett et al. (2001).

While these new conceptual categories were important, much more significant to me was the praxis within which they evolved. This praxis provided a participatory and systemic reframing in which: the role of the educator was reframed as a facilitator acting with students as co-learners; and the structures and processes of education were reframed to allow for changes within the course that could be directed by student experience. It was this re-framing of action that allowed for a symbolic or iconic re-interpretation of learning. I now realise that I applied these same symbols,
within the domain of development, with peasants in my work in the Solomon Islands and Mozambique, and following this, in my research.

Resistance from those not accepting the failure of the paradigm of mechanism in social contexts

I found resistance to the practice of systemic participation surprising, when it arose within the student body at Hawkesbury, and within my first working environment in Canberra. I could not understand how others could not see that which appeared so natural to me. Resistance to the Hawkesbury approach was also significant with some organisations refusing to employ agricultural students who had been educated at Hawkesbury.

I now see, through my reading of Perry (1999), how this resistance had a temporizing effect on me. It resulted in a prolonged pause in my commitment to systemic participation following my graduation, and in my first overseas project. It was during my first overseas experience that the failure of the mechanistic paradigm of development became obvious (refer to my Solomon Islands experience in Chapter 2). This paradigm failure led to my recommitment to the new emerging paradigm I had experienced at Hawkesbury and led me to another iteration of the above process of onto-epistemic learning.

Overseas iteration of systemic reframing

My continuation in developing the learning that I gained from Hawkesbury, and my ability to systemically reframe problem situations, arose through my continual experience of encountering the fundamental failure of contemporary development in the projects I worked with overseas. It was this impetus that encouraged me to engage with the category of the unknown in a process of learning as unravelling.
Fundamental failure of the known

My preference for retreating to the safety of the mechanistic paradigm, and society as I knew it, was subverted by my continual encounter with the failure of overseas projects. These projects, discussed in Chapters 2, 3, and 4, had all failed significantly. The first Solomon Islands project failed its own narrow objectives, in being a technical sham and failure. More broadly, the farms also failed to provide a balanced diet for the students. The second Solomon Islands project failed to respond in a timely way to peasants needing assistance to rehabilitate their food gardens following a cyclone, and the training provided no wider benefits for peasants. In Mozambique the project I worked for, in its previous two years of operation, had not been able to work with more than 80 peasants. It was considered a flop by both the locals and those who employed me.

In the face of such obvious failure, what I found even more startling was the inability of those responsible for such failures, to adequately recognise the failures and their role in it. Rather, they saw the cause of failure in difficulties they associated with both the local environment and the peasants: difficulties that were so unlike the expatriate environment from which they were from. It appeared to me that the expatriate development experts themselves felt no complicity in the failure that resulted, and so felt no need to change either their own role or activities.

Immersion in the unknown - learning as unravelling

Guided by the systemic reframing of the relationship between lecturer and student and between the university, society, farmers, and students - I applied the same systemic icons to the guidance of my engagement with the unknown category - the peasant and their experience, together with the broader local experience of extensionists, local government, and non-government agencies.
In my first Solomon Islands experience, I moved towards mixing socially with local people, eating meals with both the farm managers and the school students, and learning Pidgin English. In my second Solomon Islands experience I built on this by travelling where I could with the locals, working in their steepland gardens, working with local extensionists in the field, and living in a village (see Photo 7). I came to experience some of their dilemmas as my own dilemmas. In Mozambique the arrangements made in regard to my safety made it difficult to spend much time socialising with peasants, and so I worked mainly through local extensionists. My past experiences, in allowing me to unlearn what I knew, formed a basis for beginning to see the locals as equally capable development practitioners as myself. They also provided the environment for the emerging categories of a systemically reframed expert and project.

**Emergence of a new category - reframing the role of the expert through systemic participation**

When I was at Hawkesbury, the systemic image of facilitator with students as co-learners was supported by the contextualising effect of: agricultural systems, the acknowledgement of students as autonomous learners, and the role of communication as the sharing of meaning. I adopted a similar reframing to challenge the expert role that I felt pressured to assume in my first overseas project. This experience was like a secondary unravelling experience. It was unravelling in that I had no role models to follow, and the expert model that was provided me I felt I had to reject. I felt I needed to reject the expert model as I could not see myself as an expert. I was in a foreign country and I knew so little about its agriculture, culture, and environment. To call myself an expert would be to ignore this foreign context. By acknowledging the foreign as a valid area of interest, I came to see my own ignorance, and concomitantly the peasant’s area of expertise. Peasants
became in my mind, development practitioners in their own right. As they emerged in my thinking as autonomous development practitioners, communication became a process of the sharing of meaning with them.

While in its re-telling this experience sounds all quite logical, its actual experience was daunting. I found myself continually asking questions of the local peasants, extensionists, administrators, and expatriate experts, as I found myself wanting to test out who knew what about the day-to-day realities of peasant and extensionist experience. In time I have come to see that experts needed to stay within the confines of their own knowledge in order to remain experts, and this could explain my notion of *expat-centric development*. That is development that revolved around expatriate skills rather than local needs.

Through peasant’s eyes I came to see in my first project, that the non-expert role that I played set me apart from other experts - who the locals saw as keeping information to themselves. They saw me as someone who shared information with them and helped them find out what they needed to know, so they could become independent of me. In my second Solomon Islands experience I found myself seen locally as an outsider, at which I first baulked, but in time became comfortable with. In Mozambique I was comfortable with my role that I now see as a development collaborator, seeing myself as only one mind amongst many.

Overall I found that by opening up to peasants and extensionists, and showing the uncertainty of my expatriate knowledge in the foreign environment of the peasants and extensionists, that in time the peasants and extensionists were willing to show the uncertainty of their knowledge within the expatriate environment. This allowed for a shared understanding, built from the dialectic between different realities.
Emergence of a new category - reframing the role of the project through systemic participation

As my overseas role in development changed from being an expert to being a development collaborator, I found myself coming into conflict with the idea of projects as blueprints: designed and implemented by experts with expatriate development and donor institutions. Two problematic questions arising from this were: a) If the peasants and I were forced to operate within the confines of a project as a blueprint, then how could I justify my role as a development collaborator, whose actions changed with the changing context through interaction with other autonomous development collaborators, and maintain a sense of communication as a sharing of meaning? b) How could expatriate institutions and experts justify the use of a blueprint project when they professed the importance of peasant participation?

This conflict I thought was largely resolved through expanding the expatriate notion of peasant participation, which was already specified in the project. This expansion started from my view of participation that was limited by the mechanistic paradigm that sought to direct peasant participation in the direction of the project blueprint. It moved towards embracing systemic participation, in which peasant participation does not provide an input into a blueprint project, but rather the project inputs and directions, are determined within the participation of peasants as development practitioners in their own right.

In my first overseas experience, I sought to initiate such a move through the development of a Farm Handbook that attempted to outline the need to correlate expatriate and local knowledge. In the second project, local expertise was involved in designing the participative process that would guide the rest of the project. This
Chapter 8: From mechanism to systemic participation - an autoethnographic evoking of epistemic learning in development

grew in conjunction with the ever changing context and needs of both extensionists and peasants. The pilot projects, in which individuals and groups of participants sought to improve their situation, became the cells of achievement, from which the “organism” that was the project began to form.

In Mozambique I gained a mandate to use a form of systemic participation that had evolved in the Solomon Islands. The application of this within the Mozambican context resulted in an emerging paradigm of systemic participation, as outlined in Chapter 5. Underpinning this paradigm were the principles of contextualising what is known through engaging with the unknown - particularly the unknown of the peasants, local extensionists, and local organisations. In viewing the unknown peasants as “legitimate others,” their participation and dialectic engagement became the constitutive reality from which the project emerged. This constitutive reality emerges and is continually transformed and reconstituted through communication that is the sharing of meaning, and known by Habermas as communicative action.

Resistance to systemic participation and the temptation to regress to the mechanistic paradigm of development

I have no doubt in my mind that if I found contemporary development successful, I would have embraced and become a part of it. In so doing my learning in systemic participation was likely to have become like much of my previous schooling - lost by the wayside of irrelevance. In so doing, I would not have had to repudiate the known and engage the unknown, to experience learning as an unravelling. But my encountering of the continual failure of contemporary development was matched with the apparent interest and ability of peasants and extensionists to engage with systemic participation.
In stark contrast with the peasant’s and extensionist’s apparent inclination and ability in systemic participation, was the unexpected rejection and misunderstanding of it by dominant expatriates and expatriate institutions with which I engaged. In all three overseas experiences, the dominant expatriate institutions associated with the projects I worked with showed disregard for the possibilities of local achievements in development, as they did for their own failure. In Mozambique I experienced the active undermining of my work with peasants by detractors who were ideologically driven towards peasant participation, but their notion of participation was informed by the paradigm of mechanism. In many respects my Mozambique work provided me with an opportunity to subsequently clearly differentiate between two different paradigmatic forms of participation.

At the time, however, it was extremely confusing, a confusion that Salner (1986) is well aware of when she says that misconceptions that arise, can often result from being informed by different paradigms. But at the time, although I felt comfortable with directing my actions by the symbolic systemic reframing of participation, and the implications it had for my role and the role of projects, I found myself cognitively confused. It is now my understanding that this confusion arose from my cognitive development still having remained largely within the mechanistic paradigm. Although having heard the terms paradigm and worldview, they had no significant meaning for me.

**Depicting naïve epistemic learning**

Drawing from the three cognitive categories in Kitchener (1983) and their transposing by Bawden (1992b:10) into learning categories, I depict my naïve epistemic learning as a movement from my initial state of learning and meta-learning, to its state at the end of Phase 1 of my epistemic learning. This movement
was initiated by experiencing and critically reflecting upon the fundamental failure of contemporary development to significantly help improve the living conditions of peasants. Following from the observation of fundamental failure of contemporary agriculture, I came to realise the inappropriateness of its categories of expert, blueprint projects, fixed disciplinary boundaries, and a focus on implementing projects as development. This realisation occurred as I found guidance from systemically reframing these categories that became “expert with peasant,” “project direction emerging from peasant participation,” and the vital daily interests of peasants rather than disciplinary categories, together with a focus on peasant participation.

As a result of this reframing, that included the peasant and focussed on development that emerged from the sharing of meaning instead of the transmission and acceptance of facts determined outside of the peasant domain, I found development amazingly easy and successful. Yet in contrast to the recognition that I expected to receive in regard to this success, I was the unexpected recipient of resistance and undermining from both the dominant expatriates and expatriate institutions that I was associated with. So much so that it made my continual work in such an environment untenable. So this phase of my learning came to an end as a result of the unravelling experience reflected in the two questions: a) Why was the success of systemic participation ignored and undermined? and b) How could I explain systemic participation and where could I gain theoretical and philosophical support for it?

I only found the commitment to persist in developing my growing epistemic awareness through the experiences of Chapter 5. Here I was assisted by the work of Freire (1970a) to seek an explanation within a paradigm that supported my
experiences, and that did not alienate me from them. Within this experience I realised my paradigmatic entrapment in which, while my actions were changed through a process of systemic reframing, the implicit assumptions and values I was drawing upon to explain and justify them remained the same. The next phase of my epistemic development thus involved seeking theoretical and philosophical support for a paradigm of systemic participation that occurred following the insights described in Chapter 5.

PHASE 2: SECONDARY EPISTEMIC LEARNING - TRANSFORMATION OF THINKING THROUGH THE UNDERSTANDING OF NAÏVE EPISTEMIC LEARNING

My first unravelling in my teens, during which I became aware of unnecessary hunger, provided the crucible for a change in my actions. This was assisted by a change in iconic vision at Hawkesbury that reframed participation from something that was directed by an outside reality, to a reality that emerged from the participation of participants. The resistance to this new kind of participation, and the persistence of the manner of thinking in which I was enculturated, resulted in my continual tendency to regress to my previous manner of being. But countering this was the continual failure of the old approach to improve the position of peasants, and the ease in which this situation changed as a result of my emerging sense of systemic participation, where those that participated felt enlivened.

However, this whole process was itself brought to an end in my second primary unravelling experience that occurred at the end of my Mozambique experience, and brought my participation in overseas development to what I thought was a premature end. In this second unravelling, my newly emerging understandings were challenged to their core by the contemporary paradigm of development and the
institutions and individuals that safeguard it. Yet I did not wish to become alienated from my first unravelling experience and succumb to the inevitability of unnecessary hunger, as I did not wish to abandon the joy I had found in systemic participation with peasants. Refusing the alienation confronting me, I committed myself to seeking onto-epistemological support for systemic participation.

**Research iteration - fundamental failure of the known**

The results of contemporary development that I experienced in the projects overseas demonstrated a gross failure to achieve benefits for peasants. While emergent systemic participation was able to change this, this was only short-lived as existing development structures and expertise negated this new direction. In short both my understanding of contemporary knowledge and my knowledge of systemic thinking had failed to help me.

I had no interest in ignoring my experiences and returning to discipline-based research, as I had experienced how ineffective it had been overseas. In time I had the good fortune of returning to Hawkesbury, but the intellectual landscape there had changed when compared with my undergraduate experience (refer to Appendix 2). It seemed to me that systemic thinking was now being taught rather than learnt and experienced. Most postgraduate research undertaken by my colleagues took an action research approach, but my problem was not with a lack of action, but in understanding my actions and how others perceived them. So I set myself the long task of researching as a critical reflection upon my overseas experiences in order to find support for my experiences of systemic participation.

This forgoing of my past attachment to discipline-based and methodology-based knowledge, as well as my more recent attachment to systems thinking, was not
unlike my forgoing of the contemporary categories in development practice that I have previously mentioned. This process was assisted by my early engagement with grounded theory through the work of Glaser and Strauss (1967) and Strauss and Corbin (1990).

**Research iteration - immersion in the unknown - learning as unravelling**

I found staying within one discipline, or one methodology, unsatisfying as it limited my perspective to only a small part of the problem of unnecessary hunger. So I came to engage with several areas of knowledge. This is reflected in Chapters 1, 2, 5, 6, and 7. Each immersion within a new body of knowledge, like learning a new language, requires the ability to resist the transposition of what is known into the unknown. Of resisting the tendency to ensure the unknown conforms to known categories. It requires an ability to trust in experiencing the new experience, with the knowledge that understanding will emerge in its own good time. It took many months before I began to understand a particular new area of knowledge, and this was enhanced by returning to this research at different times over many years. After some time I found myself re-ravelling my learning according to new categories of understanding. Typically, however, within the new category of knowing, I would encounter a point of contention that conflicted with my experience and understanding. This would lead me to yet another knowledge area of interest with which I would engage.

For example, Uphoff’s (1992) book *Gal Oya* was one of my first areas of research interest. In this book Uphoff sought to change sociology on the basis of his experiences with irrigators. I could have written something similar in regard to making suggested changes to agricultural extension based on my overseas experiences. But there were several things that diverted my attention from such an
enterprise. Firstly, I thought that Uphoff had overlooked the extremely difficult working environment of the project workers. He was focussing on a disciplinary critique, while they were focussed on physical survival. Secondly, this was exacerbated by Uphoff’s focus on how well the irrigators were at confronting political and social inequities, while he was able to do little about the project inequities that he faced at his level. Finally, the focus on one discipline alone provided a uni-dimensionality that went against the everyday experience of peasants.

The supporting onto-epistemology of quantum physics referred to by Uphoff (1992) led me to the work of Zukav (1979) and Kuhn (1970). From there I got involved in the work of Maturana and then Habermas and Foucault. This has been described in chapters 6 and 7, and I raise it here again just to illustrate the research process of immersing myself in respective categories, that to me at the time were “unknown.” It is from this following of resonance of thought with experience, and the resulting linkages of concepts between the different bodies of knowledge, that the new category of systemic participation emerges, a category that is able to support and develop my experience of systemic participation with peasants.

**Research iteration - emergence of new categories and processes from ad hoc experience within the unknown**

The reframing of research as researching within ones problems, rather than remote from them, is an extension of the reframing of agricultural education that I had experienced at Hawkesbury, and the reframing of development with peasants in my overseas experience. This reframing does not provide for blueprints that can be followed, simply critical engagement. As a result of this critical engagement new concepts and actions emerge.
In Chapter 4 the project was depicted as an unfolding drama between two alternative views of what it means to participate with peasants in development. I have found from my research, described in Chapters 5-7, support for the concept of systemic participation. This support comes in two different forms that are not completely separate from each other. The first form relates to the onto-epistemology of systemic participation. The second form relates to the dynamic practice of systemic participation in the socio-political domain of human living.

An emergent onto-epistemology of systemic participation

The notion of ontology as the nature of reality, and epistemology as how we can know about that reality, were important concepts that assisted me in making explicit the implicit assumptions and values that guided my learning and meta-learning. In constructing an understanding of these concepts, as they informed a mechanistic paradigm, I was able to make distinctions about the assumptions, values, and concepts that supported systemic participation.

This onto-epistemic journey, started with my reading of Uphoff (1992) and engaging the concepts of Quantum Physics. As a result I moved away from envisioning a project as a mechanistic model that focussed on the manipulation of incentives to achieve the linear directions specified by the project. This move embraced an organic model of development that focussed, using an example from Uphoff (1992), on reducing impediments to irrigators. A key assumption of this model of development was that irrigators were natural developers in and of themselves, and thus through their participation the direction of the project would change.

It was strange to me that the concepts of Classical Physics so extensively informed development with peasants! But I was excited to find that concepts in Quantum
Physics helped me explain my experiences of systemic participation. Of particular importance was the comparison made between Classical and Quantum physics, derived from Zukav (1979) and outlined in Tables 1-3 of Chapter 1. Classical Physics supported the idea of the knower as an independent observer of an outside reality, while Quantum Physics supported the notion of the knower as a participator in the creation of reality. The former implicates alienation from ourselves and our environment, as we are seen to be determined by an outside reality which can be construed as a Great Machine of which we are but cogs. The latter implicates participative engagement and allows for the possibility that reality includes and is affected by our choices and participation. Such a reality is constituted through the interaction of participants in the process of their participating. Reality is not a priori to participation, but emergent from participation!

In my view, Maturana and Varela (1992) provide an example of systemic participation in the domain of biology. This is apparent in the informational closure of organisms that results in the structure of an organism determining its response, and not an outside reality. Within this constitutive reality, the one-to-one relationship between reality and observation is lost. If peasants are assumed to be self-determining organisms in Maturana’s sense, then pre-planned projects that conflate the response of the peasant with that presumed by the project, participate in a false ontology: a false ontology that assumes self-determining organisms can be strategically directed by others.

Foucault, as discussed in Chapter 6, provided me with an onto-epistemology of systemic participation through his notion of truth within a socio-political domain. Truth, he says, is constituted with power. This implies that peasants can only exhibit power through the construction of their own truth. Mechanistic projects demonstrate
this concept for expatriates and experts, but do not allow for the possibility of it to be exercised by peasants. All truth and participation is proscribed by mechanistic projects a priori to the project. This contrasts with the onto-epistemology of systemic participation, whereby truth and participation is self-constituted by the participants as co-“development collaborators” whose participation together creates the project.

Dynamic processes of systemic participation

Thus onto-epistemological awareness provided an explanation for both the paradigm of mechanism that guided contemporary development, and the paradigm of systemic participation that was emerging as an explanation for my experiences in development with peasants. But how could I understand and describe how I proceeded from being within the paradigm of mechanism, to being within the paradigm of systemic participation? The processes of development outlined by Freire (1970a), Habermas (1988), Perry (1999) and autoethnography (Ellis & Bochner 2000), each within their own specific contexts, were of great benefit to me in this regard.

Freire, in politically adverse conditions, sought to assist illiterates to read. In this context he found illiterates moved from a state of being almost immersed within their environment, as tools for the benefit of another, towards a permanent state of revolutionary change or critical consciousness inherent within Freire’s ontology of humankind “to be more.” Those within this state are human in their own right, at the behest of no outside reality. This was achieved via a naïve transitive state whereby those previously without a voice begin to seek one, and the elite begin to feel they are being unmasked. This process of consciousness raising is referred to by Freire as cultural action for freedom. This process was seen to be emergent from within a
status quo which exhibited the propensity to frustrate, limit, and reject this process. For me, the power of Freire’s description of his work with illiterates lay in the way it resonated with my work overseas with peasants. It provided a sense of warring, not just between two different paradigms in the Kuhnian sense, but a warring over the right to be master of one’s own destiny, within a context in which the peasant is already a tool for someone else’s benefit. The starting point of development then is not a neutral or passive point of undevelopment, but an active state of created undevelopment. This situation is something similar to autoethnography, where the self becomes aware that it has been submersed in society and now it wishes an identity for itself: an identity that is different to the one that society provides it.

Autoethnography resonates with Freire’s notion of cultural action for freedom, but it is something that arises within the individual, not something facilitated by outsiders. While autoethnography may be assisted by people undergoing a similar process, it cannot be sponsored, in the sense that many people imply in projects when they suggest to others that they can empower peasants. To imply that one can empower others is to manipulatively take concepts of liberation from the paradigm of systemic participation, and incorrectly apply them within a mechanistic paradigm. I experienced something like this when I was participating within an emergent paradigm of systemic participation, yet still experiencing the over-determining influence of the paradigm of mechanism from which I was emerging. This too-and-fro dynamic assists in crossing the boundary of ones own knowledge and looking at it from the view of another - the unknown. In this process of boundary crossing we, along with our knowledge, become vulnerable (Alsop 2002:10) as the imperialist or fixed cultural gaze (Fischer 1986:210) turns upon itself, and it’s colonising quest that conflates “the other” with “the self” is broken, and the “other” become subjects in their own right.
This change in gaze is reflected in the comments of Cooper and Packard (1997) who note the singular focus of development organisations directed towards Africans. They seek to turn this focus around and to balance it with a focus on the institutions themselves, and with what they do at the point of interaction with Africans. In so doing, along with the concepts of authoethnography applied at a personal level, we may experience the possibility of transcending the categories in which society places us, and would have us remain. We are faced with both the power of society to create us in its own image, and with the possibility to reject this necessity and in turn create the possibility of influencing society just as it has influenced us.

Habermas (1988) and Brand (1990) adds to this perspective through Habermas’s idea that seeks to suggest that the sense of the death of enlightenment that resulted from the experiences of WWII were not inevitable. Habermas depicts a System that has a performative focus, and a Lifeworld with an objectivating focus, held in dynamic tension. The Lifeworld seeks the replication of values through cultural replication and the System seeks to more efficiently coordinate the replication of values through making what is implicit within the Lifeworld, explicit within the System in a process of rationalisation. In Habermas’s view anomie, or the decline in social standards, results when the System comes to colonize the Lifeworld. This results from a process of “juridification,” where for example, the law becomes a substitute for morality. In the field of development, this can be seen when the process of project implementation becomes a substitute for actual development. According to Habermas, the sense of legitimation obtained from the focus on following correct procedure within the System comes at the cost of coherence with the context of the action within the Lifeworld. Habermas seeks, however, to bring the System under the control of the Lifeworld again. In this process he promotes the role of communicative action, as opposed to the strategic and instrumental action effected
through the media of power and money that occurs within the System: the term System here represents the institutional structures of society. The process of communicative action is seen to renew the human ability of being critical (Habermas 1987:374-403, Held 1980), a capacity which was lost through the materialistic determinism of the System. With the re-gaining of the ability to be critical, humans remove themselves from the domain of the instrumental and strategic communication of the System, and place themselves within the ontology of the subject-subject relationships of the Lifeworld, where communication is seen to lead to mutual understanding.

Perry (1999), from within the context of a university, follows the intellectual and ethical development of students. The students are seen to move from a state of embeddedness within a dualistic onto-epistemology of truth. Like the fixed gaze of the dominant observer, the observer is right and the subjects that are the objects of the observation are wrong. The students are seen to pass through different levels of multiplicity and contextual relativism, through a process of commitment that can achieve actualisation. However, this path is difficult and fraught with the possibilities of retreat and escape from the commitment to engage self and others that arises within contextual relativism.

The development trajectories arising from the authors just discussed are depicted in Table 6 below. Their common starting point is characterised as a state of embeddedness, where the self does not have sufficient distance from the environment in order to objectively critique it. This is exampled by: a) the illiterate within their oppressive social structures that result in their daily struggle to survive, b) the auto-ethnographic subject within society, c) the citizen within the System, and d) the student within dualistic reality. In this state of embeddedness, the subject as
object is simply part of a larger system of which they are not aware. As a result, the beneficiaries of the system are able to take advantage of other individuals for their own advantage, to strategically direct them. To use Habermas’s metaphor, the *Lifeworld* is controlled by the *System*.

At some time, however, according to Freire’s ontology, the desire “to be more,” as defined by the self and not by the oppressive elite (society, the System or “objective reality”), arises. The self seeks to take its place as a self-directed being, the student as a self-directed learner, and the peasant as a self-directed development practitioner. This is portrayed as a process of liberation in Table 6, along with its counter-effect provided by the *status quo* through a process that alienates the individual from their goal of liberation.

**Table 6: From embeddedness to self-awareness - drawing from the work of Freire, Habermas, Perry and the concepts of autoethnography**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author or Domain</th>
<th>Development results from the tension between:</th>
<th>Liberation portrayed as a process of:</th>
<th>Alienation portrayed as a process of:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Freire</td>
<td>A self that emerges from a reality in which it is embedded</td>
<td>Consciousness raising</td>
<td>Massification and bureaucratization maintained if necessary by a <em>Coup d'état</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auto-ethnography</td>
<td>The self that asserts its own template and a self constructed from the template of society</td>
<td>Boundary walking and transculturation</td>
<td>The fixed cultural gaze that results in “othering”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Habermas</td>
<td>The <em>Lifeworld</em> and the <em>System</em> - at stake is the replication of implicit truths</td>
<td>Communicative action - communication as the sharing of meaning through critical thinking</td>
<td>Strategic communication via the media of power, money – <em>Juridification</em> being one example</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perry</td>
<td>Onto-epistemology of dualism/multiplicity and contextual relativism</td>
<td>Commitment to actualisation</td>
<td>Retreat and escape from commitment towards contextual relativism</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

But such a process is not easy, as it must necessarily confront those who have previously benefited from their immersion in reality. The trajectory towards self-
direction from immersion cannot be defined or taught, as each person must experience their own onto-epistemological dilemmas (Salner 1986). Each must pass through their own “inferno” experiences (Binyon 1938:Canto xxvii), guided not by fear of the reactions of others, but by the joy of self-transformation. This joy assists commitment, consciousness raising, communicative action, and critical thinking, elements that are there to use as, moment-by-moment, an individual chooses to commit to self-making rather than being made by others. Herein is the essential conflict between the paradigm of mechanism and systemic participation.

**Research iteration - side-stepping resistance to systemic participation**

Both category and processes of systemic participation in the previous section were seen to be confronting to those who benefit from others being in a state of embeddedness within society. Such political confrontation necessitates the need to sufficiently articulate, and intellectually understand, the position of systemic participation if one is to continue to justify its usefulness and appropriateness. It was within this second phase of epistemic learning that I gained such understanding. In the process I lost any previous and residual desire to return to development within the mechanistic paradigm. Further, I can see how the resistance contemporary development demonstrates towards systemic participation is inevitable. It is the nature of the forms and structures of mechanistic society to replicate the process of mechanism, not systemic participation.

In my first phase of epistemic learning I rejected the “knowing” of the status quo as a means of addressing my experience of being unravelled. Now, in the re-ravelling of my Phase 2 of epistemic learning, I can see the necessity to reject the institutions and social forms that replicate this kind of thinking. What arises from this is the challenge to create new social forms and institutions within the paradigm of systemic
participation. This I see as the main challenge facing me following this thesis and will be briefly addressed in Chapter 9.

**Depicting Phase 2 epistemic learning**

Phase 2 of my epistemic learning arose within the context of the realisation of my paradigmatic entrapment in Phase 1. As a result I characterise Phase 2 as the *systemic reframing of explanation*. This allows me to explain participation that occurs within either a mechanistic or systemic paradigm. The paradigmatic awareness that results is a dual process, as in becoming aware of and being able to explain the underlying values and assumptions with which I had been enculturated, I was able to form an alternative. As a result of my secondary epistemic learning I am now able to make the implicit assumptions of both the mechanistic paradigm and the paradigm of systemic participation more explicit. In so doing I feel challenged to develop social forms and institutions that can replicate the processes of systemic participation within its own paradigm.

**PHASE 3: TERTIARY EPISTEMIC LEARNING - EVOLVING SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS THAT REPLICATE SYSTEMIC PARTICIPATION**

The main insight I have gained from this phase of development in my epistemic learning is the need to move towards the development of social forms and institutions that replicate the processes of the paradigm of systemic participation. It is necessary for these social forms to escape the paradigmatic entrapment of existing institutions reflected by Bawden (1987a:153) in his call for changing the structures and functions of education, and in Maiteny and Ison (2000) in their observation of the need for society’s culture and structures to change in order for systemic ideas to flourish:
Chapter 8: From mechanism to systemic participation - an autoethnographic evoking of epistemic learning in development

Systems, in sum, was caught within the very construction that it strove to change but within which it still had to operate and remain viable until the prevailing culture and structures themselves changed. (Maiteny and Ison 2000:575)

This becomes the work of Phase 3 of my epistemic learning, the systemic reframing of institutions that will follow this thesis. The concept of worldview, discussed in Chapter 1 and in the work of Skolimowski (1994), provides some guidance for me in this respect; particularly in regard to my Phase 1 experience and Phase 2 explanation of my epistemic learning in systemic participation occurring within a mechanistic worldview. I will now draw on the work of Skolimoswki (1994) to explore how this might occur.

According to Skolimowski (1994) Western civilization has undergone four cycles of cosmological change. Starting with a cosmology that was Mytho-poetic, Greek Logos emerged. From Greek Logos the Graeco-Roman cosmology emerged. This in turn gave way to the logos of Medieval Theos from which the Medieval-Christian cosmology formed. Finally the most recent Modern-Mechanistic cosmology resulted from the logos of Modern Mechanos, but is now seen to be collapsing (Skolimowski 1994:136).

This process of changing cosmologies is seen to arise as a result of the limitations of the human mind in handling complexity, demonstrated by the human propensity to act in a manner whereby “epistemological order is superimposed on the ontological order” (Skolimowski 1994:139). Kuhn provides an example of this when he says:

...though the world does not change with a change of paradigm, the scientist afterwards works in a different world. (Kuhn 1970:121)

Skolimowski suggests that the epistemology of Modern Mechanos resulted in the Modern Mechanistic cosmology. However, as this logos or epistemology, like the
others before it, is pushed to its limits, it destroys the cosmology which is formed from it. Skolimowski sees the mechanistic cosmology as bringing many material benefits, yet it is falling apart due to its “dark side” - “ecological devastation, human and social fragmentation, spiritual impoverishment” (Skolimowski 1994:136).

The logos emerging as a result of the collapsing mechanistic cosmology, Skolimowski calls *Evolutionary Telos*. Interestingly he sees this resulting from the “*Methodology of Participation*” (Skolimowski 1994:137) which in turn, in time, is seen to bring forth a new cosmology of “*wholeness and connectedness*” (Ibid:141). He sees the formation of this new cosmology to be many decades away, and our closeness to its emergence makes it difficult for us to see its formation with clarity. Skolimowski posits five characteristics of this new cosmology:

1) First, the universe is seen to be more profound than what even Newton thought. This profundity, depth and mystery cannot be captured through mechanism and reductionism.

2) Further, the profundity of the universe can only arise as a result of the second characteristic of the new cosmology - the profundity of human beings.

3) This sense of mystery and depth in both the universe and humans is seen to provide a sense of spiritual connection, the third cosmological characteristic, found only in a participatory universe in which we become responsible “for our own destiny and the future of the planet” (Skolimowski 1994:140). Truth, purpose, and validity become supernatural realities: as the metaphor of the universe and humans, as machine-like entities, loses its power.

4) A sense of wholeness and connectedness.

5) A universe that is non-deterministic and open.
The vision of “creative transcendence” that Skolimowski provides, suggests that the cultural replication of systemic participation will not result until a systemic cosmology forms, and supersedes the mechanistic cosmology that is our heritage. Until that time I see my role as seeking to address the “dark side” of a mechanistic logos and cosmology, particularly that of unnecessary hunger. Also, there is a need to focus on continually endeavouring to make the implicit assumptions of the logos of systemic participation explicit, and to experiment with social forms and institutions coherent with the logos of systemic participation. In so doing I hope to transcend the mechanistic logos where “knowledge is power, the power to transform nature to our advantage” (Skolimowski 1994:145). The mechanistic logos applied to development with peasants has resulted in the power to transform peasants to our advantage, and in the process also alienating the peasant from themselves and their environment, and alienating the developer from the peasant. Habermas (1987:370) shows something similar in relation to the complicit role of the welfare state in rich societies, which while endeavouring to ameliorate the effect of domination, can become themselves a vehicle upon which a citizen is dependent. The work of this thesis endeavours to show how systemic participation and my epistemic learning, that progressed through phases of: re-framing, paradigm change, and the possibility of a change in worldview or cosmology; can be effective in addressing the problems of unnecessary hunger that arise within a mechanistic logos and cosmology.

The last chapter which follows, attempts to synthesise a portrayal of the epistemic learning described in this chapter, along with the implications a systemic reframing of institutions may have on my future work.
CHAPTER 9

THE SYSTEMICALLY PARTICIPATING SELF

All life is participation. The song of life is the song of participation. The sorrow of life is an estrangement from participation. When life has discovered the meaning of participation it has discovered its most important modus for growth. The process of participation is perhaps the most profound vehicle of the evolving universe.

Henryk Skolimowski
The Participatory Mind (1994:152)

AN OVERVIEW OF MY EPISTEMICALLY LEARNING SELF

In the writing of Chapter 8, while referring to Quantum Physics (Zukav 1979) and biology (Maturana and Varela 1992), I argued against a transcendent reality. Rather, I saw it as that which we choose to make it. Yet patently this cannot be completely so, else we would come to transcend our environment which includes others: in so doing I would have become the transcendent category that I wished to replace. Maturana and Varela (1992) take this issue into account in balancing the structurally determined organism with its environment using the notion of structural coupling. Within structural coupling two or more structurally determined systems exhibit a congruency that persists as long as each is able to maintain their own class. What is significant is that neither determines the other but each change in the process of relating, living, and conversing. What is made real then is not reality but relationships, a relationship that arises between self-determining structures that do not allow strategic or instrumental communication (Habermas 1984, 1987, and Brand 1990), a relationship within which an ethic arises through the validity of the other that is founded in the validity of the self (Maturana and Varela 1992), a relationship that is committed to contextual relativism (Perry 1999) in which we are all permitted to participate in the construction of our own truth (Rosenau 1992:78).
Chapter 9: The systemically participating self

My epistemic learning resulted from a change in relationship - from subject-object relationships to subject-subject relationships. In the former, I sought to know what I should do (reflected in the title of Tolstoy 1991) while in the later I seek to know what I should be? In helping me answer the, “What should I do?” question, I was assisted through the media of power and money wielded by institutions that appeared to have special access to the truth. But in following this pathway I found myself alienated from myself and my experiences, as I was directed by others I regarded as having knowledge that was superior to mine. In the domain that relates to the two questions: Who I should be?, and, What should be the relationship between myself and others? - I found self-fulfilment came at the expense of the loss of power and money, yet resulted in self-empowerment and the richness of joy.

It is this notion of learning as gaining power over oneself, not of others, through eschewing the power of the institutional guardians of truth, such as the state, the church, science, and economics - and following the path of joy, that I found resonated with Dante’s Divine Comedy as it unfolds in Purgatorio (Binyon 1938:Canto xxvii). The work of the “teacher” within this notion is not to teach but to encourage commitment for self-actualisation (Perry 1999). The work of this thesis within this context then is to gain courage and understanding from the telling of my story, as I have gained courage and understanding from others who have told their story.

To evoke an overarching sense of my story, I would like to refer the reader to Table 7 below. The central dynamic within all the three phases of my epistemic learning in this diagram is represented by the generic dynamic of epistemic change (GDEC) that was elaborated in Chapter 3, and used to help my explanation of systemic participation in Chapter 8. Four characteristics of this dynamic include the:
Chapter 9: The systemically participating self

1. Fundamental failure of the known.
2. Immersion within the unknown.
3. Emergence of new categories.
4. Resistance to the new categories from the status quo.

This dynamic is informed by the onto-epistemology of Quantum Physics (refer Chapter 1 Tables 1-3), autoethnography (refer Chapter 2 Table 4), Freire’s cultural action for freedom (refer Chapter 5), Foucault’s philosophy (refer Chapter 6) and in Chapter 7: Uphoff’s sociology, Maturana and Varela’s biology, and Habermas’s philosophy of communicative action. Resulting from the dialectic arising between these ideas, and my experiences and understandings, is the notion that I refer to as systemic participation. My learning of systemic participation outlined in Chapter 8, and summarised in Table 7 below, is depicted as occurring in three phases where the GDEC is guided by the systemic reframing first of action, secondly of explanation, and lastly of institutions. Through the dynamic process of the GDEC in each phase the starting categories are transformed. The emergence of new categories reflects the fundamental difference between the paradigm of mechanism and systemic participation. These differences are not trivial and I could not move from one paradigm to the other without the experience of paradigmatic entrapment that is reflected in Part 2 of the thesis (Chapter 5). Within this experience I realised and internalised the incompatibility between the two paradigms that is also highlighted by Salner (1986:231), Hiley (1984) quoted in Valero-Silva (1994:220), Bawden (1987a:153), and nicely articulated by Maiteny and Ison (2000:575) as a situation where one is caught within the paradigm that one seeks to change. In essence what results is a distinction of the meaning of participation within the contrasting paradigms of classical and quantum physics, and their resulting distinct onto-epistemologies.
Table 7: Depicting my epistemic learning as a shift from a paradigm of mechanism to a paradigm of systemic participation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PHASE 1</th>
<th>PHASE 2</th>
<th>PHASE 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Systemic reframing of action</strong></td>
<td><strong>Systemic reframing of explanation</strong></td>
<td><strong>Systemic reframing of institutions</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Starting Categories</strong></td>
<td><strong>Transformed Categories</strong></td>
<td><strong>Starting Categories</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert</td>
<td>Expert &amp; project with peasant as &quot;development collaborators&quot;</td>
<td>Discipline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project</td>
<td></td>
<td>Method</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fixed disciplinary boundaries</td>
<td>Changeable interests and needs of peasants</td>
<td>Directed by media of power and money</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus on procedural correctness</td>
<td>Focus on participatory relationship with peasants</td>
<td>Focus on personal transformation - changing self</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **INCOMMENSURABILITY BETWEEN CATEGORIES AND LACK OF PARADIGMATIC AWARENESS**

- **EMERGENT AWARENESS OF THE NOTION OF PARADIGM AND CHARACTERISATION OF BOTH THE MECHANISTIC PARADIGM AND PARADIGM OF SYSTEMIC PARTICIPATION**

- **TURNING POINT 1 ✤s MOTIVATING PHASE 1**
  1. What can I do about unnecessary hunger?
  2. How can I improve the lived experience of peasants?

- **TURNING POINT 2 ✤s MOTIVATING PHASE 2**
  How can I explain the undermining of my success in systemic participation and my inability to explain what systemic participation was?

- **TURNING POINT 3 ✤s MOTIVATING PHASE 3**
  How can I replicate the practice and explanation of systemic participation?

**Generic Dynamic of Epistemic Change (GDEC)** referred to in Chapter 3 and 8, includes elements such as:
- a) the fundamental failure of the known,
- b) immersion in the unknown,
- c) emergent categories, and
- d) resistance and conflict surrounding the new form of knowing.
Each phase arises from the problems arising from the limits of the previous phase, and the whole process resulted from my initial unravelling in my teens whereby I could not explain why people went unnecessarily hungry, and the impact this had on my sense of what it meant to be human (refer to Chapter 1). The motivating questions for each phase I refer to in Diagram 1 as turning points, a concept I also used within my experiences in Mozambique (refer to Chapter 4). The implication each phase has in relation to the concept of paradigm, is identified in Table 7 for Phase 1, as naïve systemic action and its concomitant lack of paradigmatic awareness. This caused an ambiguity, resulting from two different senses of participation arising in action, but I lacked an ability to explain their difference. This led to Phase 2 becoming a phase of systemic explanation, providing a paradigmatic awareness in which the two different types of participation could be seen to be informed by two different paradigms - that of mechanism and systemic participation.

Systemic replication becomes the last phase of my epistemic learning which I see as providing my post-thesis direction. Within this notion I see myself endeavouring to participate in the evolvement of new institutional forms that support and exhibit the praxis of systemic participation that is evident within the systemic action and explanation of Phases 1 and 2 of my epistemic learning. However, the results of this institutional praxis are far from inevitable, as the notion of congruence between organism and environment (Maturana and Varela 1992) and between self and society (Gregory 2000) makes itself felt. This ability to replicate systems thinking and action depends as much upon a change in society’s worldview, as it does upon the practice of like-minded practitioners. This need for a change in worldview is highlighted in Maiteny and Ison (2000:575) as a change in “the prevailing culture and structures” of society. Skolimoswky (1994) depicts this as a change in cosmology resulting from the failure of the modern mechanistic cosmology in the
face of ecological disaster, fragmentation of our individual and social lives, and “spiritual impoverishment” (Skolimowsky 1994:136). In the place of mechanism the “Methodology of Participation” (Skolimowski 1994:37) is seen to arise, which in turn will bring forth a new cosmology of “wholeness and connectedness” (Ibid:141). The cultural replication of systemic participation is only seen to be possible as society’s existing mechanistic cosmology is superseded in the face of a continual failure of the cosmology of mechanism.

This cosmology of “wholeness and connectedness” is illustrated to me: a) in my sense of connectedness with the starving described in the thesis introduction, b) in the words of Fromm (1962:151) who says the words of the speaker cannot be divorced from the life and being of the speaker, otherwise they serve to deceive rather than reveal, c) through the work of Torbert (1991) as he struggles to find a balance between his personal, social, and professional lives, and in the work of d) autoethnography, where one is informed not only by logic, but also by emotion and spirituality, and the understanding of self is accompanied by a greater understanding of others. Ellis and Bochner (2000:738) reject that self should be fashioned only by the template that society offers it (Alsop 2002).

My epistemic learning has allowed me to progress through naïve practice to an explanatory evoking of systemic participation. This progress in self-making was supported by my congruence with the theory and praxis of the self-making of my Hawkesbury Experience, and also by my recent embracing of some ideas drawn from Freire, Foucault, Uphoff, Maturana and Varela, and Habermas that also resonate with a cosmology of self-making. In the third phase of my epistemic learning that I have called systemic replication, I reject most current forms of institutions, and their structures, processes, and relationships which they replicate -
Chapter 9: The systemically participating self

as products of a mechanistic cosmology and onto-epistemology. Within the third phase of epistemic learning that I see will follow this thesis I seek to answer two questions of importance to me. The first is, “What will the form, function, and process of institutions that can replicate systemic practice and explanation look like?” The second question is, “How can I assist others to learn of the joys of self-making that arise through the insights gained from a critical reflection on their experiences, and engaging with theories and philosophies that are resonant with a cosmology of wholeness and connectedness?” (Skolimowsky 1994)

IN PURSUIT OF STRUCTURES THAT REPLICATE SYSTEMIC PARTICIPATION

The concept of systemic participation grew from my initial construction of development in my Hawkesbury undergraduate years, as intercultural interaction that had arisen from my engagement with Checkland’s Soft Systems Methodology (Checkland 1981), described briefly in Chapter 1 and more fully in Appendix 1. In seeking to understand why I shifted from the notion of intercultural interaction to that of systemic participation, I found the autoethnographic explanation of the tension I experienced between self and society more complete, as it was critically aware of how cultural perspectives arose and how they affected the individual. This was something that my understanding of development as intercultural interaction did not do. The systemic concepts of reframing, paradigm, worldview, and epistemic learning which I found in the writing of this thesis assisted me to move beyond the notion of culture, to see how culture could be re-made. For me, this remaking of culture was assisted through the re-formation of my cosmology and the onto-epistemology that results from it.
In this process of “remaking culture” in relation to development with peasants, I portray the failure of the onto-epistemology of mechanism, and the emerging success inherent within the onto-epistemology of systemic participation. The former is depicted as contemporary development, sponsored by the fixed gaze of dominant expatriates and their institutions that results in what I now call expat-centric development. Within expat-centric development the reality of the expatriate “expert” is favoured in the implementation of blueprint projects, in which local participation is merely the conscription of peasants to carry out a reality that has already been defined. “Successful” development can thus be construed as following the correct procedure as laid out by the project document. However, the onto-epistemology of systemic participation gives rise to a constituent onto-epistemology that arises from within the participants, including the peasants as development practitioners in their own right. Development within this onto-epistemology is seen to be relationship-based in which congruence between self-making individuals is creatively and mutually maintained. Skolimowski (1994) makes a similar distinction evident between his notions of co-creative participation and pseudo or pre-programmed participation.

Within my experience of the naïve practice of systemic participation in my overseas work in the Solomon Islands and Mozambique (refer to Chapters 2, 3 & 4) I was operating within the existing mechanistic paradigm and institutional structures that replicated mechanistic development (refer to Chapter 5). Within my experience of systemic explanation, I was able to see the incommensurability between my emerging sense of systemic participation and the practice of mechanistic and strategic participation of contemporary development. Within this second phase of epistemic learning I found theoretical and philosophical support for a process of development as self-making that denies transcendent reality at the same time as
supporting a constitutive onto-epistemology that arises through dialectic communicative action (refer to Chapters 1, 6, 7, 8). The work of the third phase of my epistemic learning, which will be the focus of my post-doctoral work, is constructed as moving beyond the structural, functional, and procedural limitations of the institutions that replicate the mechanistic paradigm of development - to engage in the creative enterprise of constructing new institutional forms that replicate and support the development of the practice and explanation of systemic participation. Others, like Gregory (2006), also demonstrate a similar desire for institutions that can be controlled in a meaningful way by those who are part of them.

While not being able to provide a blueprint or plan for such a process I can briefly outline two principles that will inform my commitment to this engagement. The first will focus on learning as a process of self-making through epistemic awareness. The second emerges within the ethic of the value of others that arises in conjunction with the value of self.

The implications that I see arising within these two concepts are:

1. For development to be seen as the maintenance of congruency between the self-making process of participants, who are committed to the responsibility of constructing their own critically reflective and contextually relevant “truths.”

2. Institutional forms, functions, and processes are seen to be constituted by, and emergent from, the congruencies arising between all participants engaged in the process of their own self-making.

3. The strategic role of the media of power and money in the pursuit of strategic development gives way to the communicative action of systemic participation, in which morality is normatively determined through a collection of individual commitments to participate. This is in contrast to the morality of
strategic action that is policy and rule-based, and doing ones best involves the carrying out of pre-defined procedures.

I see myself participating in the above enterprise initially within the Solomon Islands where I can be informed more intimately through the effects and context of my past experiences. Most problematic is the concept of funding, as I feel these ideas exclude the concept of a central donor who sponsors development for their own strategic purposes. Because of this it is likely that any resulting action will be pre-eminently a productive enterprise or business that can support all participants.

ENCOURAGING COMMITMENT TO CONTEXTUAL RELATIVISM AND SELF-MAKING

Through systemic participation the concept of teaching is transformed from the transfer of facts about reality, to how we participate in the construction of truth. As such, the best that I see that I can do is to maintain my commitment to contextual relativism, in which action is coordinated communicatively between self-making individuals in subject-subject relationship. Within this commitment I have no obligation to convince others of my truth, outside of my own commitment and engagement with my own critical reflections, and my interest in engaging with and supporting the critical reflections of others. I see this commitment as a “will-to-function" outside of the institutions of society that are largely informed by, and constructed to replicate, mechanistic thinking. In so doing I hope to encourage communication that is not institutionally mediated, and encourages others to “speak of the silences” (Bochner 1997) that are otherwise institutionally maintained. This, I hope, will assist in conceptualising the notion of learning as the realisation of joy that arises both from overcoming a sense of alienation between self and it’s experiences, and rejecting the domination of self by a transcendent reality that is strategically
maintained by society’s institutions. In so doing I seek to participate in a Foucauldian quest to reject an apparent necessity of the status quo, which I describe as unnecessary hunger, and see how it can be made a contingency (Cooper2002).
REFERENCES


Bawden, R. (1983). Do we really know where we are going? Richmond, NSW, Australia, Hawkesbury Agricultural College.


References


Easterly, W. (2006). The white man's burden: why the West's efforts to aid the rest have done so much ill and so little good. New York, Penguin Press HC.


Fanon, F. (1963). The wretched of the earth - the handbook for the black revolution that is changing the shape of the world. New York, Grove Press.


References


References


References


References


References


Sinclair, A. (2005). It's the expectations that can distract us, including those we place on ourselves. Managing the demands of self and others can be a liberating experience. *AFR BOSS:* 66.


Tudge, C. (2003b). *So shall we reap (How everyone who is liable to be born in the next ten thousand years could eat very well indeed; and why, in practice, our immediate descendants are likely to be in serious trouble)*. Camberwell, Vic, Penguin Books Australia Ltd.


APPENDIX 1

A DEVELOPMENT MODEL

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report is to detail the interactive processes and experiences I have had with a group of colleagues involved in Third World development issues. Hopefully the report will be useful in several ways:

1. Be a useful tool for me in clarifying what I have actually gone through, and think, as a result of this interaction process.
2. Demonstrate the usefulness of a “systems approach” to problem solving.
3. That this report can be passed on to other people as a basis for discussion about my involvement in Third World countries.

As this report will be read by some who may not be conversant with systems thinking, it would perhaps be appropriate for those in this category to read Techniques in Soft Systems Practice Part 2: Building Conceptual Models (Appendix 1 not included). This appendix is quite easy reading and only takes about half an hour to read. This model becomes the basis of this work so it is necessary that the reader is conversant with the concepts the appendix embraces. For further development of these concepts the reader would also find Chapter 6 in Systems thinking, Systems practice by Checkland (1981) very helpful.

My initial involvement with this learning project was brought about by a notice from Ray Ison (Lecturer, Hawkesbury Agricultural College) on our third year agricultural student’s notice board. It invited interested students to look at a particular Third
Appendix 1: A development model

World aid project, which he had visited previously and was due to visit again in July, 1983.

At the first meeting, eight students turned up together with Ray Ison and Bob Macadam (another Lecturer). Ray and Bob both expressed enthusiasm in testing the usefulness of Systems Thinking on a complex “real life” issue that Ray had come in contact with. This was the Kurunegala District Rural Development Project in Sri Lanka. Interest by Ray and Bob was expressed to those who had come, in developing some sort of prospective ideas which may constitute an “improvement” to the situation as it was elaborated by Ray, and also stated in a “case study” of the same project by a group from the University of Reading in the United Kingdom. It would be good if those not acquainted with this project browse through the cased study located in Appendix 2 (not included).

Thus we started out on our intellectual journey in pursuit of using new methodological tools which many of us were just discovering. The initial stage was spent with eight of us, together with Ray and Bob, in discussion about the Kurunegala Project based on the written material in Appendix 2 and enriched by the personal experiences of Ray when visiting the project area.

It became obvious that such a large group was unwieldy, and not able to provide for full participation. So it was decided to divide up into two groups of four students each. Each group would develop along its own lines and we would all meet to collaborate and exchange ideas as was needed. The group I became involved with included:

- Meryn Carey (Fellow 3rd year agricultural student),
Appendix 1: A development model

- Ramond (Graduate Diploma of Extension student and Extension Officer in the Solomon Islands), and
- Dale Williams (Graduate Diploma in Extension student and previously working in PNG and Africa).

In the three months following, our group went through stages of description, analysis and confusion, which lead eventually to the conceptualisation, in part, of our own ideas in relation to Third World development. I would now like to describe these experiences.

A MODEL OF KURUNEGALA?

Our group first thought it would be possible to develop some ideas and possible improvements for the Kurunegala Development Project (KDP), which might be useful for Ray to take with him on his July, 1983 visit to the project area. We had read Appendix 2, had discussions with Ray, and decided in an effort to gain a group perspective that we could identify with, we would list the things which came to our minds about the KDP. As we started listing them, some points were debated and discussed. This tended to restrict participation and was fairly tedious. To try and overcome this we decided to operate under “brainstorming” rules. The outcome is listed in Table A1-1 below:
Table A1-1: List of important characteristics of the Kurunegala Development Project

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Issue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Credit arrangements: 80% had no access due to corruption and inefficiency</td>
<td>Climate and topography disparities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plantation economies - monetisation</td>
<td>Social strata - caste</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional complexity, inefficiency, lack of coordination</td>
<td>Unwillingness of elite to alter status quo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dependence on three plantation crops for export</td>
<td>Very limited control of prices and markets of export items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reducing terms of trade</td>
<td>Excessive foreign influence and market control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political expediency vs. democracy</td>
<td>Population pressures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental imbalance</td>
<td>Unemployment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good levels of education and academic skills</td>
<td>Land ownership concentrated in a few hands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low productivity and incomes</td>
<td>Incompatibility of existing infrastructure with Western aid given</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disparity between Western ideals with local context</td>
<td>A lot of money spent, but for whose benefit?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With these points noted, the whole picture appeared so complex. It had us wondering how to collect the main points together so that we could discuss the project in a cohesive way. It was decided, in an effort to get the situation clearer in our minds that we would go through the “CATWOE” technique that is outline in Checkland (1981).

A “CATWOE” OF THE KDP

*Clients, beneficiaries, victims: the peasant

*Actors: Project planners: World Bank and Government of Sri Lanka

Project implementers: advisors, extensionists, field officers and small business

Project receivers: land owners, Government and peasants

*Transformation processes, purpose, mission: the “teach and visit” system of extension was the main transformation process. The main purpose of the project
Appendix 1: A development model

was to evolve a replicable model of regional development for raising productivity, employment, incomes and living standards of the rural population in Sri Lanka.

“W”orld view, underlying values: political gain, creation of equality and the raising of living standards. Ideological conflict between what the planners would like the project to be and what it actually was.

“O”wner, people with power to say yes or no: World Bank Project directors, Sri Lankan Government

“E”nvironment: infrastructure poorly developed, historical context

From our group’s involvement in CATWOE, we saw a paternalistic group of governments and officials who were “owners,” or in a position of control, and yet they also had a completely different Weltanschauung to those who were “beneficiaries.” By this stage we started to wonder why the fact that the project was not really working was taking our attention. An important quote in the first page of Appendix 2 of the project documentation reflects this.

Many obstacles stand in the way of success. Not least of these are the prevailing distribution of social, economic and political power at village level, the structure of institutional and administrative arrangements concerned with extension and credit; the actual content, purpose and management of rural development policies; and the degree of commitment of national policy-makers (and international aid agencies) to design programs which are appropriate to the conditions of village communities, which reach them, and in which they can participate actively. Where these obstacles are not overcome, one possible result of extension and credit schemes is that, while overall production and income levels may increase for the region or the country as a whole, the majority of small and poor farmers are ones who benefit least. Indeed it is possible that a society in which there is an initially uneven distribution of assets, power, influence and income may remain unequal or become more so, when ‘growth’ (perhaps stimulated by extension and credit systems) takes place, at least in the short and medium term. One implication of all this is that where the explicit objective of extension and credit systems is to reach the small and the poor farmers, then the design and implementation of such programs has to be thought about very carefully indeed, especially with respect to the obstacles mentioned above.

We felt that the obstacles were recognised but nothing was really done about it in relation to the content of the project. Why does such a project which is meant to be designed to alleviate some of the problems mentioned in the quote above, fail to do so? This question, together with the complexity of the situation and our seeming
ineptitude to cope with it, led to frustration. This became apparent with group activities becoming irregular and hopes of getting anything out of the whole exercise looking doubtful. Some favourable aspects of this frustration however, were that each person was trying different approaches and look at the situation in different ways. Meryn, for example, provide a model (refer Appendix 3 – not included) which brought some “fresh air” into the process and allowed us to become better acquainted with each other’s thoughts and feelings about issues of Third World development.

A new direction

Eventually we became concerned about the effectiveness of our group and the purpose for which we were now studying together. Was it realistic to expect a small group of people who are not even involved in a situation to look at it “on paper,” without interaction with the “actors,” and come up with some “possible improvements”? Even if that was possible, what sort of credibility would it have, and what benefit would it be to us anyhow? Our need for personal satisfaction became apparent through these sorts of questions. These questions were not being answered by our present interaction and involvement in the KDP.

DEVELOPING A PERSONAL MODEL OF DEVELOPMENT IN LESSER DEVELOPED COUNTRIES (LDC)

Our new direction, which developed out of the above environment came: to develop a model of essential processes we saw necessary for effective participation in LDC. This was to be based on our own philosophy and perspective. Perhaps after developing a model such as this we could then compare it to the KDP as a basis for discussion. This would be both meaningful and relevant to us and it would also assist in guiding our future involvement in LDCs.
Appendix 1: A development model

Happy in this new direction, Dale and I spent the next three weeks together developing our thoughts. I must thank Dale for taking the time and effort to persist in our common objectives and provide good practical insight from his experiences in PNG and Africa in the past five years. The other two members were largely unavailable during this period, but were good in providing feedback about the model which Dale and I developed.

We decided we should continue developing our “problem situation” within the context of Checkland’s Soft Systems Methodology (Checkland 1981). We would be happy if we could make it to step four of the model, that is, conceptual modelling. Our involvement in the first four steps of Checkland’s model were very interactive. We often went back and forth from our philosophy (situation structured/unstructured), to the “root definition,” and again to the model. To make it easier to write-up, and also hopefully easier for the reader to follow, I will talk about how the situation developed in order of the procedural steps in Checkland’s model.

**Situation unstructured and structured**

We saw our situation as being to develop a model for *successful development* in LDCs, as we saw it. The resulting model would provide a basis for discussing our views on development, and a guide for our future involvement in LDCs. Thus the context for the model was the way we saw things, that is, our philosophy of life and our view of effective development. Many of the points below were developed from our original discussions of the KDP, while others arose from the process of developing the *root definition* and the *conceptual model*. The points that came to our attention are listed below:

- Some useful attitudes we would like to have during our involvement in development projects in LDC are *cultural awareness* and a sense that we
Appendix 1: A development model

are *guests*. This would imply we should be both humble, and respectful of the people and culture we work within.

- Restrict action which does not help the *target group*, that is, the rural poor.
- Emphasise skills and ideas, rather than a preoccupation of undertaking large capital works projects. That is emphasise *social infrastructure vs physical infrastructure*.
- Encourage local involvement.
- Preference for projects with relatively large benefit for simple inputs which can be easily administered.
- Exercise good stewardship of the environment.
- Help should be integrated and holistic.
- Be pragmatic - set practical limits and objectives.
- Complete preliminary stages of planning before starting the next stage.
- Development is time consuming, there are few, if any, quick solutions or improvements.
- Language is very important to know as it’s so much a part of the culture.
- Awareness of cultural background.
- Assess the situation, where people are, and why?
- Share with locals to find out what needs they have - individually and collectively.
- What is “their” direction?
- Participate with locals to develop a *self sufficient* and *directed* project, with regard to such elements as: finance, organisation, and technology. Curtail involvement which requires unrealistic levels of these elements.
- Involvement necessitates an interaction between *our needs* and *their needs*.
Appendix 1: A development model

- Development should be an interactive process where all participants each have a good understanding of the other, and a genuine respect for each other, and so allowing for a *pooling* of information and ideas to occur.
- Ideas and processes to be developed, implemented, and assessed *with* the community it affects.
- Structures should be *loose*, and development should only occur as genuine needs become apparent in relation to that culture.
- Use village level contacts from the poorer class to encourage active participation of peasants.
- Facilitate the peasants to generate ideas, interests, and commitment that are *self-perpetuating*.
- “Grass root” development.
- Long range planning.
- Select problems most limiting to the development of the culture.
- If involved in developing diverse geographical areas, remember that different segments probably have different needs because of varying social, cultural, and environmental variations.
- A *small effective work* is better than a large ineffective one.

A development of some of these concepts into small models occurred during the process of developing root definitions and the conceptual model. They are listed below and mainly revolve around the word *interaction* (a mutual or reciprocal action or influence). This word encapsulates the major concept of our work. It was realised while we were developing the root definition, as we shall see later.
Depicting a process of development inquiry

In development work we need to ask ourselves, what is the most effective way to operate? Many projects use one or more of the processes in the model below (Diagram A1-1), the most predominant, being what we call the filter down process. This process is very similar to extension projects here in Australia where a decision is made, often at the apex of the triangle, for the good of the people, or farmers for example, in general. Processes are then implemented, like the Teach and Visit method, whereby the people in need are educated to see the advantages of the decision made. We would maintain that there should be direct interaction where possible. In either the filter down or filter up methods, ideas get distorted and taken out of context along the way. Direct interaction allows for a more dialectic learning process to take place.

Diagram A1-1: How does the process of inquiry and adjustment take place?
Who makes the decisions?

The above issue of interaction goes hand-in-hand with the issue of who makes the decisions? A filter down method implies that the decision is made at the apex of the triangle - from above. However, we would maintain that an interactive relationship shares in decision making, like the interaction process indicated in the model above.

In Model A of Diagram A1-2 below, the standard practice is for the helper or developer to look at the situation, talk to the owner of the problem, for example the peasant, then in her or his expert role goes away and then thinks up a solution and then tries to educate the owner to adopt his or her ideas. We maintain that Model B is better. Here the helper and the owner of the problem, look at the problem situation together. As a result of this interaction on how the problem is perceived, together they develop a way of improving the situation. This new development is already accepted by the owner of the problem, as she/he was part of the process of developing the improvement.
Diagram A1-2: Who makes the decisions?

Intercultural inter-action

As a result of interaction both “helper” and problem “owner” maintain their separate identities. However, in the process of interaction each becomes acquainted with the other person’s concepts and why they hold them. This facilitates the incorporation of new ideas, and in an atmosphere of acceptance, leads to the further development of each individual. This process continues ad infinitum. So the worldview or weltanschauung of the participants in the inter-action model above change shape, while in the filter-up or filter-down model only one group of participants are meant to experience this - and this is predefined by others.

Root definition

Root definitions are an important part of Checkland’s methodology, as this is what the conceptual model is based. It is meant to describe in a “nutshell” what we want the system to be. Our initial root definition was, “cross-cultural facilitation of self-
development in LDCs.” However, we later substituted, “cross-cultural” with “inter-cultural.” Thus the root definition became: “inter-cultural facilitation of self-development in LDCs.”

The word *inter-cultural* seems accepting of the interaction of more than one culture. It acknowledges that there are limits to how far one can identify with another culture, while it appreciates the benefit of multi-cultural interaction because of the complimentary nature and stimulating effect of different approaches, values, and abilities. That is, we don’t have to become totally as they, the peasants are - like an anthropologist may endeavour to do - to be of benefit, and yet we should not arrogantly put aside cultural differences. It is better to acknowledge cultural differences in a spirit of humility and gratitude and use these differences for common benefit.

*Facilitation* implies that there is no conventional teacher/learner relationship. That is, we both have a lot to learn. From our perspective we would see that by operating as a type of catalyst for self-development this would be a learning process also for us. *Self-development* is something we think ought to be self-evident. Who gives someone dreams that cannot be realised or maintained by the person to whom they are given? If she/he does, surely resentment and humiliation are the result? We would put forward that development does not occur, unless it can be maintained by those for whom it was originally undertaken with.

**DEVELOPING THE CONCEPTUAL MODEL**

Once we were this far most of the work had been done, and yet nothing could be seen for it. The root definition told us what sort of system it was that we wanted to
develop and now we needed to find out how it could be done. The greatest difficulty was to have the verbs we had selected to be of equal importance. That, is not mixing the operation concerned, with how it was done. The three verbs originally chosen were: orientation, interaction, and monitoring. We saw these verbs as following one after the other, as well as interacting. Orientation was essentially a “get to know and identify with” stage of cultural appreciation, together with “knowing where each other stood,” and what each person was there for. From this initial orientation, ideas which were appropriate to both parties could be developed and implemented. As a result of this interaction the outcome could be monitored by both parties to see if it was effective. The process would then continue around in a cycle, hopefully improving each time around.

Upon looking at the interaction stage in the cycle, it became apparent that planning together was a really important part of this stage. We thought it was important enough to warrant a position in the model between the orientation and interaction stages. The final model, Diagram A1-3, is shown below, together with alternative verbs all starting with the letter “P.”
Although we view the model as being most effective when started with a good orientation and then follow through the distinct stages, we realise that many of the stages are interactive. In this way one can shift emphasis from one part of the process to another, in order to aid the continuance of the cycle. What is important is that these four verbs are held together within a \textit{weltanschauung} that includes the two important concepts of \textit{systems thinking} and \textit{adult learning}.

In an effort to explain our perception of the model and the reasons we had for it, I would like to go through each stage and list some of the concepts we viewed which suited that step and which related to the model as a whole.

\textbf{Stage 1 - Orientation (Preparation)}

We viewed this as the most essential step in the whole model. Upon it, the effectiveness of the rest of the model is based. \textit{Inter-cultural orientation} requires a long time. If one is to really be effective with the people with which one works, often learning the language is necessary. Also participation in their lifestyle is important in
Appendix 1: A development model

gaining an appropriate and relevant view of both their and your own values, attitudes, and perspectives. It takes time to develop the social infrastructure through which understanding and good-will between two cultures can be developed. Both parties have needs, which if the project is to be successful, have to be met. It’s the identification and working with these common needs which will in the end determine the success, if any, of the project undertaken.

If agreement cannot be made at this basic stage then it’s not worth trying to develop “out-of-step” with each other. This is the foundation upon which the success and relevance of the rest of the project is built. In brief, the main elements of this orientation are seen to include: time, identification and affiliation, language, values, attitudes and perspectives, along with respect and humility.

We would like to note here that the four stages of development we see as emanating from the perspective we hold. They are an expression of how we would like a development project to operate. When this model is used it should be remembered that how they are carried out will depend on each particular situation. However, if the orientation stage of development is not successful, it is our view the development process should not continue further. However, in the event of success, we would suggest the following phases of development.

**Stage 2 - Strategy (Planning)**

Planning is seen to be the intimate link between the phases of orientation and operation. All plans should relate to the concepts and ideas which were found to be of importance for both parties involved. It is a process where the objectives which both parties are committed to fulfilling are formalised. This includes ascertaining the form of organisation appropriate to develop, run, and maintain the program; the
Appendix 1: A development model

physical infrastructure required, and the purpose for which all effort is directed. Some simple guiding concepts for this planning stage could include: self-direction, long-range planning, integrated planning, and a questioning review - are these changes likely to be beneficial?

Stage 3 - Activity (performing)

This phase portraits the nature of the activities undertaken. These should be developed in relation to the context of the previous two phases, in order to ensure they remain relevant. If the project begins to head in a direction that was not intended, and is contrary to our objectives of development, then there needs to be a mechanism which can adjust the direction of the activities. This “mechanism” is seen to be provided by the monitoring process of Stage 4.

Some of the concepts that guide this activity phase include:

- *Small is beautiful.* That is a small effective work is better than a large superficial one.
- *A loose and dynamic structure.*
- *Self-sufficiency.*
- Avoiding involvement which is likely to require unrealistic levels of technology and capital.
- Restrict activities not *beneficial to target group.*
- Preference to projects giving *largest benefit for least change.*
- Good stewardship of the environment.
- Complete initial stages of any plan before proceeding to next stage, or have a good reason for changing the original activity.
Stage 4 - Monitoring/evaluating (pondering)

Monitoring and evaluation is essential in any interaction or activity. Such a phase is seen to be concerned with the following questions: 1. Has the interaction been successful and consistent with respect to what was planned? 2. Are the people involved happy about the outcome? 3. How can what we did be improved if we were to do it again?

This four phased model of development represents how we view effective development projects should operate. It arose out of an initial contact with a traditional development project and its seeming inability to come to grips with the original questions it set out to solve. Hopefully, the views developed here will go some way in developing new and more effective ways of inter-cultural interaction and development.

ADDENDUM

In Checkland’s (1981) SSM, CATWOE’s are generally used to develop root definitions. We thought it would be interesting if we developed a CATWOE based on our model of development, and compare it with the original CATWOE we did for the KDP. At first we tried going through Clients, Actors and Owners, and we found that within our perspective, they were all the same people. That is, all participants were interactively and interdependently participating in all these activities, which were normally relegated to people playing only one particular role. Thus we saw peasants as clients, actors, and owners. This arises within a weltanschauung of power sharing, equality, inter-dependence, adult learning, and self-direction. We would assume that the environment would need to be similar if we were to continue to interact together successfully.
Our initial conclusion that: **C,A,O + W,E = T** is significant in that it shows that the type of transformation which occurs is very dependant on CAO and WE. We would maintain that *all participants* should be on an equal footing with regard to decision making and power sharing. For effective participation the acceptance and recognition of the various *weltanschauungen* of the participants should result in the transformation process being compatible with those involved. From our point of view, we would see that *adult learning* and *systems thinking* should be essential parts in the transformation process. This is the main difference between our model and the conventional approach to development, which use a *didactic pedagogy* and are *task oriented*, in achieving transformations. These affect the nature of the first step of our model which we deem to be most important, but which conventional programs place a lot of assumptions.

**REFERENCE**


H. Mattner, November 1983
APPENDIX 2

“COMING OUT” IN THE SCHOOL OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT – A CRITIQUE OF INSTITUTIONAL SYSTEMIC DEVELOPMENT AT HAWKESBURY

INTRODUCTION

I first wrote this paper almost two years ago now. However, until now, I never had the courage to share it with the Centre for Systemic Development (CSD) community, of which, theoretically I was a part. Given the current debate in the CSD, and that I am enrolled as undertaking research in systemic development, I thought I should not ignore my connection with the CSD any longer. To this end I proffer this paper as a symbol of my participation within CSD.

To place my ideas in context I would like to briefly mention my association with the concepts of “being systemic” and “critical.” Something attracted me to the radical new degree program that commenced in 1981 and was implemented by Richard Bawden and his colleagues. I had applied, and was accepted to Gatton, Roseworthy, and Hawkesbury Agricultural Colleges: but I chose Hawkesbury because of what I perceived as its dynamic nature, the approach it took in looking at relevant issues/problems, and its humanness. My choice was continually rewarded, as by the end of the course, I reached the stage where I was willing to finish it and walk away without receiving any bit of paper saying I had obtained a degree. This, I believe, is the highest compliment I could make to a course - a course that was “life enriching.” After about 10 years of working on “development issues” in Australia, its South Pacific neighbours, Africa, and Cambodia, I returned to undertake part-time postgraduate studies. “Being systemic” has always seemed such a natural part of
me – a part which is more than just a “method” to use. It has been an approach to life which I have found enriching. As such it must be more than just a science – perhaps the way I use it, could best be described as a “world-view” or an onto-epistemological orientation. My postgraduate studies with Richard Bawden as my principle supervisor have been most rewarding, as has been my contact with other people I have associated with at Hawkesbury. However, my relationship to the institutional dimension of “Systemic Development” has been somewhat different. During my undergraduate years, from 1981-1984, while there were frustrations, I thoroughly enjoyed the course and felt very much a part of it. Since my postgraduate studies however, my experience has been one of separateness, this has continued within the CSD. The good thing is that it has created a tremendous freedom for me to undertake my work. The disadvantage is that it is a lost opportunity in creating community and engagement which is inclusive, rather than exclusive. From my experience, CSD, while saying different things to other centres is very much the same in structure, but it is less adept at servicing that structure than other centres appear to be.

Concomitant with the notion of “being systemic” has been the notion of being critical. Originally I took this notion to be the dictionary definition of “the act or the art of criticising.” Later this developed into something more along the lines of Habermas, having a liberative purpose.

In Knowledge and Human Interests Habermas says that an exercise of reason is ‘critical’ precisely when its impact frees us and others from the interests that constrain us and others from arriving at a greater degree of liberation. (Simons 1995:124-126)

This view can be enhanced by that of critique’s purpose to show the transformation of an ideal into ideology.

The task of critique is not to denounce the ideals, but to show their transformation into ideologies, and to challenge the ideology in the name of the betrayed idea. (Fromm 1962:126)
Appendix 2: “Coming out” in the school of agriculture and rural development – A critique of institutional systemic development at Hawkesbury

My view is that the institutional arrangements surrounding what it is that is “systemic” at Hawkesbury, have promoted “critical culture” as an ideology. Such ideology has been, at times, quite removed from the actual ideal of being “critical,” and so as an institution it has demonstrated a difficulty in listening to criticism. As I have never really felt part of those institutional arrangements, I can only imagine what reasons there may be for this. Such reasons could include: a) being part of a world which is predominantly hostile to ideas which challenge it, b) working within institutional arrangements/structures which did not evolve from an appropriate “working through” of the constructs of the “world view” that is held, and c) over-commitment, lack of time and resources. These same reasons have dogged my own sensitivity of being criticised. Conversely, I can be so critical of my own critique that many times it goes unsaid. This appears to me to be the opposite side of the same coin, as instead of continual small adjustments being made, it leads to rigidity which eventually must be swept away. Well after this updated introduction I will now like to return to what I wrote two years ago.

“COMING OUT”

No, I am not homosexual. I feel, however, that I am coming to a better appreciation of the homosexual notion of “coming out.” There is a certain gravity which tends to hold one within the limits set by a “status quo.” Such exists within all human activity involving more than one person. We may even find it useful to visualise a similar process within each of us. These limits may be formal or non-formal, but they always exist. Within ones environment we are normally quite aware (consciously or unconsciously) of what these limits are. It may take considerable energy before these limits are exceeded. But when they are, it releases a certain degree of energy which was previously used to focus on ensuring one stayed within the boundaries,
which can then be transferred to focussing on the new direction one is undertaking. It is in this sense that I see myself “coming out” of the CSD.

“Students,” within holistic and emancipatory notions of learning found within CSD, are not meant to exist. Students and teachers alike are all co-learners. Yet I have always felt very much a student within the school, more so now than in 1981. This is not the predominant feeling I get from my principal supervisor, but it is the overall feeling I get from being part of this school, or part of the CSD - if I am part of it - who knows? Yet although I am not meant to exist, I would like to say that I do. Further, although you may not like what I have to say - I must say it - for my own good, and hopefully for yours as well. That I must say it does not make it right - and so I seek to dialogue with you.

THE “HAWKESBURY” TRANSFORMATION

While reading the first page of Bawden (1997) which outlines the genesis of the transformation of the School, I became at once conscious of my own experiences with the School, starting as an undergraduate student in 1981 during the first intake of the new course. The school’s “experiment” has been described and written about many times, some examples of which are (Bawden and Macadam 1983; Bawden and Macadam et al. 1984; Packham and Bawden 1985; Bawden and Macadam 1988; Macadam and Packham 1989; Packham, Roberts et al. (1989); Bawden 1991; Bawden 1992). These papers represent the views of the “experimenters.” Other papers have been written by people coming to “observe/participate” in the Hawkesbury experiment (Cardwell 1987; Applegate 1988; Patterson 1990). To a lesser extent some students in conjunction with staff have written of their
experiences within the course (Evans, Thomas et al. 1983; Macadam, Duff et al. 1984).

The “Hawkesbury” transformation begins with the decision, in the late 1970s, to transform a School of Agriculture. This change in focus resulted in a move: from a production orientation to an orientation of rural development; from teaching courses to problem-based learning; and from a reductionist to a holistic paradigm. While these developments are outlined elsewhere, Bawden (1997) takes the opportunity of outlining “the model of the learning process” central to what is “systemic development.”

I am very aware of the process undergone when relating a project one has directed, that has its primary purpose the “assistance,” in some form, of others; especially when the “others” are not participants in the narration. I was the object of the out-workings of the above developments in the early 1980s. A student in the first group to participate in this newly designed course - the Bachelor of Applied Science (Agriculture).

The selection process was very thorough and involved dialogue between lecturers and prospective students. Having undergone the same procedure at Roseworthy Agricultural College, South Australia; and Gatton Agricultural College, Queensland; I found the Hawkesbury course much like it was related to in the staff papers mentioned above. As a mature-age student the course appealed to me greatly. In fact about one third of the original intake of students, were mature-age entrants.

I thoroughly enjoyed the course. However, there have been several notable experiences, then and since, that suggested to me that there were and are better
Appendix 2: “Coming out” in the school of agriculture and rural development – A critique of institutional systemic development at Hawkesbury

ways of doing and thinking about systemic transformations. Some of my observations back then, and since then, are outlined below. The process I would like to go through in this paper is to list my observations and experiences, followed by the observations and experiences of various visiting fellows, and then make some further comments.

MY EXPERIENCES AND OBSERVATIONS WITHIN THE SCHOOL - A SNAPSHOT.

1. Not long into the first year of the course the majority of students wanted to change it back to the old course. It appeared then to me that their pervading feeling was that everything was “wishy-washy.” No-one appeared to know what they were doing, and the students did not feel they were learning anything. I cannot recall any mature age students within this group. It was strange to me, however, that all the students went through the same interview process advising them of the nature and direction of the course. Why was it that they were so unaware of what they were getting themselves into? Why was it that the staff apparently had no idea that such a reaction would be inevitable - that one round of communication in a particular environment does not necessarily change anything?

2. It appeared that not many of the staff really knew what was going on. Some wanted to know, and made it their business to move in that direction, others didn’t. Yet all were involved in facilitating student groups. This facilitation process was very uneven. Students, undertaking group or personal projects, would go to one facilitator and ask them what the set task involved. They would then start in that direction. Later they would talk to fellow student from a different group who said their facilitator said it was something quite different. My approach was to rely primarily on Richard Bawden and Bob
Appendix 2: “Coming out” in the school of agriculture and rural development – A critique of institutional systemic development at Hawkesbury

Macadam. Through experience, I found that most facilitator’s views on the direction and meaning of a particular task would change to that of the views I had gained from Richard or Bob. It was surprising for me that most of the students never seemed to be aware of this situation. It was just frustrating for them as they ran around to find that the goal posts appeared to be continually changing.

3. There was tremendous freedom to do anything you wanted - well almost anything. Looking through my graduation submission (Mattner 1984) refreshes my memory at the range of activities I was able to do. From the practical, technical, and scientific; to the pragmatic and conceptual. Many students complained of the lack of technical input. Although it was difficult at times to arrange, it was always possible, if you wanted to do something about it. I completed separate Chemistry and Soil Chemistry courses within the School of Agriculture; and in the School of Horticulture, courses on plant identification, plant physiology and micro-propagation (cell culture). This was additional to the technical input provided by the course. In the last phase of the course, two of us, in conjunction with a postgraduate student, grew one hectare of sweet corn and butternuts on land that was previously pasture. The best metaphor of what I was doing at the time was to see myself as a business person - my business was learning. I had strategic plans, operational strategies and implementation actions - all to do with my learning.

4. Within the course there was a persistent problem of promptness and excessive diversion. To cope with this I would always arrive at general course activities 10 to 15 minutes late. Even then I would often be early. It was not unusual to find a programmed activity abandoned or re-scheduled for another time. At the “Course Council’s,” where staff and students met to
discuss problems, there was always a lot of talk, but nothing much seemed to eventuate. No-one ever seemed to be responsible for anything. When with another student from the course, a postgraduate student and I undertook a partnership to grow 1ha of sweet corn and butternuts, we agreed on a way of doing things which counteracted these problems. Firstly, any meeting that we had would start within five minutes of the nominated time. Minutes would be taken of each meeting (on a rotational basis), and we would nominate who was responsible for doing what, when, and how. Sometimes these responsibilities would be individual, other times collective.

Why was the course unable to develop some kind of *modus operandi* which would ease the feeling that one was simply going around in circles - not cycles!

5. While changing outward protocols such as calling staff by first names, and referring to them as facilitators, the teacher student relationship often still persisted. I was involved in one project that included staff (Evans, Thomas et al. 1983) and is referred to in Macadam and Packham (1989). It was reasonably useful, but very much directed by staff.

6. Some of the course advisers were not even aware of the nature of the course, others were. I was fortunate to have one who was aware of the nature of the course on my graduating interview panel. One adviser who was not, however, was to supervise a consultancy I undertook for the Aboriginal Development Commission (Mattner and Stevens 1985). This person ended up calling the resultant first draft report, “a lot of trash!” I had suspected this could happen and so had covered my “professional arse” by collecting all the traditional data while in the field. I rewrote the report in the traditional format, which then made it acceptable for him.
7. Following the course, over many years, there were about three surveys of how graduates were doing. Some promised feedback on the results, but like in many surveys, the results seemed to just disappear down a “black hole,” with the direction of gravity naturally heading away from those surveyed. One normally experiences these situations. However, with the profession of the course envisioning learning as a cooperative process, I found it disconcerting that such experiences fell far short of the profession.

8. After about ten years, when I returned to what is now the University of Western Sydney (UWS), Hawkesbury, I found the situation to be worse. Worse from my perspective as a postgraduate research student. The postgraduate coursework students seemed to at least have some active support from staff. To hear the stories from overseas students gave me the feeling that I was operating in some sort of “Third World” context. An overseas student, for example, took three years full-time to do a one-year coursework masters. The story goes something like this. Student starts coursework masters. Before finishing coursework masters student upgrades to masters by research. Researches for a bit less than two years. Hopes to finish at the end of the second year of research. Advised by supervisor that he would have to do some more experiments which would take another six months. Student does not have the time, quits his research and picks up where he left off with coursework masters. Rushes to complete this before his three years are up! Another observation has been that most overseas PhD students the school has had, had no idea what they were getting themselves into by coming to the school. For example, student arrives on campus to do pasture research. “Where are the laboratories?” “Here, but they are not really set up for what you want to do.” Student realises that it would take six months to set up, and lots of money and staff resources, and
realises it's a lost cause. The “choice” to study Systemic Development is then made. That is, they did not originally intend to study Systemic Development, but circumstances were such that one could say they were almost coerced into studying it. Remarkably, those I have talked to who have gone through this kind of process, in the end, are glad to have done what they have done. But is this the ethics of Systemic Development? Does this result in the best kind of Systemic Development?

9. My own experience was very frustrating. Just to gain access to resources such as information technology was a battle. It took more than five phone calls, two letters, and about four months to finally gain remote access to the computer network, and I was told that it was a privilege. Recently this privilege was taken away from me without notice because it was thought “expedient” to do so. Other frustrating experiences included requesting the research money that was allocated to research students. It took six months for me to get a reply in relation to money available to me for year 1996, by which time the year had expired? How many other students don’t claim their money due to less than clear knowledge of knowing what is available and how to claim it? Where has all the unclaimed funds gone? Coming from a community development background I could not help but try and improve the situation. I went to the person responsible for research students and to the Head of the School with suggestions. I was willing to offer my time to develop resources and access programs for incoming students, however, my offers were not wanted. A school of rural development that does not want assistance from its students! No vision of a better future, no claim that they could improve things, and no interest in anyone that has - least of all students. A dismal picture indeed.
10. The rise of the CSD is yet another case where students have not featured. When one is holistic, does away with traditional boundaries, is inclusive, one would think that students and farmers, or anyone else being involved in what projects there are, would feature students to the extent that they are part of a common learning community. If they are not, then it would seem that there is not a common learning community within a community that professes there is, and has had over fifteen years of trying.

11. Regardless what is most important within a university, it is not hard to envisage that research takes on a high priority, at least in profession. The administration and support of our research I regard as dismal. Staff responsible for supporting research often blamed the lack of resources available. But if this was the problem, one would expect the existing resources to be used effectively, however from my experience, this is not the case. Arriving overseas students can take up to three tries to find a desk to use as their own. Computers in the “research labs” remain without working connections to the network, and not working for years at a time. Resources available are not clearly specified in a handout when commencing. Student assessments always ask whether there is anything the student needs to assist them in their work - but there appears never to be any response. I do not bother to fill out this section any more - my confidence in the inability of the system to be continually ineffective is so strong. Letters take six months or more for a reply, and are only responded to when one writes to the Head of Faculty. Requests for refunds of expenses incurred take months, and one never really knows what magic is at work when one makes an application to upgrade from masters to doctoral studies. So much for openness, clarity, and rationality.
These are non-trivial arguments for me as they are the basis of my learning experience in the school. Further, I need to go some way in resolving them if I am planning to be part of some innovative change. I need to be critical of the above experience as I would not like to repeat it.

EXPERIENCES AND OBSERVATIONS OF VISITING FELLOWS WITHIN THE SCHOOL - A SUMMARY

Cardwell’s view of Hawkesbury

Many visits were made by academics, including an eight week stay by Prof. Vernon B. Cardwell. Cardwell wrote a summary of his study leave in Cardwell (1987). I would like to briefly highlight the following three quotes.

I believe my experience at H.A.C. can be best illustrated by the phases of my educational experience i.e. Phase 1 (weeks 1-3) - Period of intellectual groping (concrete experiences); Phase 2 (weeks 4-5) - Excitement and discovery (reflection and observation); Phase 3 (weeks 6 and 7) - Consolidation of thoughts, perspectives and views (abstract conceptualization); Phase 4 (week 8) - Drafting a written statement (active experimentation). (Cardwell 1987:2)

The concerns I have for the H.A.C. educational program in the faculty of agriculture is associated with what it doesn't do at this point in time for students and the demands placed on the faculty to deliver the desires and/or needs of the students. (Cardwell 1987:2)

Student frustrations included concerns about difficulty in meeting with faculty. One must become assertive and aggressive to succeed. There is also a sense of much wasted time finding people, materials, resources, and personal direction. Which in the eyes of some was very inefficient. (Cardwell 1987:11-12)

Applegate’s view of Hawkesbury

Applegate, a visiting fellow for six months, wrote his views in Applegate (1988). Applegate was a reductionist who saw a need for improvements to be made to the traditional system. He makes the following points about the Hawkesbury approach:

1. Students have a "limited understanding" of the basics of agricultural and biological thought.
2. Hawkesbury was responsible for students "accepting responsibility for their own growth." Student growth, post-course, is "much more certain" for Hawkesbury students than their American counterparts.

3. Can the personal growth of a student be achieved without the loss of exposure to "the great breadth of intellectual syntheses of former creative learners?"

4. Lectures can be interesting and group work can be dull - it all depends on the people involved and their attitude towards things. The structural changes may not be important.

5. Critiques the separate boundaries drawn between agriculture and people that kept these notions apart – when according to him they are inseparable.

6. Tension between seeking theory that is relevant and having sufficient relevant theory prior to starting.

7. Author sees origins of reductionism and disciplines in "a commitment to excellence." My question is, "excellence in what - technology, or quality of life?"

8. American students want education just to get a good paying job. Author is disappointed in lack of values. But how to get continuity of participation unless using the cudgel of low marks?

9. Hawkesbury "group approach" noted in its philosophy, but author noted that decisions appeared to be made outside of the groups.

10. Lack of punctuality noted within Hawkesbury community. "An appointment, a scheduled time for a staff meeting, an agreement to produce a document or provide feedback by a certain date are, to me, an informal contract between people. Meeting the terms of that contract are signals of mutual respect between parties. Breech of the contract is taken, by me, as a signal of less than full respect for my rights as an individual."
11. The collection of papers within the school are all supportive of the Hawkesbury paradigm. Where are the other views?

12. The defensive nature of the faculty was noted. Defensiveness is unusual considering the philosophy is aware of the tentative nature of any espoused theory. "But it seemed to me that my reflections were generally taken as negative criticism rather than opportunities for growth." In part this could be seen as a response to the tirade of criticism the faculty has experienced. Innovation always requires risk and when the status quo is threatened criticism is inevitable.

13. Hawkesbury students, like their contemporaries, like to please their "teachers." One student attached the Kolb and Hawkesbury learning cycles without referring to them in the text of the assignment.

14. "Given the commitment of the Hawkesbury paradigm to co-learning of faculty with students, of action research wherein the lines between investigator and investigatee blur, of continuing modification as the Hawkesbury paradigm itself changes, of Hawkesbury's dream of being the quintessential learning system; it strikes me as inconsistent that students are conspicuously absent from most deliberations and debate that shape the program."

15. The author sees that Hawkesbury is the most innovative form of tertiary education that he has come across. He notes the usefulness of the on-farm experience and the flexibility of technical support staff.

16. Applegate (1988) goes on to suggest that the ability to seek out materials from the library should naturally be one of the attributes of the autonomous learner. Further that these skills should not just be used to gain the information one wants on a particular situation i.e. a "task-driven mode, but also to develop skills by which new ideas are likely to be encountered."
Appendix 2: “Coming out” in the school of agriculture and rural development – A critique of institutional systemic development at Hawkesbury

It was interesting, however, to read of Applegate’s suggestion in relation to when this wider reading could be done.

What better time, isolated as you are from the hurry hurry world of campus, to try some new and different kinds of reading? I would endorse as a valid learning experience the negotiated generation of a reading list to be pursued during the farm experience.” (Applegate 1988:9-10)

Applegate must have quite a different view of farming than my experiences have been. Firstly, it would seem that he has no idea on the level of work farmers do and that they simply cannot put off or delay their programs like educational enterprises may. Secondly, the degree of physical effort required when working on a farm, made it very difficult for me to read anything when I returned home in the evening, much less being interested in writing anything.

Patterson’s view of Hawkesbury

Patterson (1990) was written after ten months of being a Visiting Fellow at the faculty. He looks particularly at organisational learning. Using the notions of (Argyris and Schon 1980) he suggests that the school needs to formalise school critique, and develop a system for dealing with it. To do this, he says, requires a change in the “theory-in-practice” of the faculty. This, he sees, would allow a “tolerance for criticism,” as well as a built in time component which permits time to be spent on such activities. Such a view is interesting given that the faculty has a developed a strong critique of the wider system within which it operates. I have selected three quotes that highlight Paterson’s main views:

Espoused theory is that theory of action which an organization pledges allegiance to and communicated to others, often in official documents. This is the answer the organization gives when asked how it would act. Organization charts and procedures manuals are prime examples of espoused theory in practice. Theory-in-use, on the other hand, is the theory of action that is constructed from actual behaviour. This is the theory that explains how the organization does act. The norms, strategies and assumptions, often implicit and undiscussable, that dictate the daily running of the organization are its theory-in-use. Theory-in-use is to be inferred from observation of organizational action. (Patterson 1990:2)
In summary, criticism can be directed toward espoused theory -- the Hawkesbury learning paradigm, theory-in-use - the norms embedded in organizational action, and any contradictions between the two. (Patterson 1990:3)

Again, referring to Argyris and Schon, (Argyris and Schon 1980:132) organization learning that occurs when members respond to feedback by correcting errors so as to maintain the central features of organizational theory-in-use is called single loop learning. …Organizational learning that leads to new organizational norms is called double loop learning. According to Argyris and Schon, ‘There is in this sort of episode a double feedback loop which connects the detection of error not only to strategies and assumptions for effective performance but to the very norms which define effective performance.’ (Ibid:134) This type of learning is often triggered by interpersonal or intergroup conflict within the organization. (Patterson 1990:3-4)

Patterson states that there is a huge amount of criticism of the Faculties' espoused theory, theory-in-use, and discrepancies that lie between them. He refers to (Cardwell, 1987; Packham and Wylie, 1986; and Applegate, 1988).

Student views (Evans, Thomas et al. 1983 and Macadam, Duff et al. 1984) have been sort, but only in a minor way. My participation in the writing of (Evans, Thomas et al. 1983) was one of interest, until not long into the process I began to feel it was very much “directed” by the staff facilitator. In the opening paragraph it states: “This investigation into the Technical Services situation within the School of Agriculture was initiated due to a concern amongst some staff members that technical staff are being inefficiently utilised.” Initially I contested this view, as many students found it very difficult to gain access to any form of technical support. I wanted to make the problem a joint one, rather than just owned by the staff. I was not able to do this so I took a back seat to the whole process.

FURTHER OBSERVATIONS

Drawing from the context provided by what has just been written I would like to add a few more observations.
Appendix 2: “Coming out” in the school of agriculture and rural development – A critique of institutional systemic development at Hawkesbury

1. Regardless of the incredible pressures of the context of in which systemic development has operated at Hawkesbury, it has always had a refreshing attraction to participants. Something is “ringing true.” Perhaps we should more fully explore what that is.

2. The institutional (formal) form of “doing” systemic development has not properly reflected the dynamics and rewards of “doing” systemic development informally in small networks.

3. From my observations as a student in the first years of the course (1981-1982), it appeared, in business terms, that the new systems approach was more of a “take-over” than a “merger.” This politics has continually played itself out in the background with it never appearing to become part of the debate itself. In this respect we have not gone very far with the Habermas view of critique. It would seem that the “cosmology” of the beginning of systems ideas at Hawkesbury, is in part cause for what appear to be the chronic problems that currently exist. How can we expand the boundaries to include that which is hidden from us, or from that which we hide?

4. Could it be that the social arrangements, reinforced by institutional ones, seem to ensure that students never really say what they experience - as they value their “certified education” more? And could it be that staff find it equally difficult to say what they experience because they value their “official careers” and retirement benefits more? We are attracted by an idea, and at once are caught between “doing it” (it becomes a new specialist field), and “living it - being it” (where it becomes part of our way of life). Doing it, or living it, requires us to develop social and institutional structures consistent with the systemic onto-epistemological “worldview.” The structures I see at Hawkesbury, including CSD, appear to me to be inconsistent with this “worldview.”
5. Like Eva Cox in Cox (1995) I seek a civil society. But what is that? Are we capable of envisioning what it is? Are we able to bring it about together? For it must be together. Today’s society is the individual. The individual primed by economics to be greedy in order to bring about the best ends for everyone; primed by science that there is no knowledge outside of science, and science and economics in turn directed by-and-large for the advantage of the elite. And what of universities in this whole process? Are we learning from them? Or is it because we are learning from them that the situation is not improving? And what of “learning to learn” - to be learners? I would suggest we need to learn to live. That we can learn the most from our own lives and from the lives of others. We need to conjoin the knowledge of a scientist with the scientist’s life. Conjoin the politician’s politics with their lives. Conjoin our own professions with our own lives. Learning to learn has to be an idea developed from a university - who else better to teach us? What are the ideas that we can develop from our lives and how can they best be used to develop the university?

H. Mattner

July 1999
Appendix 2: “Coming out” in the school of agriculture and rural development – A critique of institutional systemic development at Hawkesbury

REFERENCES


Appendix 2: “Coming out” in the school of agriculture and rural development – A critique of institutional systemic development at Hawkesbury


Patterson, T. (1990). What is the UWS-Hawkesbury Faculty of Agriculture that it may learn? or stuck in accommodation. Vermont, Burlington, VT, USA, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, VOTEC Department, Agricultural Engineering Building, University of Vermont, Burlington, VT, 05405, USA.