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Partly Fragmented, Partly Integrated: An Anthropological Examination of “Postmodern Fragmented Subjects”

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It has become commonplace for anthropologists, historians, and other researchers to discuss the cultural and historical construction of “selves.” One now-classic description of this sort is the historian E. P. Thompson’s account (1963, 1967) of the way industrial capitalism created a greater time consciousness among English factory workers. More recently, the literary critic Frederic Jameson has written about the psychological effects of late-20th-century capitalism. Using as his evidence works of architecture, poetry, music, and other artistic and intellectual productions, he has argued that (at least in the United States, the focus of his description) the standardization of our environment, saturation of our consciousness by mass media, and local dislocations caused by the globalization of production have produced a new dominant consciousness: a *postmodern schizo-fragmentation* (1991:372) characterized by floating emotions, inability to “organize . . . past and future into coherent experience” (1991:25), and compartmentalization of diverse bits of information in unconnected mental regions.¹ Jameson’s discussion, like Thompson’s, has become an influential account of the psychological effects of political-economic change.² His stimulating analysis deserves a thorough investigation. How well does it fit late-20th-century U.S. Americans?

On the basis of my interviews with some urbanites and suburbanites in the United States, I will argue that Jameson’s account of “postmodern schizo-fragmentation” is only partly right. Each person whose talk I have analyzed did have disparate schemas that can be traced to heterogeneous social discourses and practices.³ However, emotionally salient life experiences mediated their internalization of social discourses and led to a partial cognitive integration of them. This was true across boundaries of age, ethnicity, color, class, and gender for my interviewees, suggesting problems with not only Jameson’s account but also others that expect a “rupture of narrativity” among marginal or exploited groups in this society (e.g., Ortner 1991). My research also throws suspicion on studies

that infer general forms of consciousness from art works or theories created for an elite audience.

Jameson on Late Capitalism, Postmodernism, and Psychological Fragmentation

Many of the central theses about postmodern consciousness that Jameson sets out in his well-known 1984 essay, "Postmodernism, Or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism," are presented in brief in his earlier classic, *The Political Unconscious* (1981), and are developed further in the introductory and concluding essays of his 1991 collection, *Postmodernism Or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*. Although his ideas changed over the ten years spanned by these works, I will dwell here on the common themes rather than the disparities, paying most attention to the 1984 and 1991 works.⁴

As is typical of people who come to cultural studies from literary criticism, Jameson means by "culture" what anthropologists would call culture in the humanist's sense: that is, architecture, paintings, movies, novels, and the like. Drawing on U.S. cultural productions in particular, Jameson sets out several characteristics of postmodern culture. (He acknowledges that postmodern culture is not the only type produced under late capitalism but it is, he claims, the dominant form [1991:6, 406].)

One of these characteristics is "depthlessness"—that is, a rejection of anything beyond or behind images, including emotions as inner experiences or signifieds, as distinct from signifiers. For artistic examples, Jameson points to Warhol's paintings (for example, "Diamond Dust Shoes"), in which mere display replaces a symbol that is to be completed or probed for deeper meaning; to the seeming two-dimensionality of the Wells Fargo Court in Los Angeles; and to a general "waning of affect" (1991:15) in art.

Another key characteristic of postmodern art, according to Jameson, is its reliance on pastiche—for example, the playful mixture of previous styles that characterizes postmodern architecture or E. L. Doctorow's interpolation of real historical figures into the lives of his fictional characters in the novel *Ragtime* (1975). The result, in the case of *Ragtime*, is that "this historical novel can no longer . . . represent the historical past; it can only 'represent' our ideas and stereotypes about that past" (1991:25).

This weakening of a genuine historical consciousness is closely related, for Jameson, to the "schizophrenic" quality of postmodern art. By this he means not that postmodern artists are schizophrenic in the clinical sense, but that their art is "a rubble of distinct and unrelated signifiers" (1991:26):

Think, for example, of the experience of John Cage's music, in which a cluster of material sounds . . . is followed by a silence so intolerable that you cannot imagine another sonorous chord coming into existence and cannot imagine remembering the previous one well enough to make any connection with it if it does. [1991:28]

All of these features (depthlessness, pastiche, schizophrenic quality) give postmodern art a different relation to the world than modern art had, according to Jameson. The unconscious utopian impulse to compensate in coherent narrative for capitalist fragmentation and alienation that Jameson saw in modern literature and described in *The Political Unconscious* (1981) has been replaced, he argues, with postmodern anti-utopianism in art and theory. Anti-utopianism in theory is exemplified by postmodern theorists' critiques of "master narratives" like Marxism.

I have no quarrel with this characterization of postmodern art and theory; indeed, it is quite insightful. The question, however, is how to explain the sort of fragmentation discussed in postmodern theory and displayed in postmodern art. Is it a reflection of the consciousness of its producers—fragmented works issuing from fragmented psyches? Or from psyches of any sort reflecting a fragmented world? Or—to propose a completely different hypothesis—is postmodern theoretical and artistic fragmentation a deliberate representation by the artists and theorists, a statement about the world rather than a reflection of it?²⁵ Jameson's Marxian explanation leans strongly toward the former: current material conditions have created artists and intellectuals with a historically determinate form of consciousness, the structures of which are in turn reflected in the structures of their music, architecture, novels, and theories. If this explanation were true, contemporary cultural productions would be windows through which we could discern the psyches of their producers and the conditions under which these arose.

The relevant material conditions for Jameson are those created by "late capitalism" (Mandel 1975), which Jameson thinks of not as capitalism's senescence but as its greatest expansion. One critical aspect of this "third stage" of capitalism (the first two being market and monopoly capitalism) is "a new and historically original penetration and colonization of Nature and the Unconscious" (1991:36). The unconscious has been colonized by the omnipresent mass media, including advertising, which channels into consumerism impulses that might previously have disrupted the social order. Jameson credits the Green Revolution with penetrating and colonizing nature. The implications of this conquest are explained at greater length in "Secondary Elaborations," the concluding essay of his 1991 book:

the postmodern must be characterized as a situation in which the survival, the residue, the holdover, the archaic, has finally been swept away without a trace. . . . Everything is now organized and planned; nature has been triumphantly blotted out, along with peasants, petit-bourgeois commerce, handicraft, feudal aristocracies and imperial bureaucracies. Ours is a more homogeneously modernized condition; we no longer are encumbered with the embarrassment of non-simultaneities and non-synchronicities. Everything has reached the same hour on the great clock of development or rationalization (at least from the perspective of the "West"). [1991:309–10]

A very important aspect of our "more homogeneously modernized condition" is the standardization of the socially constructed environment. Unlike the

modern landscape, in Europe especially, where factories, cars, and power lines could be found alongside “grimy medieval monuments and cramped Renaissance tenements” (Jameson 1991:311), in the postmodern scene, “where [ancient] buildings still remain, renovation and restoration allow them to be transferred to the present in their entirety as those other, very different and postmodern things called *simulacra*” (1991:309). (We could think of Sturbridge Village, Massachusetts, and Colonial Williamsburg, Virginia, as examples in the United States.)

Finally, according to Jameson, late capitalism is a world capitalist system that rests on transnational exchanges of finance, manufacture, advertising, and consumption (1991:xix). The result in the United States has been the loss of blue-collar jobs with good wages and benefits (see also Harvey 1989).

What mode of consciousness is created by these conditions?

One significant effect, for Jameson, is the loss of a genuine experience of historicity. This point is developed particularly by way of contrast with the earlier “modern” consciousness of history (especially of western Europeans) that was made acute by the juxtaposition of the new and the old described above—not only within a single place (e.g., a city), but also in the experiences of “elites” (Jameson’s term) who traveled from the city to the “medieval *pays* to which they return[ed] on family vacations” (1991:366), and in the imagination of these same European elites in comparing their way of life with that of the “natives” in the colonies (1991:311). It follows for him that, since all traces of the preindustrial past have disappeared, so too has “a ‘sense of the past’ or historicity and collective memory” (1991:309). Contributing to a loss of historical sense is the uncertainty of employment in late capitalism. With factories closing and both blue-collar and white-collar workers being downsized out of their jobs, “life destiny” ceases to be a “meaningful narrative category” (1991:350).⁶

The absence of a lived experience of historical change, in turn, creates “fragmentation of the subject” (Jameson 1984:63).⁷ In Jameson’s writings, the connection between the loss of history and psychic fragmentation is not entirely clear but seems to be as follows. We are no longer presented with genuine survivals from the past but only with information about the past or simulations of the past. This information, and much other information besides, is presented to us in a discordant jumble due to the expansion of information delivery through new technologies such as multiple cable stations: Jameson notes that “spectacle or image society” or “media capitalism” would be appropriate synonyms for “late capitalism” (1991:xviii). The result is a heterogeneous, scattered knowledge system, “somehow internally segmented and assigned to different floors and different office buildings” (1991:370). We can attend to only one piece of this vast and diverse knowledge system at a time, so a metaphor for postmodern consciousness is that of “channel switching” among different “compartments of reality” (1991:372–373). Jameson probably did not intend to convey that people have as much control over their consciousness as this metaphor suggests (is it like TV viewers deciding which button to push on a remote control?), for he also offers a very different description of this fragmentation. If our unadapted percep-

tual equipment tries to represent the postmodern world, he suggests, the result is

as disastrous as those that would be encountered by a relatively simple natural organism given to mimetic camouflage and trying to approximate the op art laser dimensionality of a science-fictional environment of the far future. [1991:372]

Jameson proposes this chameleon image to differentiate his understanding of the fragmented subject from that offered by Deleuze and Guattari (1977) of a new psychological type: “the ideal schizophrenic—that psychic subject who ‘perceives’ by way of difference and differentiation alone” (1991:345). Jameson’s alternative is that we do not need to imagine “some unimaginably complex new internal human nature” (1991:372); instead, the psychological effects Deleuze and Guattari expect could be the result of older cognitive equipment trying to model a new world.

Still, he sums up the psychic results of late capitalism as “postmodern schizo-fragmentation,” a result that seems inevitable, if it is true that

“We” thus turn out to be whatever we are in, confront, inhabit, or habitually move through, provided it is understood that under current conditions we are obliged to renegotiate all those spaces or channels back and forth ceaselessly in a single Joycean day. [1991:373]

The only mixing of information across these “spaces or channels” occurs randomly. An image of it is provided by

Vargas Llosa’s remarkable “memoir” of the old days of the radio serials in Latin American, *La Tía Julia y el [E]Scribidor*, where the separate daytime programs slowly begin to infect each other and colonize their neighbors, amalgamating in the most alarming—but as we have just seen, the most archetypically postmodern—of ways: such interfection is then the very prototype of what we may call the postmodern mode of totalizing. [1991:373]

The end of a coherent self means, for Jameson, the end as well of both a personal style and of emotions:

The end of the bourgeois ego, or monad, no doubt brings with it the end of the psychopathologies of that ego—what I have been calling the waning of affect. But it means the end of much more—the end, for example, of style, in the sense of the unique and the personal, the end of the distinctive individual brush stroke (as symbolized by the emergent primacy of mechanical reproduction). As for expression and feelings or emotions, the liberation, in contemporary society, from the older *anomie* of the centered subject may also mean not merely a liberation from anxiety but a liberation from every other kind of feeling as well, since there is no longer a self present to do the feeling. [1991:15]

Jameson does not celebrate schizo-fragmentation. The simultaneous availability of so much information

opens up a means for constructing false consciousness which is tactically far more advanced than older and more primitive tactics of lying and repression and can do without the now cumbersome and Ptolemaic technologies of classical ideology. . . . The superiority of the new method lies in its capacity to coexist perfectly adequately with information and full knowledge, something already implicit in the separation of subsystems and topics in various unrelated parts of the mind, which can only be activated locally or contextually . . . in distinct moments of time and by various unrelated subject positions. [1991:375]

To put it into terms I introduced in another context (Strauss 1990), Jameson's view is that there has been a shift in the form of false consciousness from an older *vertical containment* to a newer *horizontal containment*. In the situation of vertical containment, consciousness formed by one's lived daily experience is implicit and hard to express, buried beneath the well-learned formulations taken from dominant ideologies.⁸ If Jameson is right about postmodern consciousness, that older form of false consciousness (explicit lies covering implicit truth) has been replaced by horizontal containment.⁹ In this form of false consciousness, lies and truth are internalized in separate cognitive compartments and neither is buried or hard to express, but the discrepant pieces cannot be brought face-to-face so that the truth can defeat the lies because there is no unified subject in whose awareness these multiple representations could meet. The political effects Jameson expects are confusion or cynicism (1991:274) and passivity.

Notice the parallels Jameson draws between the characteristics of postmodern cultural products on the one hand, and postmodern consciousness on the other: depthlessness (e.g., the waning of affect), lack of historicity, and incoherence. These parallels are not accidental:

If, indeed, the subject has lost its capacity . . . to organize its past and future into coherent experience, it becomes difficult enough to see how the cultural productions of such a subject could result in anything but "heaps of fragments." [1991:25]

In other words, late capitalism creates fragmented selves who then produce postmodern culture (both art and theory). Although Jameson's primary concern is with the first and last terms of this causal sequence (late capitalism and postmodern culture), his theoretical framework gives a crucial mediating role to the middle term—to psychological fragmentation, the form of personality, perception, and cognition specific to this historical period.¹⁰

Before going on, it is important to highlight two points. First, Jameson is a theorist of the postmodern rather than a postmodern theorist (to use a distinction he made) (1991:15). Thus, he does not reject unifying explanations—in fact, one of his goals is to show that attacks on systems like Marxism are products of our time rather than timeless truths. Nor does he rule out the presence of a formerly "centered subject." Second, his expectation is that psychological fragmentation is quite widespread, at least in the United States, if not elsewhere in the world at present.¹¹ This is so even though some of the aspects of late capitalism he cites affect some people more than others. For example, academics with

tenure have unusually secure jobs, while for many women, immigrants, ethnic minorities, and young people, insecure jobs are not a radical new development.¹² At one point he does note that postmodernism “in the more limited sense of an ethos and a ‘lifestyle’ . . . is the expression of the ‘consciousness’” of the “professional-managerial class” (or “yuppies”) (1991:407). That does not mean, however, that psychological fragmentation is confined to yuppies any more than modern forms of consciousness were confined to the entrepreneurs whose ethos and “lifestyle” dominated an earlier stage of capitalism. Thus Jameson uses catch-all terms such as “the subject in consumer or late monopoly capitalism” (1981:124); “the human subjects who happen into this new space” (1991:38); “the subject” (1991:25); or simply “we” (e.g., 1991:27) to describe the bearers of postmodern fragmentation.

Sherry Ortner takes Jameson to task for assuming that postmodern fragmentation is equally prevalent across classes in the United States. In Ortner’s formulation, fragmentation and flattening are not general effects but are concentrated among those who are disadvantaged in this society. As Ortner puts it,

He [Jameson] is inclined to see all the inhabitants of late capitalist societies as victims of postmodernist disruption and flattening, and I think this is true in certain limited areas, particularly in the realm of consumer culture. But Jameson never arrives at what is to me is the central, essentially Foucauldian, point: that the decentering and flattening of subjectivity, and the disruption of both pastness and futureness, are specifically effects of power. Fragmented identities are not equally distributed over the social landscape, even in late capitalism, nor is the inability to formulate and enact one’s own projects, to narrate oneself as both a product of a coherent past and an agent of an imaginable future. [1991:5]

Ortner uses Elliot Liebow’s *Tally’s Corner* (1967) and her own analysis of Grimms’ fairy tales to argue that poor African Americans in the United States and women (in Europe and the United States?) are especially subject to a “rupturing of narrativity” (1991:6–7,10–11). In what follows, I will consider whether this alternative formulation holds up any better than Jameson’s.

Looking for Postmodern Subjects

This, then, is how we would recognize Jamesonian postmodern fragmented selves if we were to meet any. They would have little genuine historical awareness and not use the life course as a narrative device. Also, they would be aware of multiple, diverse bits of information or opinions, among which they could switch rapidly but which they could not integrate into a meaningful whole; any mixtures of these separated bits would be random. Above all, they would appear to be the product of conflicting social influences, with nothing one could call a cognitive center of interpretation that imposes a personal style in appropriating information (“the end of the bourgeois ego or monad . . . means the end . . . of style, in the sense of the unique and the personal” [Jameson 1991:15]). Finally, they would not express inner emotions. My question is: Do we find such fragmented subjects in the late-20th-century United States?

Jameson's description of postmodern consciousness in the United States and his discussion of its links to wrenching local dislocations caused by changes in the global economy would seem to be particularly applicable to some of the subjects of my own research. In 1984, 1985, and again in 1990, I conducted a series of open-ended, in-depth interviews (six lengthy, semistructured interviews per person) with 15 working- and middle-class men and women living in the suburbs of Providence, Rhode Island.¹³ All were U.S. suburbanites and urbanites surrounded by the standard late-20th-century array of home electronics. Furthermore, all but two pilot interviewees were neighbors or employees of a Rhode Island factory owned by Ciba-Geigy, a multinational chemical company based in Switzerland. Shortly before I began my research, the parent company decided to close the Rhode Island plant to shift operations to newer facilities elsewhere in the United States that promised lower energy and labor costs. (They may also have hoped to escape the controversy the Rhode Island plant had aroused as the state's worst industrial water polluter and a source of noxious air pollutants.) I interviewed the plant's neighbors and employees to ascertain how their political-economic beliefs were affected by their experiences with the plant and its parent company. The very topic of my research, therefore, was the sort of dislocation caused by multinational capitalism that Jameson describes. Before I began those interviews, I studied the history of local protests over the Ciba-Geigy plant and interviewed key actors in those protests. Some of my interviewees had been active in those protests, so I knew about them through newspaper reports and others' descriptions as well as through their own words.

Of these 15 interviewees, I will focus primarily on Jim Lovett, a neighbor of the Ciba-Geigy plant and a former welder, now in his late sixties.¹⁴ I chose Lovett because in an earlier article (Strauss 1990) I used his discourse as a prime example of horizontal containment. That is, he holds discrepant ideas that are equally easy for him to express but that he typically voices in distinct contexts. If Lovett does not fit Jameson's model of postmodern consciousness, it is not clear who does. Furthermore, Lovett was the most eloquent and voluble person I interviewed. Images of space, time, persons, and society that were vividly conveyed in Lovett's talk are less obvious in the discourse of my other interviewees.

After presenting his case in detail, I will introduce Carol Russo, a school secretary in her fifties. Russo, who keenly felt the lack of respect that came with growing up female in a family that expected little of girls, seems a good example to begin testing Ortner's expectation of a rupture of narrativity among marginalized peoples.

There may be objections to my using people in their fifties and sixties to test theories about postmodern consciousness.¹⁵ These are not objections Jameson is entitled to make, since his description is supposed to apply generally to "the subject in consumer or late monopoly capitalism" or "the human subjects who happen into this new space." Still, we could allow that he may have been presciently describing an emerging form of consciousness that is more likely to be found among younger than among older U.S. Americans. To counter this objection, I will include the examples of two interviewees in their twenties, Anna

Monteiro and Matthew Healey. Monteiro and Healey were both college graduates working in dead-end jobs at the time I interviewed them, but were planning further education that would lead to professional or business careers. They participated in a series of interviews I began in 1995 in Rhode Island and North Carolina on the topic of welfare reform. As was the case in the Ciba-Geigy study, my interviews were open-ended, although less extensive: in this case, I conducted two interviews per person, each about an hour and a half long. Interviewees were chosen to maximize diversity from a larger group of respondents in a random-sample phone survey.

A final objection that could be made to what follows is that my method of in-depth interviews already assumes a centered subject.¹⁶ But Ewing (1990) uses the same method to argue that wholeness is only an illusion. I think the charge of question-begging applies even more forcefully to studies of fragmented selves that are based entirely on evidence drawn from public culture. These studies take for granted that which needs to be shown: that we are nothing more than the reflection of the cultural environment that “we are in, confront, inhabit, or habitually move through” (Jameson 1991:373). At present, we have too many discussions of postmodern subjectivities that do not come within handshaking distance of any putatively postmodern people. The problem with such discussions is that we cannot understand exactly how selves are constructed by society and how their consciousness is reflected in their public productions if our only source of information about selves is the social context and cultural productions themselves. Obviously all three (political-economic relations, psyches, and cultural productions) are closely related, but the exact nature of their relationship is not so clear—and not likely to be clarified by cultural studies that avoid a closer look at the middle term in this series.

In what follows, I will consider in two parts whether there are any postmodern fragmented selves in Jameson’s sense. First, I will show that Lovett expresses discrepant cognitive schemas that derive from inconsistent social discourses. In the second part, however, I will show that (1) each of Lovett’s schemas shows a personal way of appropriating the social discourse from which it was derived, something that is easier to see when his talk is compared with that of Carol Russo; (2) both Lovett and Russo have one schema that partly integrates the others I describe; (3) in both cases, the schema that brings about this partial integration can be traced to emotionally significant early life experiences, which Lovett and Russo talked about in ways that show them linking their past to their present; and (4) partial integration can be seen as well for two younger interviewees, Anna Monteiro and Matthew Healey. Age made no difference for my findings. Neither did class (Healey’s family is upper-middle-class, while the others are working-class), ethnicity, or color (Monteiro is a black Cape Verdean American while the others are white Euro-Americans).

Theories Meet People, Part I: Evidence for the Partly Fragmented Self

Since cognitive schemas do not offer themselves up for our direct inspection, what do I take as evidence for their integration or lack thereof? My assump-

tion has been that a given schema is expressed in a “voice” that is distinguishable by its key words, imagery conveyed in metaphors, typical contexts of expression, and emotional valence (Bakhtin 1981; Strauss 1992). Thus, I would take, as evidence for an integrated self, a single voice dominating an interviewee’s discourse about a wide variety of topics and, as evidence for a fragmentary self, multiple voices in a single person’s talk. But perhaps further clarification is necessary. One of the anonymous readers for this journal, commenting on an earlier version of this article, stated:

I always have trouble with talk about multiple identities and fragmented selves because I do not know what is being asserted. . . . By necessity, human thought is compartmentalized, since one cannot hold everything in mind at once. The notion of containment seems to say that information of one kind is not integrated with information of another kind, although they *should* be because both types have something in common. . . . I cannot quite tell if compartmentalization should entail a sense of incoherence and fragmentation on the part of the individual, or only on the part of the observer. [emphasis added]

This comment is very perceptive. Methodologically, what it suggests is that it is not significant if someone talks about the end of a romantic relationship in a different voice than he or she uses to talk about what they are having for dinner: nobody would take this as evidence of postmodern psychological fragmentation. It is much more telling if someone speaks about roughly the same topic in very different ways, depending on the context, using voices that offer widely discrepant ways of representing a given situation. These are discrepancies from the observer’s perspective that might also appear as such to the interviewee. In fact, I found that discrepancies did sometimes become apparent to my interviewees, contrary to Jameson’s expectation that the postmodern subject cannot bring “subsystems and topics in various unrelated parts of the mind” (1991:375) into awareness at the same time.¹⁷

Lovett’s Discrepant Cognitive Schemas

Jim Lovett has been subject to many of the forms of disorientation Jameson describes. Several years before I met him, he had been forced out of work by an occupational disability caused by inadequate ventilation in another local factory, where he had been a welder of exotic metals. Also, Lovett was unable to read for most of his life, only learning after his forced retirement. Thus, he was more dependent for information from television and radio than most people are. I learned about him through my earlier case study of the neighborhood protests over the Ciba-Geigy plant; newspaper reports, interviews with other people, and his own journals showed him to have been very active as a demonstrator, speaker at hearings, and source of frequent telephone complaints to the local plant, whose emissions left him almost suffocated.

Three distinct schemas seemed to underlie much of Lovett’s discussions with me about his life, his work, the fight he carried on with Ciba-Geigy, and many other topics that occurred to him as we talked. These schemas struck me

as discrepant because they contained disparate self-representations, as well as clashing models of individual agency, society, and historical progress or change.¹⁸

When Lovett was speaking from the perspective of his *Can't fight the system* schema, he was angry, resentful, and despairing. From this perspective, class position limits what one can accomplish: the rich and powerful always win and the little person always loses. If one takes a very long view (that of millennia), time is cyclical: history shows a ceaseless alternation of creation and destruction.

When Lovett expressed his *Achieving anything you want* schema, by contrast, he saw no limits to the mobility of the hard-working individual, and his sense of history focused on change and unbounded personal agency, with a person's past efforts determining their future success. The time perspective he displayed speaking in this voice was much shorter—roughly, an individual's lifetime. In this voice, Lovett sounded optimistic.

Finally, when Lovett voiced his *Feeling responsible for others* schema, his frame of reference was neither the class nor the individual, but the family or another group like a family. His time perspective was roughly three generations and traced the influence of parents on their children, and the continuing effects of good or poor child-rearing as those children grew up and became parents in their turn. The family model was also applied metaphorically, for example, to talk about corporate families. His sense of agency, when speaking in this voice, was neither the structural constraint of his *Can't fight the system* voice nor the limitless possibilities of his *Achieving anything you want* voice, but a position in between these extremes that focused on the possibility that we can make a difference in our children's lives, if not our own. Correspondingly, his sense of history was neither the pessimistic cyclical view of his *Can't fight the system* voice nor the optimistic image of linear progress displayed in his *Achieving anything you want* voice, but a moderate image of change bounded by natural continuities. The dominant affective tone of this voice was contentment. Table 1 summarizes the differences.¹⁹ Note that *Can't fight the system*, *Achieving anything you want*, and *Feeling responsible for others* are names for Lovett's schemas as well as the voices that express those schemas. Since the schemas can only be inferred from the voices, I will present evidence for these different voices before I discuss how the schemas expressed by these voices were shaped and how they are related to each other.

Lovett's Can't fight the system voice. In the first three interviews, I asked Lovett about the work that left him disabled and about his dealings with Ciba-Geigy. The interviews were loosely structured around a set of topics I discussed with everyone, but I encouraged interviewees to speak as long as they wanted and to go on to other topics that seemed to them to be related. Lovett participated enthusiastically, moving from Ciba-Geigy to big business in general, his own employers, rich people, crooked politicians, criminals, and welfare abusers. Consistently, he spoke of the way the hard-working average person is exploited by lazy and corrupt bureaucrats, politicians, and businessmen, whom he castigated

Table 1.
Lovett's multiple schemas.

	Can't fight the system	Achieving anything you want	Feeling responsible for others
Time	cyclical	linear progress	linear, continuity with progress
Temporal horizon	millennia	person's lifetime	two or three generations
Agency	structural constraint	unbounded agency	childhood influences decisive
Society	opposing classes	atomistic individuals	family groups
Affective tone	anger, resentment, despair	optimism	contentment

along with the irresponsible poor. Workingmen like him are burdened by a system in which they have to support everyone else: not only their own families but also the rich and the poor in their own country and around the world. It is a world in which people only listen to money, no one listens to the little guy. The average person cannot fight this system or get ahead, but is trapped in endless, repeating loops.

The following passages illustrate Lovett's *Can't fight the system* voice. In the citations following these passages, the year the interview was conducted is followed by the interview number and the transcript page. Note that passages 1 through 5, which are some of the best examples of Lovett's *Can't fight the system* voice, appeared in the first or third interviews conducted in 1985, and those from the first interview are within a few pages of each other in my transcripts. At that point in the interviews Lovett had been discussing Ciba-Geigy's decision to close its Rhode Island plant, leaving several hundred employees without jobs, which led him to speak about the company's coverups of health hazards at the plant, politicians who allowed the plant to pollute, and the way money corrupts in general. In this and all subsequent passages, underscoring indicates my emphasis, italics the speaker's emphasis.²⁰

1. It's just that the system, it's just so hard on the little guy, that's all. It's been the workingman, it's been the workingman that has supported the country, the *workingman* that has supported the world. The poor guy, he's on welfare; he doesn't pay no taxes. And the rich man, right up until today, he's got some money, he hides it; he don't even pay taxes either. So who's it leave? The working guy, that is *struggling* to support a family, to keep a home, to have enough groceries on the table, to send his kids to school. He just don't have enough. He's struggling all the time. And he's carrying the whole world. He is. He's carrying the whole world. Somebody could be starving over in Ethiopia—who'd they turn to? They

come back here. The rich guy, he, he may throw it in one place, but he's on the other end, getting it in, too! So what money he sends over, he's over there collecting, because he's involved somewhere in that cycle, too. And the poor guy, he can't; he don't have no money. So he can't give it. The workingman pays the other guy. It's just . . . just an endless cycle. I was going to say something else, but it'll come back to me. I could go on and on about things, but this is my own personal feeling, but I think that it may relate to a lot of things that people are thinking, but never have the opportunity to say. [1985,1:17–18]²¹

2. Corporations do not care about people. They—all they care about is satisfying their stockholders, making money. They don't care about the little person, that's just another pebble in the road; if it gets in your way, you kick it aside. That's the bottom line. It's the way I feel about it. They just do not care. Somebody starts complaining about it, then they go on someplace else and they start all over again. The same thing. [del. 4 lines] In this world they could go round and round, 50, 100 years from now, they could come right back to Rhode Island and start all over again. It's just an endless thing to—they don't care. [del. 4 lines] You can't fight that. You can't fight that. [1985,1:11]
3. I don't think that we listen enough to people of knowledge. [del. 9 lines] We don't want to hear someone say, well, you know, if you don't curtail what we're doing, then, not tomorrow, but 10 years or 20 years from now or 50 years or 100 years from now, that is going to be gone. How many of our beautiful animals or birds are gone. Forever and ever and ever. And it's true, this is happening to . . . everything around us. That, eventually, what we appreciate the most is no longer going to be here. So, in a sense, we're going to burn ourselves out and maybe a million years from now the whole thing'll start over again and hopefully it will be done—I think each time that this whole thing revolves or evolves or whatever you want to say, the proper word, I think it's improving. [laughs] Until a burnout point again. I, I think that it's endless. There's no end to it. [1985,3:17–18]

As passage 2 makes clear, in this voice Lovett looks on late capitalism with despair. Notice as well the images of no one listening (passages 1 and 3), a metaphor that he used many times to express powerlessness.

4. Politicians. They get away with murder. And they, you—everybody could be up in arms about it, but until you can get a group, no one's listening. [1985,1:9]
5. [speaking of high utility costs] Why should the little homeowner have to subsidize the big corporations? It's not right, it's not fair. Again, what're you going to do about it? I'm only one person. So what? They'll say, "Yes, sir, you're right. Yup. You're right. We'll look into it, we're going to take care of it." Click, the phone off. [1985,1:10]

Lovett's Achieving anything you want voice. In other contexts, Lovett used a very different voice, in which he spoke enthusiastically of the way anyone can make big money in this country. This voice was dominated by metaphors that indicated a lack of limits. It did not surface until the fourth interview in 1985, when I asked him what he thought of the "free enterprise system":

6. I think it's terrific. I, myself, Irene [his wife] and I have been for a number of years Amway distributors. [del. 3 lines] And we could build this business as

much or to any height that we'd want to, even to what they call direct distributorship. [del. 21 lines] Now this was free enterprise. We were given the opportunity to take something from the beginning and grow and go with it as far we wanted to go. [1985,4:18]

For Lovett, "free enterprise" seems to denote not the whole capitalist system but businesses like Amway that provide entrepreneurial opportunities for the little guy. There is no necessary contradiction between Lovett's approval of such businesses and his disapproval of businesses that exploit workers, neighbors, and customers. What is striking, however, are the differences between Lovett's *Can't fight the system* and *Achieving anything you want* voices in their sense of history, belief in personal agency, and evaluation of global capitalist expansion.

7. [Continuing discussion of Amway] So it's quite a, *they* are quite a business today. They started with a single product in a garage and [laughs] I've already lost track of what they've grown to. You know. It's tremendous. [del. 6 lines] They're all over the world now. They're all over the world. They're in Japan and China and England and Germany, France, Canada. Just about every country. Australia. [del. 11 lines in which the example is given of another Rhode Island Amway distributor who won a new car as a bonus] This is available to anyone in the business. You know. There's no, there's no restriction, there's no line about, well, I belong to the—you can't reach this level. No, there's nothing like that. You can go from zero to the top. [del. 13 lines] Them men [the ones who started Amway] are, I don't know how much they're worth. [del. 5 lines] So . . . it's just a, just proves that with an idea, that there's no limit to any level that anyone in this country couldn't achieve. [1985,4:20–21]

8. CS: Is the system fair? Does everyone have an *equal* chance to get ahead?

JL: If you take it as a single person. Over everybody else. One person as—if *he*. . . or *she*. . . wants that bad enough, then he and she will achieve it, because everything is, everything is out there. [1985,6:18]²²

In passage 7, global corporate expansion ("They're all over the world") is a sign of success and is viewed favorably ("It's tremendous"). In passages 6 through 8 there is no social contextualization of the possibilities for individual achievement; all that is necessary is to have an idea (passage 7) and to want something enough (passage 8). In response to another question, Lovett repeated a slogan he had learned as an Amway salesman: "You can achieve anything your mind can conceive" (1985,6:17). All of his stories when he spoke in this voice were of individual success. These narratives were ones of linear progress and had a short temporal horizon, limited to a person's lifetime, unlike the descriptions of endless repeating cycles over long time spans when Lovett was speaking in his *Can't fight the system* voice.

Lovett's Feeling responsible for others voice. When Lovett thought about his role as a family man, he spoke in yet another voice, that of a responsible, caring person. In this voice, being a good parent is a form of success. In the following passage, I had asked Lovett to start off by telling a little about himself and

his attitudes about business. He told the story of how he incurred his disability, then went on to the following:

9. I'm happily married. And I've got three terrific kids and wonderful grandchildren. I feel so, that with my education, which was only to the 9th grade, I've been fairly successful, um . . . raising my family. And you can judge that by the way they raise their children. My mother and father always said that they would always would wait to see how I handled my children, brought them up, to find out whether or not *they* did a good job and I feel so that my brother and I never had any problems. His and my children seem to be doing well. [1985,1:2-3]

Over the course of subsequent interviews, Lovett told a different story about his brother but consistently stressed intergenerational continuity, along with the possibility for change (for good or ill).

10. And I see it within my own children, compared to my brother's children, where he . . . did things a little bit in reverse or opposite from me, so my children, in my eyes, have developed in my way, which is correct if you will; where my brother may've taught his children, or may not've taught his children, the good habits, so therefore they learned bad ones and they've continued with bad ones and grown bad ones. Where I taught my kids, my children, good habits, and they've improved on their good habits and I see it within *their* children. So, it is a direction that you give them that they follow. And, and it's progressive. Everything is progressive, I guess, if you will. You start something off in a good line and it's going to grow in a good line, like a tree, if you've got a good seed, it's going to grow a good tree, but if something contaminates that seed, then you're going to have a bad [tree?]. [1985,3:17]

A key word in this voice was *responsible*. The good family man is a responsible person and teaches his children to be responsible as well:

11. My brother is not prepared for anything. He has never prepared himself for anything. So it goes back to, right back to childhood. What you were taught as a child. [del. 8 lines] Like my brother's children are just the complete opposite of mine. [del. 3 lines] Because my two sons and my daughter are . . . aware of what's taking place and show responsibility toward their family. [1985,5:2-3]

Lovett speculated that his brother's failures as a responsible family man were the result of not grasping the full meaning of the Boy Scouts' "very good code of ethics," which teaches "leadership and caring for other people" (1985,5:2).

Perhaps it is not surprising that Lovett would talk about child-rearing in a different voice than he talked about class conflict or entrepreneurship. But Lovett used his *Feeling responsible for others* voice, stressing caring and responsibility within a somewhat patriarchal family model, to talk about more than private families—it carried over to the "work family" and even the "national family." In the next example, Lovett makes allowances for a manager once he thinks of the manager as being like a husband.

12. [Lovett was talking about his former employer] I had one job—was a stainless steel cooling section? It got twisted, in fabricating, because it—the clamp that I was using—failed. It had to be cut in half and then made into two units instead of one long one. That’s all they remembered—the mistake I made. The one mistake in 30 years! They kept throwing it up to me. *Never, ever* giving me congratulations or praise for going in there, working three nights in a row until well after midnight. *Nothing*. They always remembered the thing, the mistake you made, never the good things you do. [laughs] Not only industry, but in your own families. You know [laughs]. I don’t never tell my wife what a fabulous cook she is, or how nice she does the laundry or anything. But let her forget to do something and “Well, what the hell you do that for? Why—” You know. It’s true. I don’t care—it’s human nature. It’s so easy to remember, or find fault, than it is to praise someone. How often does a person say, “Gee, I love you like crazy?” You know, you’re thinking it all the time. You think it 24 hours a day, but you don’t say it. [1985,1:12]

In the next passage, by contrast, Lovett’s *Feeling responsible for others* schema leads to a more critical judgment of plant managers who are insufficiently caring:

13. [CS asked Lovett how he would have run Ciba-Geigy’s Cranston, Rhode Island, plant if he had been in charge] I would not’ve done what, what they did, because I *care* about people and I care about myself. I care about the environment. I’m—I care about—if you want, patriotic—I care about people. I like people. [del. 8 lines] I am the one in the shop, if there had been a fire, an accident, I was the first one on the spot whether I was the furthest away or not, so I was that type of person. I would jump in and do something, even [del.] regardless of what it may harm, it may be harmful to me. [1985,2:2]

Note that, in passage 13, Lovett equates liking people and caring about them with being “patriotic.” Hating others, therefore, is un-American.

14. And it upsets me to no end to think that there are groups like the Ku Klux Klan and the German organizations and things like that. [del. 1 line] I can’t understand—I believe that, I believe in free speech and all that but these people will get right up and—in an audience—and say, I hate the Jews and I hate the blacks and I hate [del. 21 lines]. It just seems so sad that what we, the average person, believes in this country and then have these same people say, “I’m an American, but I hate this or I hate that one. Or we should kill all of these and all of them.” That isn’t what the American way is; that isn’t what our ancestors fought for. [1985,4:25]

Responsible is ambiguous: it can mean reliable and dependable, but it can also mean carrying the burden of obligation for something. Lovett voiced that sense of burden particularly in agonizing about how much he should support his sister-in-law and brother: his brother had been a heavy drinker for many years and could no longer work. Lovett also became irritated when it seemed that his children, in-laws, and friends took advantage of the fact that he was not working or asked for advice that they then ignored. Still, unlike the resentment and pessimism that dominated his *Can’t fight the system* voice and the optimistic

enthusiasm of his *Achieving anything you want* voice, the overall affective tone of Lovett's *Feeling responsible for others* voice was one of contentment, a term he used when I asked him to describe himself:

15. I feel so that I'm content. And I'm satisfied. If I was to die tonight, I'd have no regrets. I really don't. I feel so that I have lived a good life. And fortunately for me I've had [inaudible] an exceptionally good wife. [Irene is present.] And I'm very pleased with my children. I'm very pleased with my grandchildren. I may've missed out on something but because I don't know what I've missed out on then I don't really—I really haven't missed it. Until you have something and then lose it you don't know so—I'm very content. [del. 1 line] I feel so that I have done perhaps my thing that I was designated to do. [1985,5:27]²³

Lovett's Schemas and Social Discourses

From the interview material I have presented so far, it would be possible to think of Lovett as nothing more than a collection of multiple subject positions. His *Can't fight the system* voice expresses his identity as a blue-collar worker (especially a disabled worker), homeowner, and taxpayer; his *Achieving anything you want* voice expresses his identity as a potential capitalist and U.S. American (passage 7; see also note 22); and his *Feeling responsible for others* voice expresses his identity as a father and person involved with other people. Furthermore, each of these voices expresses ideas that Lovett probably learned from readily available sources in public culture.

Lovett's *Can't fight the system* voice expresses themes typical of U.S. populism (Boyte and Riessman 1986; Goodwyn 1978; Kazin 1994), which takes the angry, resentful perspective of the "average person" or "little person" who is exploited or dominated by other groups. Left-wing populists focus on "the rich" and "big business" as the exploiter; right-wing populists focus on the shenanigans of "big government" and the poor. The average person may be like Lovett in criticism of all of these others. Lovett could have picked up populist ideas from political speeches, talk radio, or casual conversation.

Lovett's *Achieving anything you want* voice derives, instead, from individualistic ideologies, especially those strands of utilitarian and economic individualism (Bellah et al. 1985) that are sometimes referred to as the "American Dream" or "success myth" (Robertson 1980). U.S. populism and individualism overlap to a certain extent because they both promote distrust of centralized power and authority. Reich (1987) refers to this distrust as the American myth of the "rot at the top." Still, populism and individualism diverge in at least three ways, as illustrated by Lovett's *Can't fight the system* and *Achieving anything you want* voices: images of society (divided into classes versus atomistic individuals), assumptions about agency (structural constraint versus individual freedom), and emotional tone (resentful anger versus cheerful optimism). Individualistic public discourses and practices are also widespread in the United States. They are expressed explicitly in political speeches, how-to books, and sales meetings such as the Amway meetings Lovett talked about, and are inculcated

implicitly through practices that encourage self-reliance (Strauss and Quinn in press).

Finally, Lovett's *Feeling responsible for others* voice also has readily available social sources. Young people are often admonished about the need to become responsible adults; women who go on welfare are told they need to show more "personal responsibility." The stress on *personal* responsibility in the debate about welfare shows the influence of individualistic discourses, but there are still differences between talk about "the individual" and more communitarian discourses about "responsibility." To talk about responsibility is to stress duty, especially, duties toward others.²⁴ This is not the giddy, you-can-reach-for-the-stars, self-centered attitude of the economic individualist; responsibilities pull you to the ground and can keep you from getting ahead. Many of my interviewees (male as well as female) had faced situations in which they had to choose between economic advancement and spending time with their families or aging parents (see also Stack 1996). In addition to public discourse for mass audiences, other sources of Lovett's ideas about being a responsible family man could have been parental lectures, overheard gossip (about irresponsible relatives, neighbors, and acquaintances), and observation of his role models' behaviors.²⁵

Thus far, in other words, Jim Lovett fits Jameson's depiction of the fragmented subject constructed by diverse social discourses.

Theories Meet People, Part II: Evidence for the Partly Integrated Self

In other respects, however, Jameson's depiction misses the mark for Lovett and my other interviewees. Lovett's schemas are not mere replicas of dominant discourses but are his reworked versions of these, which becomes apparent when his schemas are compared with Carol Russo's; Lovett's and Russo's outlooks both show partial integration; their partial integrations can be traced to emotionally significant early life experiences, which they can talk about in a way that links their past and present; and the same pattern of partial fragmentation and partial integration holds for two younger interviewees, Anna Monteiro and Matthew Healey.

Personal Style: Schemas Do Not Replicate Discourses

The end of the bourgeois ego or monad . . . means the end . . . of style, in the sense of the unique and the personal.

—Jameson, "The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism"

I have acknowledged that Lovett's *Can't fight the system*, *Achieving anything you want*, and *Feeling responsible for others* schemas were drawn, respectively, from populist, economic individualist, and communitarian pronouncements and practices. Yet as Lovett voices those ideas, it is clear he has a unique style—that is, his own way of appropriating and interpreting those widely shared discourses. In his appropriation of populist discourses, for example, the

“little person” is an adult man, and hierarchy is expressed in metaphors of talking but not being heard. Another working-class interviewee, Carol Russo, voiced populist ideas with very different imagery.

I met and interviewed Carol Russo in 1984, before I had decided to focus on the Ciba-Geigy controversy. At that point I planned my project as a sampling of people living in different parts of Cranston, Rhode Island (the city where I lived). During a stint as a poll worker, I met a friend of Russo’s who recommended her as someone who might be willing to express her opinions. She was so helpful that in 1990 I reinterviewed her along with my Ciba-Geigy interviewees.

Like Lovett, Russo had a strongly populist outlook. She frequently expressed cynicism about politicians, bureaucrats, businessmen, and other people in power, and outrage at the behavior of the poor. Russo’s “little person,” however, was oppressed in more violent ways than Lovett’s.

16. [Speaking about powerful people in her state professional association] You’re afraid to make waves, because, you know, these people could really crush you. [1984,1:20]
17. Whoever’s on top, they’re going to step on you. [1984,1:13]
18. The people who are on top like to stay on top and they will step on everybody. [1990,3:17]
19. I think almost, there must be a chromosome missing in these people who can just go out and kill people you know. [del. 4 lines] I would say [inaudible] that this is a very indifferent world, a lot of indifferent people. [del. 1 line] The world is made up of a lot of very indifferent people climbing all over everybody else to get to the top; they don’t care who they hurt. [1990,1:21]

Also unlike Lovett, for Russo the little person is often a woman:

20. I think that women need more support. You know, we really need a lot of support. We’re not getting it. You know, just, they try to keep us back and down and stuff like that. And you have to fight them every inch of the way. [1984,3:7]
21. A woman is a second citizen. [1990,3:15]
22. Women have been downtrodden too long. [1984,4:22]

The last set of quotes make Russo sound quite feminist, and indeed, she was the only interviewee to mention unequal gender roles (“A lot of times women give up their livelihood or their life to become a mother and a wife and it’s so wrong”) in response to my question, “Who or what is to blame if people don’t get ahead in the world?” Yet unlike many other feminists, Russo opposed reproductive choice in two situations: abortion and multiple out-of-wedlock births. She suspected mothers in the latter situation of being likely to neglect or abuse their children:

23. I believe that anybody who has more than one illegitimate child should have automatic birth control or—they won’t take the pill so then they just have them spayed. ’Cause they want to live like dogs, treat them like dogs. And maybe I

sound bad, but how many of these people have children and then they mistreat them? [1990,3:15]

In the last passage and elsewhere in the interviews, children are the violently oppressed “little person” and their mothers are the uncaring oppressors. Russo also occasionally used the same schema of power-hungry, uncaring people who want to “stay on top” to understand Cold War politics:

24. How can we have a nuclear freeze and I know they’re [the Russians] not going to do it. [del. 2 lines] My attitude toward them is, they don’t care. They’re going to—they want the power and they’re going to stay on top. [1984,4:2]

Feminist, pro-life, anti-welfare, Cold War, and populist public discourses all contributed to a schema and voice I will call *Being hurt by people on top*.

I could continue illustrating Russo’s *Being hurt by people on top* schema, but it should be clear already that Lovett and Russo both have a personal style. In neither case was their talk a copy of dominant discourses but rather a selective appropriation and reworking of them.

Partial Integration

Classical psychic fragmentation—for example, the separation of imagination and knowledge—was always a consequence of the division of labor in the social world; now, however, it is the very rational or knowledge functions of the mind which become somehow internally segmented and assigned to different floors and different office buildings.

—Jameson, “Secondary Elaborations”

In Lovett’s case, at least, Jameson’s description of knowledge “assigned to different floors and different office buildings” seems fairly apt. For Russo it is less appropriate, because she managed to explain much of the world in terms of the same schema, opposing the indifferent and brutal to the innocent and weak. Even in Lovett’s case, however, knowledge fragmentation was not total. His *Feeling responsible for others* voice sometimes appeared in the midst of a *Can’t fight the system* or *Achieving anything you want* passage. Is this an example of the random postmodern amalgamations Jameson describes? No, because these border crossings were not random: while Lovett’s *Can’t fight the system* and *Achieving anything you want* voices sometimes abutted, they never infiltrated each other.²⁶ Only his *Feeling responsible for others* voice sometimes mingled with the first two or they with it.

Feeling responsible for others in the Can’t fight the system voice. In the last interview, I asked Lovett to respond to the following statement: “People often talk about there being different classes. Do you agree?” After clarifying that I meant economic classes, Lovett agreed:

25. I’m sure there’s classes of people. Because—yes, I’m sure that there are. So, there are, there are poor people. That are dependent upon income from an out-

side source. There are the working class of people that are working for someone else that are responsible people to see that their family is cared for and maybe not a freedom of choice of—but they are responsible for other people. Through taxes or welfare—it's all through taxes or deductions from their wages. And then you have the upper class or the wealthy people that have people working for them. That are in a class of their own. They, again, are looking for someone to work for them to earn them money to make them wealthy or make them successful. And not necessarily concerned with that person because there are so many of the working class that if that one person is not doing his job, then he is replaceable, expendable. Where he is in a, in a class of his own. And he only cares for his class. The poor person does not—maybe, for some reason, he has no control over—is stagnant in his line. The workingman, it seems so that he is responsible to help the poor man and he is also *responsible* to make the rich man richer. So he is a middle class. He is not poor and he is not rich. And it seems so the middle-class person is carrying the whole country or the whole world. [1985,6: 24–25]

This is essentially the same “verbal molecule” (Strauss 1992) Lovett gave me in the first passage I quoted (“he’s carrying the whole world”). Here, however, the use of the phrase “responsible people to see that their family is cared for” indicates that at this point, at least, he sees the responsible family man and the oppressed working-class man as the same person. Note, too, that the rich man is described as someone who “only *cares* for his class” (see passage 2), in contrast to Lovett’s self-description as someone who likes, cares about, and feels responsible for other people (e.g., passage 13). A more subtle clue is his use of the word *stagnant* to describe the poor person. Earlier in the same interview he had used the same word to describe his brother (“I was able to pick and grasp onto things where he was, kind of got stagnated. And he stayed in this jewelry shop just doing small nothing jobs for years and years and years and years” [1985,6:10]). It seems that the burden Lovett feels in caring for his brother and sister-in-law is generalized to a burden the workingman has for poor people.

Feeling responsible for others in Lovett’s Achieving anything you want voice. Lovett’s *Achieving anything you want* voice was expressed especially when he was discussing the opportunities to become rich through Amway. As I reread that part of my transcripts for this article, I noticed that his *Feeling responsible for others* voice intruded here, too, with an emphasis on Amway’s “code of ethics” (see his emphasis on the Boy Scout code of ethics after 11 above) that ensured that no one would get hurt:

26. With the business that we were in, as far, as high as you wanted to go with this then—even if you dropped out—there’s always someone that’s going to pick up so no one is left stranded. [del. 3 lines] The Amway corporation code of ethics’s been copied by a lot of big corporations. [1985,4:19]
27. So that is one company that I know personally that is a free enterprise company. And it really works. Because they started it with the right idea and never, never wavered from it. They set their guidelines and their, their beliefs or their code of ethics. [1985,4:20–21]

This is not a random pastiche of ideas. Lovett's responsible, ethical, caring family man seems to be playing a central narrative role. Similarly, Russo combines populist, feminist, anti-abortion, Cold War, and other discourses not in a random mixture but in a story with a consistent plot, in which the weak and good are hurt by the strong and bad.

Creating Partial Integration: The Importance of Emotionally Salient Past Experience

If, indeed, the subject has lost its capacity actively to extend its pro-tensions and re-tensions across the temporal manifold and to organize its past and future into coherent experience, it becomes difficult enough to see how the cultural productions of such a subject could result in anything but "heaps of fragments" and in a practice of the randomly heterogeneous. . . .

As for expression and feelings or emotions, the liberation, in contemporary society, from the older *anomie* of the centered subject may also mean not merely a liberation from anxiety but a liberation from every other kind of feeling as well, since there is no longer a self present to do the feeling.

—Jameson, "The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism"

The partial consistencies I found for Lovett around the *Feeling responsible for others* schema and for Russo around the *Being hurt by people on top* schema are reflected as well in the number of different contexts in which those ideas were voiced. Lovett's *Feeling responsible for others* voice was much more widely distributed across interview contexts than either his *Can't fight the system* or *Achieving anything you want* voices, occurring at some point in every interview. By contrast, his *Can't fight the system* voice was most apparent in the first three interviews and his *Achieving anything you want* voice was not heard at all until the fourth interview. The same is true of Russo's *Being hurt by people on top* voice: it was recurrent across the interviews I had with her (and across time, showing up in both the 1984 and the 1990 interviews).

Furthermore, Lovett acted on his *Feeling responsible for others* ideas much more than on his *Can't fight the system* or *Achieving anything you want* ideas. If I had heard only his *Can't fight the system* voice, I never would have guessed that he was one of the most active neighbors in the Ciba-Geigy protests. He marched, attended state hearings, and called the plant manager regularly. His *Achieving anything you want* voice was also misleading. Despite his enthusiasm about the opportunities to make money with Amway, he and his wife only sold enough to cover their costs. At an earlier stage of his life, he had considered moving to Connecticut, where there were companies that would pay welders a higher wage, but he felt that he and Irene should remain near their parents as they grew older. That is only one example of behavior consistent with his *Feeling responsible for others* ideas. During the interviews at his house he was often on the phone with relatives who needed advice, and when I interviewed one of his relatives, she attested to his helpfulness. (I saw this for myself when he showed up unexpectedly to make some repairs in the middle of one of the interviews with her.)²⁷

One way Russo acted on her concern for children was by fighting for better schools in Cranston and volunteering to tutor in them. She was also an extremely protective mother. Yet while she took pride in being an involved, protective mother, she counseled her daughters not to center their lives on their families.

28. I don't want my daughters catering to a man. My daughter [del.] said something to me, she said, "You know, Ma," she said, "Really it's your fault that we don't have boyfriends." And I said, "Oh, is that right?" And she said, "Yes, you turned us off on to men." [del.] I said, "Well [del.] I think you're dead wrong. I just told you that I don't want you to get married before you're 40. [laughs] And I don't want you to have kids!" No, but I told them that they have to get an education and depend on themselves, you can't depend on a man. [1990,1:23]

The prevalence and motivational force of these schemas suggest something beyond random motion is at work creating a partial integration for Lovett around *Feeling responsible for others* and for Russo around *Being hurt by people on top*.

The only time Lovett mentioned early life experiences in his *Can't fight the system* voice was when he recalled that his parents had told him that the Republican Party was the party of rich people and since he was not a rich person, he did not think he should vote for their party. He never mentioned early life experiences in his *Achieving anything you want* voice. In his *Feeling responsible for others* voice, however, he talked about differences between his brother and himself from an early age (passage 11) and his parents' definition of a good parent (passage 9). He also talked about his father, whom he remembered as hard-working and not involved with the family:

29. CS: What people or experiences do you think have been influential in, you know, making you the kind of person you are?

JL: Oh boy. I think that, way back when I was real little, my dad, he always worked a lot of hours. He never had much time to spend with us. As boys in growing up. Like some fathers do, they get involved with the boys in Scouting or Little League or baseball. [1985,5:2]

This theme, of a distant, uninvolved father, came up repeatedly as I asked Lovett to talk about his childhood.

30. It may've been that he worked so much that—but we never had that relationship. It was always father and son but not doing things together. Where I think that's why I, when my boys grew up, I got involved in Scouting with them. Because it was something missing in my bringing up that I wanted to extend to my children. That something I may've missed out on, or I was lacking, I took the initiative or went out of my way to [inaudible], to do things with them because of my, my loss. Where my brother, again, wasn't interested in things like that. He didn't get involved in things like that with his children so . . . [1985,5:11–12]
31. There wasn't that much love. I mean, we loved each other but it wasn't, *never*—only on a rare occasion I remember sitting in my father's lap or something.

[del. 11 lines] But I know that he cared because—he had to because of the way he worked and provided for us as we grew up. [1985,5:14]

Passage 30 is particularly interesting because in it Lovett contrasts his involvement with his children with both his father's and his brother's lack of involvement with their children. We could speculate that Lovett has strong negative feelings about his father that he hides ("But I know that he cared," 31), displacing them instead onto his brother. More generally, it seems that the repeated occurrences of Lovett's *Feeling responsible for others* theme, across a wide variety of contexts, is rooted in the emotionally salient early childhood experience of yearning for his father to be involved in the family.

Russo as well provides many clues about the roots of her concern for children and women who are victims of violence and indifference.

32. [referring to her family] Very male-oriented family. You know, women are not worth anything. You know, when you have daughters the best thing you can do is hurry up and get them married off before they can get pregnant. [1990,2:1–2]

33. [speaking of her family's lack of expectations for her] What could you possibly accomplish, you're a woman. What could you do? [1990,2:17]

Russo was the second of four girls. When the youngest was born, her father picked up her mother and the baby from the hospital and drove straight to a car lot, where he bought a new car because he was so depressed about the birth of another girl. Russo described an unhappy childhood. Her mother, who worked the second shift at a factory, was absent when Russo came home from school and "indifferent" (1990,1:5; see 19 above) when she was present, and her father was cruel, keeping her from extracurricular activities, forbidding her to go out into the neighborhood, and beating her.

There are two plausible ways of explaining this coherence between past events and present outlooks for Russo and Lovett. One is that their emotionally significant early life experiences left behind schemas that now dominate their adult interpretations of the world. Another possibility is that they are narrating an edited version of reality, a rereading of the past in terms of present schemas. Either of these explanations poses problems for Jameson. If the first is true, late-20th-century U.S. Americans are not liberated from feelings. If the second is true, late-20th-century U.S. Americans can tell a narrative linking their past and present. The narrative may not have a happy ending (Russo felt that her life has been a "mere existence" and she has "no future" [1990,2:30]), but it is a coherent narrative nonetheless. Probably both are true, because it is not possible to remember everything about our pasts: memories are always partial and doubtless often revised. But this partiality and these revisions have to be explained—why should one person use one schema to remember the past and another person use another? This difference is likely due to the importance each schema acquired earlier in life. If that is the case, late-20th-century U.S. Americans can link their past to their present, and they do so on the basis of feelings—which hardly have

been obliterated, even if it is not currently fashionable for elite culture producers to express them.

Are Lovett and Russo the Wrong Sort of Late-20th-Century Americans?

But perhaps Lovett and Russo represent an older form of consciousness, and we would find a different psychological profile among younger, hipper U.S. Americans.

Anna Monteiro. Anna Monteiro was in her late twenties when I interviewed her in 1995 for a study I have begun on attitudes about the welfare system. Most of my interviewees have been drawn from a large pool of randomly chosen phone survey respondents. However, that phone survey reached few upper-class respondents and few people of color of any class, so I asked around to find potential interviewees in these categories. Monteiro was referred to me by an acquaintance of mine who knew her at work.

In this project, I always begin the second interview by asking people to tell me “some of the major experiences that have made you the kind of person you are.” Monteiro’s first response was, “Being raised in two different cultures,” which led to a clash between her immigrant parents’ values and those she had learned growing up in the United States.

Monteiro had a strong Cape Verdean identity. She was proud that she could speak the language and that her son understood it, she was active in local Cape Verdean affairs, and she was interested in getting a computer so she could visit Cape Verdean home pages on the World Wide Web. As a dark-skinned Cape Verdean she was probably subject to another sort of conflict: between identification as being black and identification as being part of a community of recent immigrants. She did not talk about this issue, but her response to one of my standardized questions shows her ability to switch from one viewpoint to the other:

34. CS: All right, another topic some people relate welfare to is race relations. In the United States. Do you have any thoughts about that?

AM: [I hate the way] they make it seem that it’s mostly black people on welfare, when in fact the percentage is that it’s mostly white. I hate the way they skew it, so it makes it seem like it’s all black when it’s mostly white. That’s on welfare. But they don’t tell you that little thing. You know. And you can’t even do it, saying that it’s teenagers, because I think it’s almost neck as to the percentage of black or white. [del. 5 lines] And I just don’t like the way they show it. You know. Lower class women, black women in the ghetto, they’re the ones getting pregnant, they’re getting welfare. And it’s not. You know. Why don’t you show the ones living in Beverly Hills? [del. 2 lines]

CS: Some people relate this in another way, in terms of discrimination also. You know, getting jobs, or getting good pay, or something, you know?

AM: How are they being discriminated against?

CS: Oh, well, you know, if people of color are being discriminated against, then you can’t get a decent job or get good pay for your job, you know, then you might have to rely on welfare.

AM: Hmm, that could be a percentage of it. [Course you also have to have a decent] education. Can't expect to get a corporate job if you can't finish high school. And they might be the same percentage of people that complain that immigrants are taking all of their jobs. Jobs that they wouldn't take anyway. Scrubbing floors or whatever, they'll complain, "Oh, these immigrants are coming and taking all of these jobs" or whatever. [1995,1:15-16]

Another influence on Monteiro was her college psychology and sociology courses. Referring to the end of her relationship with her ex-fiance, she said,

35. When he left and I moved back home I realized how . . . smothered I was. As they say, in the classes I've taken, I kind of got tunnel vision. And you don't realize it. [1995,2:2]²⁸

And she saw classical conditioning at work with her father.

36. I told him my mother has him trained. She did not intend on it but that's what it turned out because he says he'll be home for whatever hours and doesn't feel no hunger, but as soon as he sees my mother, all of a sudden he'll feel hungry. I said, "She's got you trained like Pavlov's dog." [1995,2:6-7]

A feminist perspective also contributed to a difference of viewpoint between Monteiro and her parents:

37. Dad still to this day has a saying, "The women should know how to cook, clean—you know, she should know how to cook and clean." He still has some old-fashioned ideas. Okay. We got into a discussion about construction, working in construction. [del. 1 line] And we got on about equal pay. [del. 1 line] And I said, "That's not what I'm talking about, I'm saying, I want equal rights. If I do the same job you do, I should get paid the same thing." I said, "Like in construction, if I'm up there with you, lugging a three-pound bag of cement, doing the exact same thing, shouldn't I get paid the same?" He goes, "Yeah, but women won't do it the same." I'm like, "That's not the point. If I'm doing the same thing you do, I should get paid the same amount you do." [inaudible] that kind of old-fashioned idea. Let's not even get to homosexuals. [1995,2:6]

Finally, in other places the influence seems to have been oft-heard U.S. discourses about the importance of making an effort to achieve one's goals. For example, her story of persevering to finish college sounds like the young-Abel-Lincoln-walking-barefoot-to-school story but with a up-to-date twist:

38. I was in college for a year, I got off, I didn't go for a year. I had gotten pregnant. I went back to school while I was pregnant. And this—if you really want to do something they say you really do it. I would sometimes miss my bus and walk a half an hour to get home. [CS: Wow.] Eight months pregnant. In the summer, at night. [del.] And then a week after I gave birth I was back in classes. [1995,1:5]

Yet however diverse the sources of Monteiro's ideas, her voice was fairly consistent throughout the interviews. This self-confident voice often expressed

a schema that could be called *Learning from my experiences*. These were the words she used after telling the long story of her involvement with her ex-fiance. After describing this tempestuous relationship, which included his accidentally knifing her, ruining her credit rating, and abducting her and their son, she ended by saying, "So that was a learning experience in itself" (1995,2:3). In a completely different context, at the end of the first interview, she took a similarly positive view of the mostly secretarial and clerical jobs she has held so far (she wants, eventually, to become a counselor):

39. I believe that any job that you do, you should be able to learn something from it. [del. a few lines in which she talks about how she learned rapid number inputting on one job and different versions of WordPerfect on others] The jobs may not be the greatest but [at least] you can come away with something that you can add to your resume. [1995,1:18]

Another young interviewee to whom I will turn shortly, Matthew Healey, also mentioned the positive side of the dead-end jobs he had held. However, while Healey talked about learning from other people he met on the job, Monteiro emphasized the more classically U.S. approach of learning on her own (Tocqueville 1969:429). In the following, she recalls another conversation with her father:

40. I said, "Life is a learning experience." You have to learn, from everything you do, you have to learn something from it, whether it be good or bad. What to do or not to do. [inaudible] Just take one day at a time and just keep learning. [1995,2:3]

Monteiro credited her father with encouraging her to find her own way:

41. Some of the things my father, he always taught me to, he always said, "The crowd all goes this way, you can go [that] way. You don't have to go with the crowd." [1995,2:1]

Monteiro added laughingly that this advice backfired on her father: "But when I went against him, he didn't appreciate that too much." She gave many examples of rejecting her parents' "old-fashioned" ideas, especially about women's roles, such as "the more you date, the less your price":

42. Oh, and you should always be home. In other words, the man will find you. In other words, don't go out, whatever, you know. If they want you, and you're a good little girl, you'll stay home [del.] and they will find you. [1995,2:6]

To which her reply was,

43. You wait for them at home while I'm out. If they come, tell them to wait for me. [1995,2:6]

Monteiro's father's ideas about women's roles were like Russo's father's ideas. However, their relationships with their daughters, from the perspective of these

women now, sounds completely different. Every story Russo told of her father was of some meanness, while Monteiro's father came across as warm and loving. In addition to her disagreements with her father, Monteiro gave several examples of advice he had given her that she had followed. She told me that she had assured him, "You don't realize how much of the stuff that you've told me over the years that I've kept to and adhered to. That I have done" (1995,2:3), and said she respected him and still sought his opinion. She often referred to activities they did together.

Moreover, Monteiro did not simply reject her parent's ideas and adopt the peer culture around her. When she repeated her father's advice about going against the crowd, I asked for an example:

44. Oh, fashion. Platform heels and hip huggers. [inaudible] Just because everyone else is wearing them. Any kind of fashion, it's not necessarily that. Any fashion that all of a sudden everybody's wearing, I'm not going to wear it just because everybody's wearing it. I like to wear what's comfortable for me. [1995,2:4]

This is not a matter of saying one thing while doing another (who would say they mindlessly adopt the latest fashions?)—in fact, she did not dress in a trendy way.

Also feeding Monteiro's self-confidence was her sense of being attractive to men. Another response she gave to my question about the major experiences that have made her the kind of person she is was the following:

45. Realizing you can dump one and there's someone else behind, can give you that little power trip there, I guess. [1995,2:1]

Being popular and attractive, along with having a close, supportive family, all probably contributed to the self-esteem she attributed to herself. In talking about her relationship with her abusive ex-fiance, she said, "I never ever thought it was my fault. Self-esteem has never been a problem for me" (1995,1:11).

In sum, threading through much of Monteiro's talk is a sense of someone who approaches life with optimism and self-confidence. This voice is not constant, but it provides a partial integration of the diverse ideas she has internalized.

Matthew Healey. Healey was a few years younger than Monteiro when I interviewed him for the study of attitudes about welfare. Unlike Monteiro, he was one of the people who had fallen into my earlier phone survey by chance, through a random sampling of greater Providence phone exchanges.²⁹ After many calls, I managed to catch him between a trip to Europe and his departure for graduate school. Unlike Monteiro, whose family was working-class, Healey's family was middle- to upper-middle class, and he lived in a town with a reputation for snobbishness.

Many of Healey's answers to my questions about welfare and related topics reflected the discussions he had had with his friends about those issues. I always begin these interviews by asking people if they have a general approach to issues

like this. Healey replied that he did not have a general political orientation but liked to examine the facts and then make up his mind. The interview continued:

46. MH: And a lot of my friends who are in different fields—I have one friend who is a medical student, one friend she’s a nurse practitioner, a friend who’s in the military. So different perspectives, we get together—one who is in special education—and we get together and we discuss the issues and everyone brings their own baggage with that. So we learn a lot. It’s good to listen, not just . . . [laughs].

CS: Is this something sort of regular you do? You get together and discuss issues?

MH: Yeah, we really do. And it’s strange. Certain circles, friends I have, they would never do this. And my close friends, we really do. We try to discuss everything from politics to religion, which can be dangerous, but we’re still friends. We fall everywhere from extreme conservative to radically liberal and everywhere in between. I’ve learned a lot. [1995,1:1]

The baggage Healey brought to these discussions was diverse. One piece was religion. Healey did not dwell on his strong Catholic faith, but the subject came up at several points. For example, he mentioned his maternal grandfather as one of the major influences on his life and as someone who was similar to him. When I asked how they were similar, Healey replied:

47. Well, I’d say probably as a, more as a religious person. He worked 60 years as a Eucharistic minister and he worked a lot with the church. So his faith is a very strong example. [1995,2:1]

Healey’s religious faith probably contributed to his outlook on several issues, such as premarital sex. He is opposed to abortion, and when I followed up on that topic, asking him to imagine a situation in which his girlfriend became pregnant accidentally and he was faced with the possibility of supporting the child, he had a hard time doing so because he is also opposed to premarital sex.

48. I’ve been in a situation where I could have had premarital sex, but I opted not to because that was very important to me. As far as my upbringing and in the spiritual sense, it is very important to know what that really means. [1995,1:9]

Another factor that has shaped Healey’s outlooks is having worked for pay since he was 16:

49. I’ve worked since the day I was 16. I did landscaping. Very humbling because I would be cutting grass for kids that I went to school with. While they, you know. And I, of course, I thought that was strange at first. But I was earning money and that money was saved. That was an important lesson. My father felt that that was very important. And at first of course I was, “I want to be out with my friends,” and this and that. But I do look back now and it was a very valuable experience. [1995,1:3]

Thus far, Healey’s views sound fairly conservative, and indeed he described himself as more conservative than some of his friends, although less so

than his father. Yet he is not a conservative in the mold of any current national figure. For example, he considers himself an environmentalist on many issues. Most U.S. Americans do as well (Kempton, Boster, and Hartley 1995), but Healey is far more knowledgeable and active in this area than are most people in this country. For example, he had worked with local wildlife officers, rescuing and rehabilitating sick animals, and he minored in environmental studies as an undergraduate.

Also, he is a fan of the *Star Trek* television series. He said he did not watch much sports on television because “there’s always a rerun of *Star Trek* on.” He credited one episode of *Star Trek* for his way of thinking about the issue of immigration:

50. People say, my friends tell me that I am very influenced by what I hear: one of my favorite programs on television is *Star Trek*. It’s a very idealistic world. But I do think that that is within our sights to one day live on an earth that does not have a social problem. That everyone is provided for and we’ve taken care of these things. But again that’s 300 years in the future, so I think it’s going to take at least that. But that, a lot—one little thing always clicks in my mind, there is an episode where they talked about these computer components that were made in Dakar, Senegal? I think it’s Senegal. Dakar, Senegal. And here’s a country that doesn’t necessarily have as much technology *right* now, but look it, okay, we made this world a unit, we are all together, invest where everyone is given an opportunity. That just says to me as an aside, look it, okay, let’s make Mexico or let’s make Central America a technology center. Then the people, perhaps the Americans will be going *there* to work. You know, it is entirely possible. However idealistic it is. I don’t know, that is just an influence, one of the influences on my thought. [1995,1:14]

Healey’s international outlook went far beyond this. He had studied European history in college and was very knowledgeable about the historical background of current world events, such as the conflict in Bosnia. And he could speak four European languages. On his recent trip to Europe, he had tried to judge the extent to which Nazi beliefs were still widespread in Germany by talking to Germans of all ages in German and listening to their offhand comments, for example, on the German-language tour at the concentration camp at Dachau.

Still, as was the case for Lovett, Russo, and Monteiro, there was an outlook that partly integrated Healey’s diverse ideas. This could be called *Listening from the margins*, and Healey traces it to his having been overweight as a child.

51. CS: Can you tell me a little more about what kind of kid you were growing up and . . .

MH: Well, you know, I think one of the *biggest* things, in third grade, I had pneumonia. For three months. And, well, when I was home I had a tutor here but I ate and ate and ate and ate and ate. So I mean, I was an average-weight kid before, and when I went back to school I was overweight. And from there on in, for the rest of my life, that was it. It was a battle from there. And it’s hard for people to understand, but if you’re a kid growing up heavy, there’s—I mean, little kids are cruel. Kids are cruel. And that was a very, sort of, I think it helped formed my

personality. I do feel more comfortable dealing with people on this, I don't know, in the sense of, I see their position and I will sort of be on a radius there around. You know, I don't necessarily put myself in a power position and say, "Okay, this is what it's going to be." I say, "All right, well, what do you think?" [1995,2:8]

Sometimes Healey used a vertical metaphor of being in a "lower position":

52. CS: And how would you describe yourself to someone who didn't know you?

MH: Oh, that's a big question. [del. 1 line] I am easy to get along with. People don't understand me, necessarily, when they first meet me. They think that I'm, again, you know, a little strange. Goofy. But I like to make people feel comfortable around me. [del. 26 lines in which he describes his typical joking interactions with people and almost unflinching good humor, which leads people to pick on him in a nice way] And I think it's my personality, I think it lends to that. Maybe it's that, again, you know, dealing with people from a lower position. You know. They feel comfortable with me, I feel comfortable with them. [1995,2:17-18]

Notice, too, his use of "humbling" to describe his feelings when he was younger and had to cut the grass at his classmates' houses (passage 49). Being less well-off than his neighbors may also have contributed to his sense of dealing with people from a lower position.

The assumption that Healey is not at the center or the top affected his thinking about his future family and career. Even though he did not have a girlfriend when I interviewed him, let alone a wife and family, he was already planning his career around the compromises he assumed he would have to make to accommodate them:

53. MH: Let's say if I have the option to take a job overseas and get a higher salary or stay here and do something that perhaps wasn't as much something as what I would like to do but I would have the benefit of having a family, I would definitely choose the family.

CS: Huh. Why couldn't you bring your family with you, overseas?

MH: I could, I could, and that's certainly a possibility. [del. 1 line] I mean no one's ever really put it to me that way, and if my family and my wife would be willing to go with me, so—I just assumed it would be a case where it would be a hard decision, I wouldn't end up getting the easy decision, "Oh sure, let's go," but I'm prepared to at least deal with a compromise, not saying, "Too bad, that's what we're going to do." [1995,2:14]

Looking back at the statements of his that I presented earlier, we can see the same tendency to stand to the side and listen, in his description of his discussions with his friends ("It's good to listen, not just . . .," passage 46). This schema also gave Healey a different attitude than Monteiro about learning. While she stressed striking out on her own and learning from experience, he emphasized learning wisdom from others:

54. [talking about the merits of one welfare reform bill] I think it's a good idea to have young mothers live at home. Because where else would they live? There's a lot more family structure. And I really think family structure is important. And you can be attacked, "Okay, well define what a family is." What a family was and had worked for however many thousands of years, with all of its problems. If it worked, and you learned from your elders, you learned wisdom and you learned experience. And you don't learn that on your own necessarily. Experience comes from—wisdom is given, what you can pick up from other people. [1995,1:4]

Notice that Healey not only describes the importance of learning from others, but it is clear from the above that he also *has* listened to others—probably his friends—talk about this issue (“And you can be attacked, ‘Okay, well define what a family is’ ”). When he reported on his trip to Europe, he dwelt on the time he spent listening to people.

The same humble perspective may have contributed to his thinking about the role of the United States in the world in passage 50 above, in which he envisions a time when there will be good jobs in Latin America and U.S. Americans will emigrate there. And to a certain extent, this perspective even applied to his thinking about humans' place in the natural world. Although he did think “there is a difference between humans and other animals” (1995,2:5), he had argued with his friends that animals might have souls. And he thought people should respect animals' values:

55. [speaking of vegetarian dog food] You're looking at an animal who is supposed to have meat, you're putting human values on a dog. You know, you're imposing it, your ideas on it. [1995,2:7]

In sum, while Healey's ideas and actions cannot all be traced to his *Listening from the margins* schema, it does partly integrate the ideas he has drawn from television, his friends, and the other people he has listened to and learned from.

Coherence Manufactured on the Spot?

Earlier, I claimed that there are two plausible ways of explaining the partial coherences I found for Russo and Lovett between past events and present outlooks: that emotionally significant past experiences had shaped the schemas that dominated their adult narratives, or that current experiences had shaped the schemas through which they remembered the past. This ignores a third possibility: the partial coherences I found for Lovett, Russo, Monteiro, and Healey were created through the interaction between us during the interviews. Linde (1993) writes about the social obligation of speakers and addressees to jointly create life stories with the right amount of causal coherence. (The right amount, that is, in the United States. She discusses cross-cultural variation in the amount and type of coherence that is expected in narratives.) Furthermore, I had asked my interviewees to tell me “some of the major experiences that have made you the

kind of person you are,” thereby asking them to make a coherent connection between their past and present.

Lovett’s responsible family man persona was an identity that he was proud of and, I suspect, foregrounded in our discussions in preference to other identities that reflected less well on him: “I feel so, that with my education, which was only to the 9th grade, I’ve been fairly successful, um . . . raising my family” (passage 9). He had not been especially successful as a breadwinner, and the mention of his education at the beginning of the sentence (relevant to breadwinning, irrelevant to parenting), followed by a pause, suggests a midsentence decision to switch to a different meaning of success than the one with which he had started. Also, this statement came early in the interviews, appearing on pages 2 to 3 of the transcript for the first interview. Although I did not direct him toward that identification, my presence in the interview context may have led him to highlight it. Possibly the same is true for Monteiro’s *Learning from my experiences* schema.

Healey, however, tried to foreground a different identity than the one he eventually presented of a marginalized, formerly overweight person. In the beginning, he kept presenting himself as someone who “looks at the facts.” This was his response to my leadoff question in the first interview, and it recurred throughout that interview. He did not bring up his having been overweight until about a half an hour into the second interview. And he did so not in response to my “tell me some of the major experiences that have made you the kind of person you are” question, but in response to a later invitation to talk about “what kind of kid you were growing up.” Similarly, Russo was very reluctant to talk about her unhappy childhood; I did not learn about it until six years after I first met her, during the second round of interviews I conducted with her in 1990. The identity she kept highlighting was being a mother. I had made a point from the beginning to let her know that I was a mother too, which may have contributed to her emphasis on this identity.

More important, the evidence I gave above for partial coherence consisted not only of self-descriptions and consciously claimed identities but also of repetitions of key words, metaphorical imagery, emotional tone, and other aspects of their voices that were unlikely to have been produced for deliberate effect. For example, my claim that *Feeling responsible for others* partly integrated Lovett’s talk rests not on his explicit identity as a responsible parent but on passages like 25, where phrases like “responsible people to see that their family is cared for,” “he only cares for his class,” and “is stagnant in his line” hinted that his *Feeling responsible for others* schema was active in the midst of a *Can’t fight the system* context. Nor does it make sense that Russo would have used a lot of violent imagery, like “step on you” and “crush you,” because she wanted to give the impression of being someone who expects to be hurt by people in power. That is not the kind of coherence that Linde thinks is socially expected and it is not an identity of which Russo was proud.

Finally, my analysis also rested on evidence about people’s actions. Lovett, for example, has acted in accordance with his *Feeling responsible for others*

schema; just as Russo has for her *Being hurt by people on top* schema, Monteiro has for her *Learning from my experiences* schema, and Healey has for his *Listening from the margins* schema. None of these actions were manufactured on the spot.

Conclusions

In sum, I hope I have shown that in part Jameson is right, speaking about U.S. Americans near the end of the 20th century, that they internalize diverse public discourses, which they sometimes compartmentalize as if they had been “assigned to different floors and different office buildings.” This was especially the case for Lovett and true, to a lesser extent, for Russo, Monteiro, and Healey as well. For example, when Healey talked about his *Star Trek* idealism, he talked about a world where “everyone is provided for” (passage 50), but when I asked him what needed to be changed in the welfare system, he talked about his high school friends who were just given their spending money instead of earning it, as he had, and he focused on the importance of the work ethic.

In other respects, Jameson is wrong. For example, no two of my interviewees internalized social discourses in quite the same way, showing that personal style is not a property of some bygone bourgeois individual. For example, while Lovett’s version of populism stressed the difficulties of the workingman-homeowner, Russo’s version focused on the repression of women, children, and other people described as good but weak. This concern for the innocent and weak may help explain Russo’s opposition to abortion. In this she sounds like some of the pro-life women interviewed by Ginsburg (1989)—except that unlike Ginsburg’s interviewees, Russo believed it was a mistake for women to center their lives on their families.

Nor were multiple schemas necessarily related to political passivity for these interviewees. Lovett came to my attention originally because he was one of the Ciba-Geigy neighbors most active in the neighborhood protests over the plant, and Russo had participated in efforts to improve the city schools. Although Healey and Monteiro had not been especially politically active when I interviewed them, neither could be described as bewildered or apathetic: both discussed current issues knowledgeably and with feeling. Healey’s and Russo’s opposition to abortion, moreover, are a reminder that passionate adherents to a cause are hardly absent from the landscape of the late-20th-century United States. (Think also of the militias now active in the United States.) Cultural critics like Jameson who describe apathy and cynicism may be overly fixated on the fate of the political Left, overlooking the energy and commitment of activists on the political Right at this time.

Central to my argument has been the point that Jameson’s description of late capitalist psychological fragmentation misses the extent to which fragmentation coexists with some integration. Thus, the content father and husband of Lovett’s *Feeling responsible for others* talk seemed, at least at times, to blend into the resentful workingman of his *Can’t fight the system* narratives. Similarly, Russo’s Manichean world view, Monteiro’s self-confidence, and Healey’s feel-

ing of being in a lower or marginal position threaded through each one's talk, giving them greater coherence than would be expected from the diverse sources upon which each one drew. This is no less true for Healey or Monteiro, both in their twenties, than for Russo in her fifties or Lovett in his sixties. Nor was there any difference by class, gender, ethnicity, or color—at least for these four interviewees—which suggests problems with Ortner's expectation of greater fragmentation among subaltern groups in this society.³⁰

Four people is not very many, and it is possible that Jameson and Ortner are describing general trends that could be found if we were to look at a larger group.³¹ My expectation is that the pattern I found will hold up, not only among other U.S. Americans but elsewhere, given a cognitive model that I hold (Strauss and Quinn in press). According to this model, some cognitive fragmentation is to be expected because there is no central sorter in anybody's head that files information logically. Instead, new experiences and ideas are internalized in connection only with information that is similar in learning context, key words, emotional tone, or other perceptible features—abstract semantic similarity is not enough.³² Yet partial coherence is to be expected, because feelings have not been obliterated under late capitalism. We are still emotional beings, concerned about safety, status, and love, among other things. Repeated events that arouse these strong emotions create schemas that are likely to be used to interpret ambiguous new experiences more often than schemas that carry less emotional force. This, of course, is hardly a new discovery, although it has received some fresh support in recent psychological research (Caspi, Elder, and Herbener 1990; Shoda, Mischel, and Peake 1990, cited in Westen n.d.).

A more general moral for us, as anthropologists, is to be wary of analyses of consciousness that rest largely on the evidence of high culture, such as the music of John Cage or the architecture of John Portman. These productions are honed over time to satisfy elite cultural critics, who (at least at this time and in the United States) are often looking for something new. Theories and art works that reject older forms of unity and coherence are being rewarded now; in a few years, if it is not happening already, pastiche will no longer be novel and coherence will be fresh and exciting. Meanwhile, people will go on telling their stories and relating their ideas orally with about as much coherence and incoherence as long-standing cultural conventions and the workings of their brains allow in the milliseconds available between sentences.

This does not mean that changes in the global economy, rapid information transfers, decline of civic associations, and other features of late-20th-century political economy in the United States and elsewhere have had no psychological effects. Anthropologists can make an enormous contribution by studying these effects comparatively, which will help us go beyond rhetoric about postmodern selves and answer questions about precisely who is being affected, how, and why. These questions cannot be answered, however, without the fieldwork we do better than nonanthropological practitioners of cultural studies (see Moffatt 1990). I like Ulf Hannerz's comment about this:

When it is claimed, for example, that identities become nothing but assemblages from whatever imagery is for the moment marketed through the media, then I wonder what kind of people the commentators on postmodernism know; I myself know hardly anybody of whom this would seem true. [1992:35]

Notes

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1. Jameson's 1984 essay, "Postmodernism, Or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism," was reprinted, with very minor changes, as chapter 1 ("The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism") of Jameson 1991. I have used the 1991 version for all quotations in this article.

2. Jameson is only one of many people who have written about psychological fragmentation. This is a very popular topic at present (e.g., Gupta and Ferguson 1992; Moore 1994; and Strathern 1988). Unfortunately, few people writing about it bother to explain how the fragmentation they describe is like or unlike that described by other theorists writing now or earlier, such as Fanon (1967), Gramsci (1971), and Mead (1964). See Ewing 1990 for an exception. The result is that very different things are being discussed under the rubric of "fragmentation," ranging from ethnotheories of multiplicity to role conflict to conflicting cognitive schemas to the most radical claim of all, that people lack a center of consciousness. With all of this confusion in the debate, I needed to choose one position to examine. Despite the fact that Jameson is more concerned with postmodern cultural productions than consciousness, I have chosen his account because he concentrated on psychological fragmentation in the United States, which is the site of my research. Also, his account has been highly influential.

3. A cognitive schema is a strongly co-associated set of concepts in someone's head. For example, your schema for gift exchanges might include ideas about gift-giving occasions, types of people, typical gifts, and feelings about these. Your schema for The Flintstones would include Fred, Wilma, Barney, Betty, and so on.

4. Three such changes are his seeming abandonment of narrative as a universal mental tendency; a new focus on texts as direct reflections of their producers' consciousness; and the assimilation of ideas he had earlier attributed to Weber, Foucault, and Baudrillard and criticized as not "respect[ing] the Marxian injunction of the 'ultimately determining instance' of economic organization" (1981:92). This gives his more recent work the feel of someone who is becoming a poststructuralist more than a critic of

poststructuralism. (See also his use of the term *subject position* [1991:375]—even while questioning it elsewhere.)

5. Obviously both hypotheses are extremes and a reasonable theory would have to combine them; the question is which has priority.

6. Occasionally Jameson sounds a Weberian note as well: the “once-centered subject, in the period of classical capitalism and the nuclear family, has today in the world of organizational bureaucracy dissolved” (1991:15). But in the introduction to the 1991 book, he specifically distinguishes a Weberian focus on bureaucracy, typical of the Frankfurt School’s discussion of late capitalism, from more current usages that focus instead on the global nature of late capitalism.

7. The 1991 version of the essay phrases the same point a little differently: “This shift in the dynamics of cultural pathology can be characterized as one in which the alienation of the subject is displaced by the latter’s fragmentation” (1991:14). The terms *fragmentation* and *subject* are both contestable. Morris (1993) points out that some theorists see *fragmentation* as presupposing an original unity that has since been shattered. If there never was psychological unity, *multiple* or *heterogeneous* would be better terms. Since Jameson thinks the sort of fragmentation he describes is new (1991:15), he does not have this discomfort with the word, although he does note it is perhaps “too weak and primitive a term” to describe “the emergence of the multiple in new and unexpected ways” (1991:372). That does not stop him from using it, however. The term *subject* is often used in preference to *self* or *person*, to highlight the way people are subjected by systems of privilege and power. *Self* is sometimes preferred by anthropologists, despite its ambiguities. (See Ewing 1990, Harris 1989, and Spiro 1993 for helpful discussions.) Rather than settle in advance theoretical questions raised by choice of words, I will use both *self* and *subject*.

8. As Gramsci put it, speaking about the Italian masses,

the social group in question may indeed have its own conception of the world, even if only embryonic; a conception which manifests itself in action, but occasionally and in flashes—when, that is, the group is acting as an organic totality. But this same group has, for reasons of submission and intellectual subordination, adopted a conception which is not its own but is borrowed from another group; and it affirms this conception verbally and believes itself to be following it. [1971:327]

9. Note that as a theorist of the postmodern rather than postmodern theorist, Jameson believes there is a truth about the world, hence the importance of cultural critics providing “cognitive maps” of reality (1991:51 ff).

10. In this Jameson is true to Marx. While Marx is usually thought of as having a two-part model of society (material base and ideological superstructure), it would be more accurate to see him as having proposed a tripartite model: the material base determines people’s consciousness, and those forms of consciousness are then reflected in the art, religion, and politics of an era: “Morality, religion, metaphysics . . . have no history, no development; but men, developing their material production and their material intercourse, alter, along with this . . . their thinking and the products of their thinking” (Marx 1978[1845–46]:154–155).

11. I am not certain where Jameson stands on extensions of postmodern fragmentation beyond the United States; in the papers I have read, his treatment of this issue—of prime concern in our field—is very careless. On the one hand, in a commentary on the failure of Russian socialism, he does make an offhand reference to “the universal triumph of what Sloterdijk calls ‘cynical reason’ in the omnipresent consumerism of the postmodern today” (1991:274; see Yurchak 1997). Yet elsewhere, he talks about “the

conventional feelings of First World subjects that . . . they really do inhabit a ‘postindustrial society’” (1991:53), and in still other places he is even more specific, describing postmodern culture as paradigmatically American [U.S.] (1991:5). This makes sense, given that a significant causal factor for him is the monochronology of the built environment in which all (authentic) traces of the past have disappeared, hence the contrast he draws between the late-20th-century United States, with its strip malls and subdivisions, and 19th- and early-20th-century Europe, where medieval buildings can be seen in juxtaposition with modern factories and power lines (1991:311). This leaves unresolved what the mode of consciousness is in late-20th-century Europe, not to mention anywhere else in the world outside the United States, or even outside the cities and suburbs of the United States.

12. I suspect that members of these groups typically have ways of conceiving the life course that are not linked to the longevity of their jobs. See note 23.

13. The bulk of my research was conducted in 1985, when I interviewed five working-class and five middle-class neighbors and employees (eight men and two women) of the Ciba-Geigy chemical plant in Rhode Island. I conducted follow-up interviews with them in 1990, at the same time finishing interviews with another working-class woman, a former neighbor of the plant, who had had to break off the interviews five years earlier. In addition, I conducted pilot interviews from 1984 to 1985 with two working-class women, one working-class man, and one middle-class man in Rhode Island. One of these women (Carol Russo, who will be referred to further below) was reinterviewed in 1990. All interviewees are white and all but one Euro-American (of Irish, French Canadian, Italian, and English descent). All are parents and all but one were married. At the time their ages ranged from 25 to 64. The interviews were tape recorded, and the 1984 interviews were transcribed in full.

14. All names used herein are pseudonyms.

15. Jameson did register this objection when he was a discussant for an earlier version of this paper, stating that Lovett might represent a “residual” form of consciousness as a result of his age and occupation.

16. Ironically, Sangren (1988) criticizes postmodern anthropologists for resting their accounts on the authority of individual voices; he would probably find my account too postmodern! This shows one difference between poststructuralists and other postmodernists: the former have preserved structuralist skepticism of person-centered research, while the latter are more likely to champion the immediacy of personal experience and testimony against the aridity of abstract, unifying “cultural” accounts.

17. An example from Lovett’s discourse is given in note 26.

18. I have placed each of these schemas or voices in italics hereafter, for emphasis.

19. In an earlier publication (Strauss 1990), I called Lovett’s *Can’t fight the system* schema a populist schema and his *Achieving anything you want* schema an economic individualist schema. I have labeled them differently here to emphasize that his schemas are not the same as the public discourses from which they were derived.

20. My other transcript conventions are as follows: [word or phrase?] indicates an uncertain transcription; a three-point ellipsis indicates a long pause; [del.] indicates a short deletion and [del. x lines] a longer deletion; and [word or phrase] indicates my clarification.

21. Sometimes he cast the United States in the role of the workingman:

There’s a lot of rich, lot of rich countries that are not doing their fair share. If everybody did their fair share then, you know, everything would be good. It’s not that way. It’s always, again the workingman, he carries the brunt. So it’s one country or two countries or three countries

that have to support or maintain a whole world. Why? Because we are a world power, why do we have to, you know, be responsible for the whole world, if you will? [1985.2:25]

22. Lovett spoke in the same *Achieving anything you want* voice when I repeated these questions about getting ahead in 1990:

CS: Is the system fair? Does everyone pretty much have the same chance to get ahead?

JL: I think basically everyone has the same opportunity to get ahead if they want to apply themselves. There's no restrictions on stopping someone from getting ahead. No one says that this is as far as you can go, like some countries.

23. This passage shows that for some people at least (or for some people some of the time), life destiny is still a meaningful category (pace Jameson 1991:350). It bears out my suspicion (note 12) that having a stable job is not necessary for a sense of life destiny.

24. Observers who focus on American individualism (e.g., Bellah et al. 1985) seem to overlook the fact that public pressure to be a responsible adult has not disappeared in the United States.

25. I do not know how often—outside of interviews—people voice an outlook like Lovett's *Feeling responsible for others*. In an earlier publication (Strauss 1992), I argued that American men learn the importance of being a good breadwinner more by observation than from talk; I still think that is probably true, but I should concede I do not have any systematic evidence.

26. In the last interview, the rapid pace of the questions activated first one of these schemas, then the other, and at one point Lovett became aware of the discrepancy. I asked, "Is the system fair? Does everyone have an equal chance to get ahead?" and he started out in his *Achieving anything you want* voice: "If you take it as a single person. Over everybody else. One person as—if [*he . . .* or she . . . wants] that bad enough, then he and she will achieve it, because everything is, everything is out there." But only minutes earlier, in response to my question, "What things keep people from getting ahead?" he had mentioned lack of financial backing—people who are not well off are afraid to risk what little they have and so cannot get ahead. With his previous response fresh in mind, he faltered:

You just have to be willing to—I realize that—[sighs]. All right. You have to, I'll have to back that up. [i.e., back up] Because, *again*, there are certain obstacles that are depending upon financial aid. And *everyone* does not have enough time or energy to have enough money to achieve everything. [1985.6:18]

This is not the sort of internal amalgamation we will see in passage 25, however, even if it is a good example of the way people can bring discrepant schemas to mind simultaneously, showing that persons are more than a collection of subject positions.

27. Putting it into terms from Strauss (1992), I would say Lovett had a personal semantic network that encompassed his *Feeling responsible for others* schema. I still think *Achieving anything you want* is a verbal molecule for him. The status of *Can't fight the system* is less clear: it is like a verbal molecule in not being very motivating, but he has put it into his voice. Bakhtin (1981) would call it an example of making another's word one's own.

28. The transcription of the second interview with Monteiro was abbreviated, so passages that appear on the same page might in fact have been separated by several minutes.

29. The Greater Providence area in which I was sampling for the Rhode Island part of the study covers much of that small state, from Bristol on the east side of Narragansett

Bay, to Cumberland and Smithfield to the north, Foster to the west, and North Kingstown to the southwest.

30. Ortner may not mean the same thing as Jameson when she talks about fragmentation. Her emphasis was on the "rupturing of narrativity." Her discussion, drawing on the fate of heroines of Grimms' fairy tales and Liebow's (1967) description of poor African American men, explains a rupture of narrativity not as the inability to mentally link past, present, and future (it is hard to speculate about Gretel's abilities in that area), but as being "denied the possibility of enacting or even formulating projects of self-creation, self-realization, self-respect" (1991:7). Even this formulation, however, hardly fits Anna Monteiro.

31. A fifth case, that of an upper-middle-class consultant in his forties, was omitted to save space. An earlier draft of this paper that includes this case is available upon request.

32. Leland Searles has brought to my attention that Bateson (1951) also discusses cognitive inconsistency. Bateson makes a compelling argument for the likelihood of inconsistency on different grounds: the tendency of concepts to overlap in their boundaries, with the result that a given thing could be classified and evaluated in more than one way, depending on the context.

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