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REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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.....[redacted].....

Sec. Research Graduate School Committee

ERRATA

p 4 para 3, first sentence: "of two other" for "of two others"

p 5 para 5, first sentence: "led" for "lead"

p 7 para 2, 2nd line: "led" for "lead"

p 15 para 3, final line, "observation and measurement" for "observation, measurement"

p 40 para 2, final line: period after "1998)"

p 46 para 2, 6th line: "practice" for "practise"

p 53 para 2, 6th line: "domination." for "domination?"

p 74 para 2, first sentence: "postmodernists'" for "postmodernists"

p 78 2nd line: delete first "it is"

p 90 para 3, 7th line: "JOUet" (a toy)" for "JOU" (a game)

p 100 para 3, 5th line: "was no longer" for "was longer"

p 110 period at the end of note 19

p 143 para 4, first sentence: "Exhibit 8.1" for "Exhibit 5.1"

p 153 para 2 references: Allen et al to precede Frost et al

p 159 para 2, penultimate sentence: "*first-order realities*" for "first-order realties"

p 168 para 3: period at end of final sentence

p 176 1st line: "organisation's" for "organisations'"

p 178 para 3, 2nd line: "as well as reporting" for "as well reporting"

p 196 last sentence: period after "Recreation reserve"

p 224 last line: "drawing a connection" for "drawing connection"

p 226 para 1, 9th line: "Exhibit 5.1" for "Exhibit 10.1"

p 247 para 3, penultimate line: "made to feel" for "to feel"

p 250 last para, 5th line: period after "previous shire"

p 254 last line: parenthesis after "2002"

p 256 para 5, last line: "this may have been an issue" for "this may have been issue"

p 259 para 2, 6th line: "role is to represent" for "role is represent"

p 268 para 2, penultimate line: end of quotation marks after "rather than sad"

p 271 para 1, last line: "data are heard" for "data is heard"

delete the p 263 that reappears between pp 271 and 272

p 272 1st line: "Cubism" for "Cubist"

p 274 para 2, last line to end with a period instead of a question mark

p 281 Q5 "How would you have described" for "How would have described"

p 282 Q10: "the Bass Coast Shire Shire" for "the Tasman Shire"
Q12, 2nd line: "what would have you done" for "what would have done"
Managers Q3: "How would you have described" for "How would have described"

p 283 Q13 "what would you have done" for "what would have done"

p 294 20th line: period after "161"

p 319 3rd line: period after "Routledge"

A CASE-STUDY OF THE EXPERIENCE OF ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE: COUNCIL AMALGAMATION IN REGIONAL VICTORIA

by

JAN M. SCHAPPER

Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements of the Doctor of Philosophy,
Department of Management, Faculty of Business and Economics, Monash University.

July, 2004

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ABSTRACT

A CASE-STUDY OF THE EXPERIENCE OF ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE: COUNCIL AMALGAMATION IN REGIONAL VICTORIA

In this thesis it is argued that the techniques and philosophies of Cubism can be used to represent organisational data. With its fragmented imagery, simultaneous perspectives and reflexive engagement with the audience (reader), Cubism has a philosophy and style that offers potential to address the crisis of representation in organisational studies.

A case study of organisational change was researched using a methodology based on a constructivist approach to qualitative enquiry. In adopting this approach was the awareness that any claims to truth and knowledge are mediated by the situational context of researched and researcher. Faced with responses to change recorded in the research data that were indeterminate, fluid and complex a literature review of organisational complexity was then conducted. The matter of how to represent the epistemological and ontological complexity of the organisation in the context of the complex dynamic of the research process thus assumed major significance for this project.

This thesis is predicated on a philosophical commitment to the presentation of a realist position with the understanding that knowledge is not fixed. Cubism, whose exponents sought to present a "conceived and not perceived reality" (Chipp, 1968, p. 197) and did not "attempt scientifically to account for the world so much as experience it more fully" (Jones, 2004, no page number) is therefore presented as an appropriate model for the representation of the ontologically plausible and epistemologically contingency of organisational data. Because of its commitment both to the representation of an external reality at the same time as introducing uncertainty about the many knowledges of that reality, adopting a Cubist position is in defiance of the dichotomous relationship between modernism and postmodernism.

Cubism, it is also argued, offers an aesthetic contribution that may supplement contemporary approaches to small-scale organizational studies by slowing them down and by allowing attention to repetition, to the mundane and to the taken for granted. Any possibility of ontological certainty or fixed point or single (correct) reading is precluded; in order to stimulate the creative dialogue between author, reader and the

data, the presented data are fluid, contingent and relative. The use of Cubism as a stylistic and philosophical guide thus precludes any possible privilege in the dynamic between the reader and the author, who are both partners in the creative flux of knowingness (cf. Chia, 1995). The audience must engage with the work without judgement and without the desire to solve "the puzzle" of the text.

In summary, this thesis concludes that Cubism is sufficiently fluid, indeterminate and complex to serve as just one possible philosophical and aesthetic template to address the crisis of representation in organisational studies.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge the many people who are owed appreciation for their contribution to this thesis. It is difficult to provide a list of people to whom I owe gratitude without appearing to create a hierarchy from least important to most important, or even most important to least important. Having constructed and reconstructed this acknowledgement over many months, I am now of the view that such a hierarchy does not exist. For those who may read this acknowledgement, I would therefore recommend that you assume a Cubist demeanour, and read the page as if with simultaneity.

I wish to acknowledge;

- the enormous intellectual contribution to my thesis of my two wonderful supervisors, Helen de Cieri and Julie Wolfram Cox. Their encouragement, their faith in my capacity to do the work and their insights and guidance has ensured the completion of this thesis. I would also like to publicly thank both Julie and Helen for their emotional support and understanding as I faced the vicissitudes of my personal and professional life. As a fifty-something doctoral candidate, this personal connection was essential to get me through;
- the support of the Department of Management for the financial support to attend international conferences at which I could present my research;
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- the unflagging belief in me by my two sisters, Philippa Schapper and Mink Schapper. From Philippa, I have a sense of her pride in my achievement. From

Mink, I have a sense she assumed I could, and would, complete. Each is important, and I use this opportunity to extend my appreciation for their love, their support and their friendship. Mink, the consummate Virgo, is also owed acknowledgement for her contribution to the final presentation of my thesis with her finely tuned red pen applied to my reference list;

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- the contribution my mother Gay has made to my intellectual, cultural and aesthetic development, for it was she who made cultural experiences accessible and integral to our lives. My mother's endless curiosity, openness to new experiences and love of learning has also been an inspiration. And, it must also be stated publicly that my mother has displayed maternal duty way beyond what could be reasonably expected of any parent – she read an early draft of my thesis;
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DEDICATION

For Steven King (1967-1994).

His belief in my intellect encouraged me to pursue a career in academia.

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other institution. I affirm that to the best of my knowledge, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.

La Victoire (1918)
by Guillaume Apollinaire

O mouths man is searching for a new language
To which the grammarian of no language will have a reply
And these old tongues are so near to death
That only by habit and lack of audacity
Are they made to serve poetry still

But they are like invalids without will
Lord, but people would quickly grow accustomed to muteness
Mimicry does fine for the cinema

But let's insist upon speaking
Let's shake up the language
Let's sponsor splutterings

We want new sounds new sounds new sounds
We want consonants without vowels
Consonants that weigh heavily

The various labial farts would also render your speeches clairvoyant

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

Purpose

The purpose of this chapter is to provide the background rationale for the development of this doctoral thesis. The chapter begins with the details of the research questions, followed by an explanation of how the questions were developed. The genesis of the particular stylistic approach to representing organisational data is discussed. This chapter also provides a brief overview of the content of each of the eleven chapters that follow.

The Development of Research Questions

Premise one

This thesis is based on two fundamental premises. The first premise is that organisations are complex in their being and in the human capacity to "know" them. Interested in exploring complex/ complexity in the context of organisational studies the first research question was formulated.

Research question 1. What is understood by organisational complexity, and is this different to complex organisations?

To address this research question a literature review was conducted. Tracing the analysis of a complex organisation to some decades in the past, what emerged was the awareness that complex organisation and organisational complexity are presented in organisational literature as interchangeable concepts with little to differentiate them. However, what the analysis of the relevant literature did reveal was a tendency of organisational writers to present organisational complexity as both an epistemological as well as ontological construct. Although the distinction was not made specific in the literature that was reviewed, awareness of both dimensions of the complexity of organisations nonetheless needed to be accommodated in the representation of organisational data in this thesis. Attention was thus turned to the matter of representation and the development of the second premise.

Premise two

The second premise of the thesis is the need to utilise/ develop a representational model that can convey the epistemological and ontological richness of organisational complexity. It was in the search for suitable models of representation that I turned to my own idiosyncratic strategy for organisational sense-making (see Weick, 1995). My initial inspiration for the representational technique of this thesis thus arose from the growing and disturbing awareness that the greater involvement I had in the researching in, teaching of, learning about and interacting with organisations, the more I had begun to "see" an organisation as if it was a Cubist painting. And it was not just any Cubist painting. The first and most particular image that exemplified my experience of organisations was a painting titled the *Weeping Woman* by Pablo Picasso, (Figure 1.1). This painting gained notoriety in Melbourne (the city in which I live), when it was "kidnapped" in 1986 from the National Gallery of Victoria by a group calling themselves the "Australian Cultural Terrorists"[1].

The painting *Weeping Woman* is a study of pain and anguish in which Picasso, a Spaniard expatriate living in France, expressed his horror at the bombing of the town of Guernica during the Spanish Civil War (Jones, 2000). Although this work is not formally considered part of the Cubist *œuvre*, in drawing the face in profile with both eyes and nostrils visible, Picasso had as Barr (1946) notes, taken liberties from Cubism. Irrespective of its stylistic pedigree, the features of *Weeping Woman* that captured my sense of organisational experience were in retrospect, not just the technique but also the subject material.

The feature of the technique that could be considered Cubist was the presentation of its subject in a manner that was fractured, multi-layered and discordant. Moreover, despite the fragmentation and discontinuity of its sharp and jagged edges the painting contained the multiple perspectives simultaneously. Thus, far from a simple and disconnected image of abstracted fragments, Picasso's technique instead offered a visual frame that held and contained a recognisable image comprised of a multiplicity of positions. The image of a weeping woman, resplendent in a hat, but with handkerchief in her mouth like a shard of glass (Jones, 2000) is clearly represented and in its departure from realism, Picasso's *Weeping Woman* appears as a more real reality. The possibility of applying these techniques from Cubism to represent the ontological layers

[1] After some months disappearance, the painting was found in a luggage locker at a railway station following a tip-off provided to police. No persons have ever been charged with the theft (McCaughey, 2003).

of the organisational landscape, the epistemologies derived from multiple perspectives and emotional discontinuities of organisational experience was to serve as the basis of the subsequent research question.

Research question 2. Can Cubism serve as a theoretical and stylistic frame for the representation of organisational complexity?

As for the subject material of the *Weeping Woman*, it was "the excoriated face" (Jones, 2000, no page no. provided) of Dora Maar, Picasso's lover, filled with gut-wrenching pain palpable in its violence that was resonant with my own raw emotional response to organisational experience. In shifting the analysis of organisational experience from my self to those of the people and organisation I researched, it became apparent that other dimensions were required beyond those of the political and emotional. Drawing on the two major styles of Cubism, commonly referred to as the analytic and synthetic (Fry, 1966; Golding, 1988), the subject material of portraiture from the former and still life or *vanitas* from the latter were studied for their potential to contribute to the representation of organisational data. A further research question was thus developed.

Research question 3. Can the subject material of Cubist works (such as still life and portraiture) act as contextual frames for the development of motifs identified within organisational data?

Organisational Research

In identifying Cubism as a possible representational model was then the necessity to test the suitability of the proposition through the representation of organisational data. Using a methodology based on a constructivist approach to qualitative enquiry, a case-study of organisational change was researched.

The selected case-study, a local government council called Bass Coast Shire Council had emerged from the amalgamation of three former councils. Located some 150 kilometres to the south east of Victoria's capital, Melbourne (see Appendix A for locality map and map of Shire boundaries), the Bass Coast Shire amalgamation had occurred as part of an extensive local government reform programme implemented by the State Coalition government during the 1990s. Interested less in the macro outcomes of the amalgamation, the research sought to identify the responses from the

amalgamating councils and the employees who remained employed by the new organisation to the many experiences of amalgamation.

In adopting a constructivist methodology was the awareness that any claims to truth and knowledge are mediated by the situational context of the researched and the researcher (Berg & Smith, 1988; Hatch, 1996). As much as possible, I therefore constructed the first research question about the amalgamation to be as open-ended and non-directional for the research participants and myself as the researcher.

Research question 4. What was the experience of organisational change for the organisations and employees involved in the amalgamation process that formed Bass Coast Shire Council?

Because three (and a small part of two others) councils were involved in the amalgamation, I was concerned that the broad-brush research question may erase diversity or mar any attention to the particularity of experience (Stake, 2000) of employees from the different councils within the case-study. Moreover, within the Cubist temperament, in their challenges to bourgeois culture and High Art (Antliff & Leighten, 2001) is a commitment to honouring what may be overlooked, considered inconsequential or previously marginalised. There was therefore a concern that although a generalised question may evince material important to all parties in the research process, that the opportunities to work with the organisational minutiae may be lost. A further research question was developed to encourage attention to the particular and what may have been overlooked.

Research question 5. What were the responses of the employees and the organisation of the different amalgamating councils to the process of amalgamation?

With the development of these research questions, it was apparent there were many opportunities for discussion in the thesis on the ontological and epistemological nature of the research data. With my attention at this stage focussed on the possibilities of presenting organisational data from within a Cubist framework, I was then faced with the dilemma of reconciling what initially appeared to be two, potentially incommensurable positions. This conundrum had emerged from the transportation of one set of knowledges from the disciplines of cultural/ art theory and aesthetics to the discipline of organisational studies. Although this cross discipline approach is not new (see Barrett, 1998; Carr & Zanetti, 1998; Hatch, 1998; Linstead & Höpfl, 2000), the

"sticking point" to this shift across disciplines was the awareness that Cubism is the quintessence of modernism (Clark, 1999; Greenberg, 1961).

Irrespective of where one is positioned in the debates about the constituted nature of modernism and its relationship to postmodernism (eg. the Burrell and Cooper articles in the journal *Organization Studies*, 1988 and 1989), modernism is generally understood in organisational studies to embody the positivist ontology of realism and the epistemology of empiricism. And yet, from within cultural studies, these putative features of modernism are not recognisable. For instance, one author writing of modernism from the cultural perspective stated "the heart of modernism is the postulate of ontological discontinuity" (Everdell, 1999, p. 341); yet other authors (Vargish & Mook, 1999, p.14) have made reference to the "epistemic trauma" of modernism. This description of modernism's "penchant for subjectivity, relativism and 'hunger for wholeness'" (Allen, 1999, p. 93) is a far cry from the rational positivism of modernism of organisational studies (Chia, 1995).

Aware too that the crisis of representation is considered as either/ both a feature of modernism (see Stanford Friedman, 2001) and/ or postmodernism (see Hassard, 1999), the thesis addresses many points of confusion that surround the characterisation of modernism and postmodernism. Prompted by the need to establish the epistemological appropriateness of utilising a modernist art form to represent data within the discipline of organisational studies, the following research question was developed.

Research question 6. How can the apparent confusions between the different discipline-based constructions of modernism be accommodated in this thesis?

It was these six previous research questions that formed the basis of inquiry of this thesis and lead to the development of the last and most fundamental of the research questions. Unlike the previous questions that explored the possibility of a representational frame being transported from one discipline to be utilised in another, this final question challenges the epistemological value of such an exercise.

Research question 7. What contribution to organisational understanding can be made by the utilisation of Cubism as a representational template for organisational complexity?

This thesis is presented as an answer to that question.

Chapter Summary

With this as the background rationale a brief summary shall be provided about the detail of the chapters that comprise the substance of this thesis.

The first chapter to deal with the research effort, Chapter 2 explores in depth the issue of organisational complexity and seeks to establish that complexity has both ontological as well as epistemological dimensions within organisational studies literature. It is the intention of this chapter to establish that organisations are indeed complex, thus providing support for the requirement to develop appropriate representational tools to accommodate these identified organisational complexities. It is in this chapter the proposal to use the Cubist techniques and philosophies of representation are presented.

Faced with the requirements to provide a contextual rationale for the use of Cubist techniques and to place the work within a broader disciplinary framework, Chapter 3 locates the use of Cubism within the field of aesthetics and organisational studies.

Because Cubism is understood to be the quintessential art form of modernism (Clark, 1999), Chapter 4 offers a detailed examination of the vastly differing views of modernism from the cultural and aesthetics tradition and organisational studies literature. Using Burrell and Cooper's (1988) identification of two modernisms, critical and systemic modernism, the chapter then details how these modernisms are enacted in the issue of representation. This focus on the location of modernism within an understood philosophical framework is an important clarification in the commitment of Cubism to represent what is referred to as conceptual and not perceptual reality.

Chapter 5 is then devoted to a detailed examination of Cubism, in which its history, intellectual precursors and contemporaries and cultural contribution are considered. Of relevance to the representation of organisational data, the Cubists' approach to the representation of reality and realism is also presented. Despite the use of written language to represent this thesis there is within this chapter and subsequent discussions that details Cubism, an emphasis on visual and not literary Cubism.

Gertrude Stein, the Cubist writer has been characterised as an author who utilised both analytic and synthetic styles of Cubism in her writing (see Dubnick, 1984; Steiner, 1978), yet her prose is so dense I made the decision not to use her approach to Cubism as the model of representation. Having said that, and in recognition of Stein's considerable contribution to modernist literature, there is a brief discussion of Stein's

writings that make clear the richness of complexity of her work. More importantly the discussion highlights the challenge that would have faced both the author and reader had Stein's stylistic approach been adopted.

In Chapter 6, the political and historical background to the local government reform agenda in Victoria that lead to the amalgamation of three councils and the creation of Bass Coast Shire Council, which serves as the case-study for this research, is covered.

Chapter 7, the methodology chapter offers detailed rationale for the use of a qualitative and case-study approach to the data collection for the research. Because the approach resonated with the practise of *bricolage*, the role of the *bricoleur* as a researcher of organisations is also examined. The chapter details in some depth the processes undertaken when conducting research on the experience of organisational change, and more specifically organisational amalgamation at Bass Coast Shire Council.

The following four chapters, Chapters 8 to 11 are devoted to the presentation of the empirical data. Chapters 8 and 10 both provide contextual background, perhaps understood as "readers' notes" to assist the presentation of the research data in Chapters 9 and 11. Adopting quite different techniques from the two major styles of Cubism, Chapters 8 and 9 refer to synthetic Cubism and Chapters 10 and 11 refer to analytic Cubism.

The contextual background discussed in Chapter 8 includes detail on the features of synthetic Cubism – both in terms of technique and subject content. Synthetic Cubism, best understood as the style of collage in which materials such as newsprint, cloth and advertising flyers were pasted upon a surface, had almost without exception as its content, still-life. Traditionally still-life has been synonymous with the concept of *vanitas*, the idea that life is brief, empty, and impermanent overshadowed by the inevitability of death. The objects that serve as subject material of still-life are traditionally commonplace, ordinary and often overlooked such as candles, flowers and domestic implements. With its symbols of mortality, the theme of *vanitas* was considered an appropriate metaphor for the portrayal that followed of the inevitability of the death of organisations involved in the amalgamation. Discussion is also provided about the more general issue of the death of organisations and more particularly, responses to inevitability of death.

Chapter 9, based on the stylistic techniques of synthetic Cubism, is written from different materials "pasted" on a background of newsprint from a metropolitan daily

represented by snippets of items about local government reform and council amalgamations. As a *bricoleur*, keen to use materials that are at hand, and with the intention to portray the three major amalgamating councils with different media, one council is represented by relevant news items from the local newspaper; another by excerpts from council minutes and the third by extracts from interviews with former employees from that council. In the creation of the collage of pasted materials, a picture of varying responses to the inevitability of the death of the individual organisations involved in the amalgamations clearly unfolds.

Chapter 10 provides readers' notes to the reading of the analytic presentation that is presented in the following chapter. Broken into the themes of style, form and content, this chapter begins with a brief examination of the analytic style of Cubism. Often equated with the style of montage, the chapter then highlights the similarities and differences between montage and analytic Cubism.

In examining the form of analytic Cubism, although the subject material was quite varied and included still-lifes, landscapes and portraits, it is the latter that serves as the basis of the analytic presentation of research data. Chapter 10 thus offers some discussion on the process of portraiture, including the constitutive role of the portraitist in the development of the portrait. The techniques of the Cubist literary portraits painted by Gertrude Stein and the visual portraits of the analytic Cubists are also mentioned. With the content of the portrait entitled *Ambivalence*, the chapter concludes with a detailed discussion on the issue of ambivalence.

Chapter 11 presents a portrait of *Ambivalence*, painted from the words uttered by interviewees when talking of their experience of council amalgamation. Offering multiple perspectives structured as poses that explore the ambivalences, this chapter offers detailed attention to the ambivalence expressed by employees about working for local government; to the real and perceived grief and loss associated with the amalgamation and to the necessity to adjust to the changed circumstances necessitated by the amalgamation.

Chapter 12, the final chapter seeks to identify the contribution that Cubism can make to the representation of organisational complexity. Adopting an approach consistent with Cubism that seeks to represent the many knowledges of reality, organisational complexity can be represented as ontologically plausible and epistemologically contingent. Required to identify the gaps, the omissions and the blanks on the canvas, the chapter also asserts the value of a schema of Cubism as a defiance of the dichotomous relationship between modernism and postmodernism.

Concluding Comments

With its detailed attention to the small scale and previously overlooked, the adoption of a Cubist temperament invites the author and reader to note the repetition, the mundane and the taken-for-granted experience of organisational life. The value of a Cubist frame for organisational experience can thus be considered two-fold. The first is that in the Cubist presentation of data, its essential fluidity and uncertainty precludes any possible privilege between the reader and author, who are both partners in the creative flux of knowingness. The second is that recognising the absence of any claims of worthiness and grandeur, this approach can thus be used in organisational studies by those who wish to subvert any notion of the development of a totalising metanarrative.

Cubism, with its fragmented and discontinuous imagery makes explicit the fracture lines of organisational experience. Cubism also simultaneously strives to present the multiple experiences as a recognisable feature of reality. It is this capacity to represent multiple realities, to eschew the privileging of data and to engage the reader in the dynamic process of knowledge creation that the use of Cubism is recommended as a representational template for organisational complexity.

Figure 1.1
Pablo Picasso, *Weeping Woman*, 1937,
Oil on Canvas, 55 x 46cm, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne

CHAPTER 2

COMPLEX ORGANISATIONS AND ORGANISATIONAL COMPLEXITY

Purpose

The purpose of this chapter is to explore the complex and multiple meanings of organisational complexity. Because the concept of organisational complexity is fundamental to the thesis, it demands detailed examination and considerable scrutiny. What will emerge from this scrutiny is the many ways in which complexity has been understood as both an ontological and epistemological subject. In focussing such close attention on ideas of complexity the intent is to encourage not just a new way of thinking about organisations, but how the complexities may be represented.

In summary, the purpose of this chapter is to address;

Research question 1. *What is understood by organisational complexity, and is this different to complex organisations?*

Introduction

To answer the research question, the organisational literature that referred to complex organisations and organisational complexity is reviewed. There is no suggestion or claim that an exhaustive analysis of all organisational studies literature in recent times will be represented; this chapter will initially limit attention to only those writers who make specific reference to complex organisations and organisational complexity. The rationale for adopting this limit was the assumption that these authors would devote their attention to the examination of complexity. Although this was not always to be the case, this nonetheless served as the initial selection criteria in the development of a body of literature to study this question.

There is, in this chapter, considerable detail about the many ways in which organisational complexity has been researched, theorised and represented. It is with some trepidation the detail has been retained, because there is a very real risk it may be considered to be of no purpose. The risk has been taken however, because those writers who have identified specific variables of organisational complexity, such as structure, task and technology, offer detailed and complex descriptions and rationale for their

particular designation of complexity. In presenting their material on complexity in some depth, it is my intention to convey the sense that the complexity of the detail parallels the complexity of the organisation these writers sought to explain.

Complex Organisations

In organisational literature, it is not unusual in the references to organisations that complex/ complexity will be included in a list of descriptors. Interestingly though, despite the ubiquity of the use of complex/ complexity and the disparate range of meanings ascribed them, these words, in the main (a notable exception is Tsoukas & Hatch, 2001), appear to have been considered unproblematic not requiring closer examination. Although as will become apparent, complex and complexity have clear and particular meanings, there are many authors who imply that meaning or take the meaning for granted. This is an intriguing situation because some thirty-five years ago Hall, Haas and Johnson (1967) noted the limited number of attempts to operationalise the concept of "complex". What I propose in this chapter then is to show that the ways in which complex and complexity are used, and implied by organisational writers, require far greater attention than they currently receive.

Before embarking on this study of complexity, mention does need to be made however about the constituted nature of organisations, for it has been argued that the meaning of these social entities should not be taken for granted (Brunsson & Sahlin-Andersson, 2000; Burrell & Morgan, 1979; Chia, 1995). Moreover, because both organisation and complex are used as noun and adjective in relation to each other (ie. complex [adj.] organisation [n.]; organisational [adj.] complexity [n.]) each are worthy of closer scrutiny.

In his complaint many years ago, that the term "organization" was not being used with scientific precision, Urwick (1976) argued "organization" had become "a harlot of management communication" (1976, p. 89). At the time of his lament, Urwick identified what he believed were the two ways the word was being used[2]; and for Urwick, this was one definition too many. His consternation would undoubtedly be enormous today at the multiplicity of meanings, descriptions, typologies and definitions

[2] The first identified by Urwick (1976) was the description of the overall process of managing into component or sub-processes. Early exponents of this usage according to Urwick were the classic management writers Henri Fayol and Luther Gulick. The second usage is as a synonym for the "corporation or undertaking, the human group *regarded as a whole*" [his emphasis] (Urwick, 1985, p. 89). For Urwick, these two uses of the same term; as a description of purposeful activity and as a generalized title for a form of a human grouping as a whole are incompatible. Urwick believed the former usage to be appropriate and scientific; the latter to be too "generalized and useless" (Urwick, 1975, p. 91).

understood by the concept of organisation (see Gabriel & Schwartz, 1999; Hall, 1996; Silverman, 1970 for different examples).

It first of all must be noted that the concept of organisation is itself a question and not an unproblematic given (Chia, 1995). For instance, it has been suggested that an organisation cannot be separated from the researcher doing the defining (Baack & Prasch, 1997), as the concept of organisation is limited by the definition imposed upon it. Notwithstanding these contemporary critiques, traditionally organisations have been represented as a system of activities (see Barnard, 1938; Selznick, 1948), for the express purpose of achieving certain goals (Blau & Scott, 1963), performed by employees organised into hierarchy and roles (March & Simon, 1958; Weber, 1947) and controlled by formal and informal rules (Perrow, 1970). For some, organisations were regarded as systems in which people and processes were intertwined in the transformation of environmental inputs into organisational outputs (eg. Ackoff, 1973; Emery & Trist, 1960; Stogdill, 1973). Contemporary writers have variously presented organisations as social constructions created by shared knowledge and belief systems (eg. Clegg, Hardy & Nord, 1996; Czarniawska-Joerges, 1992; Gabriel, 1999; Weick, 1969), as sites of control and domination (Clegg, 1975; Clegg & Dunkerley, 1980), or as textual phenomena to be read and interpreted (eg. Calás & Smircich, 1991; Grant, Keenoy & Oswick, 1998; Martin, 1990; Thatchenkery, 1992).

The range of understandings and constructions of organisations is clearly very extensive; and in its extensiveness any suggestion of an agreed understanding is problematised. Being aware of the contestability of any understanding, let alone the mere suggestion of presenting an understanding (see Chia, 1995), there is nonetheless a concept of organisation that can be assumed throughout this thesis. To make explicit this concept; the view of organisation is one based on the sense of ontological plausibility and epistemological contingency. That is, the reality of organisations is not fixed, yet nonetheless has an existence consistent with what is understood as organisation. The knowledge of organisations is thus also contingent on one's sense of organisations. Thus, it will be argued, that organisations are real; and their reality is evidenced by the multiplicity of images reflected in the myriad of perceptions of what constitutes organisations. The knowledges of organisations are similarly as varied as the realities that are identified.

In adopting this view, there is some resonance with the position detailed by Purvis and Hunt (1993), when they argue for what they call is "soft-realism". In their words, soft realism is;

> 'soft' in that it readily accepts the typical postmodernist claim that knowledge claims can never be verified and that there is no vantage point external to discourse from which truth claims can be validated. Yet our position is 'realist' in that we insist that there is a non-discursive realm that can be known even though that knowledge can never be more than fallible, always liable to be displaced by some 'better' account (p. 477).

Yet another occupant of this "intermediate niche" (Harvey, 1989) is that of critical realism. For critical realists, according to Johnson and Duberley (2000, p. 151), "the philosophical imperative...is that truth must be more than the outputs of a language game yet it cannot be absolute." These epistemological and ontological positions will be discussed in greater depth in Chapter 4. In the meantime, with this understanding of organisation underpinning the thesis, it is little surprise then that one of the major premises is of the need to develop a representational model that can convey this perspective. Or that a further premise of the thesis is that organisations are complex in their being and in our capacity to know them.

In this latter premise, I am not alone. For what appears apparent is irrespective of how an organisation is experienced, whether it is a social construct (Astley, 1985; Weick, 1969), a system (eg. Boulding, 1956; 1961; Emery & Trist, 1965; Katz & Kahn, 1966/78; Thompson, 1967) and/or a psychological projection (eg. Gabriel & Schwartz, 1999; Hirschhorn, 1990), to select just a few examples from a range of possibilities, organisations are referred to as complex. It can also be noted that other organisational descriptions such as relevant uncertainty (Emery & Trist, 1965/ 1969), non-programmed, non-routine and non-uniform (Perrow, 1967, p. 208), uncertain (Simon & March, 1958), differentiated (Lawrence & Lorsch, 1967), ambiguous (Perrow, 1972), paradoxical (Lewis, 2000; Morgan, 1997), unpredictable, non-linear and chaotic (Stacey, 1996a, b, c) are also considered to be reflective of the complexity of organisational experience.

Organisational Complexity

In researching research question 1 it became apparent early in the study that there was little discernible difference between the ideas of complex organisation and organisational complexity. Indeed the terms are used interchangeably by organisational writers; the movement between the use of the terms based more on reasons of grammatical or narrative flow than a need to discriminate between similar phenomena. Rather than feeling disappointed, the review of the organisational studies literature on

complex organisations instead revealed another significant difference – complexity is used as either a matter of ontology or epistemology.

Tsoukas and Hatch (2001) who cover similar terrain to this chapter, have used as their points of differentiation, the first and second order of complexity; first order complexity is used to describe "an assumed objective world" and second order complexity, "complex thought processes". This classification is also surprisingly similar to Ford's (1999) notion of first and second-order realities, in which he differentiates between the empirically verifiable first-order reality and the interpretations of those realities, he calls second-order. What is common to each of these approaches is the effort to differentiate between the ontological and epistemological dimensions of organisations. While the focus of their papers is on the conversational context of change (Ford, 1999), and the development of a narrative approach to complexity theory (Tsoukas & Hatch, 2001), this chapter and thesis seeks to establish that a feature of organisational reality is its complexity, and in order to know that complexity, complex ways of knowing, understanding and representation are required.

In this chapter, the first way that organisational complexity is understood, is that which addresses ontological attention to organisational features. Drawing on organisational literature during the last forty or so years, this section of the chapter shall discuss many features of organisations that have been identified as reasons for, or indicators of, organisational complexity. Such factors as organisational structures, organisational size, organisational systems and the organisational task have all been cited as significant variables of complex organisations. The focus of this group of organisational commentators is on an examination of the organisation itself (eg. the Aston group that included Pugh, Hickson, Hinings, Macdonald, Turner & Lupton, 1963; Etzioni, 1961a, b; Perrow, 1967). There are also other writers who identify organisational complexity as a feature of the external environmental within which organisations are located (eg. Burns & Stalker, 1961; Lawrence & Lorsch, 1967).

Although traditionally these authors are usually grouped as advocates of structural contingency theory (Donaldson, 1995), for this chapter the emphasis is less on the details of the theory, and more on how the contingency variables contributed to the authors' perceptions of organisational complexity. From the position of many writers then, it is the organisation (with or without its environment) that is complex – with an ontological assertion of complexity, points of differentiation occurs around the constitutive features of complexity. The existence "out there" of the organisation is not under challenge, for indeed its complexity is indicative of its ontological unassailability.

The second approach to understanding organisational complexity can be best understood as matters of epistemological claims. From this perspective, the claims to the existence (or not) of a constructed or independent truth and reality are not important. For, it is in the attempts to study, know, make sense of and understand organisations that the complexity of organisations is apparent. Tsoukas and Hatch (2001) have suggested that given this situation, "one way of viewing organizations as complex systems is to explore complex ways of thinking about organizations-as-complex systems..." (p. 980). Although this chapter is less concerned with the notion of complex systems and more on exploring the diversity of responses to the epistemology of organisational complexity, the Tsoukas and Hatch (2001) view make explicit the contention that organisational complexity contains a strong epistemological dimension. It is in the pursuit of the epistemology of organisational complexity that this chapter will discuss the role of the multidisciplinary approach to organisational studies and the subsequent diversity of perspectives, paradigms and theories that have developed as researchers and writers grapple with the complexity of organising, organisations and organisational experience.

Ontology and Epistemology

The issue of differing paradigms based on ontological and epistemological assumptions was popularised by Burrell and Morgan in 1979, although it has been suggested the debate about epistemological questions has a history that dates back to the time of Plato (Johnson & Cassell, 2001). Yet, despite the lengthy history of awareness of the dimensions of the philosophy of social science, some twenty five years later one writer (Gioia, 2003) was to note with exasperation at the blurring of distinction that occurs between the concepts of ontology and epistemology. Ontology has to do with the nature of a phenomenon; epistemology is how we know that phenomenon (Astley, 1985; Blaikie, 1993; Burrell & Morgan, 1979; Gioia, 2003). Ontological and epistemological assumptions can thus be classified according to one's belief in a world that has an objective "out there" existence, or that the reality of the phenomenon is derived from a mediated social interpretation (Blaikie, 1993; Burrell & Morgan, 1979).

Objective ontology assumes that social and natural reality "has an independent existence prior to human cognition" (Johnson & Duberley, 2000, p. 180); based on this assumption, objective epistemology looks for causal relationships between variables, and locates reality, derived from sensory experiences, outside the individual. That is, the knowledge of a phenomenon is gained from taste, touch, observation, measurement

(Burrell & Morgan, 1979; Johnson & Duberley, 2000). The contrasting subjective approach, known either as constructivist or interpretivist (see Chapter 7), argues, "The reality that people confront is the reality they construe" (Gioia, 2003, p. 287); and its accompanying epistemology refers to the body of knowledge that constitutes those socially produced phenomena (Astley, 1985). The subjective perspective thus leads to an ontological and epistemological position that argues that reality and knowledge are socially constructed and mediated through the subjectivities and intersubjectivities of social relationships.

Despite what may appear to be quite dichotomous differences between the subjective and objective dimensions of ontology and epistemology, Johnson and Duberley (2000) do suggest that while an objective epistemology presupposes the existence of an objective ontology, a subjective epistemology can be combined with either a subjective or an objective ontology. As was indicated earlier, it is the combination of a plausible (objective) ontology together with a contingent (subjective) epistemology that provides the philosophical framework to this thesis. Even with the potential for the development of a hybrid ontological and epistemological position, most of the theorists for whom organisational complexity is an ontological issue, with the exception perhaps of Czarniawska-Joerges (1992), are firmly embedded within the objectivist ontology and epistemology. Guided by the necessity to establish that complexity requires a stylistic device that can represent the ontological and epistemological complexity of organisations, the different theories shall be presented without judgement. This chapter therefore will not challenge the veracity of the truth claims of complexity, but with the identification of the variables that are thought to constitute organisational complexity.

Organisations are Complex – An Ontological Postulate

Introduction

There are amongst organisational writers who select to use complex/ complexity as an organisational descriptor, many different themes around which the understanding of complex organisation is clustered. One recent writer (Anderson, 1999, p. 216) noted that "organization theory has treated complexity as a structural variable that characterises both organisations and their environments". This is certainly the case for those researchers who adopt a systems approach to organisational analysis such as Burns and Stalker (1967), Daft (1992) and Thompson (1967). There are, however

enough authors who focus their attention on specific structural variables of complex organisations such as large scale bureaucracies (eg. Etzioni, 1961a, b; Perrow, 1972), technologies and task complexity, to justify differentiating between the different themes of complexity. It should therefore be noted that even though the writers have been differentiated for purpose of study, that systems writers such as Emery and Trist (1965/1969) and Thompson (1967) were also concerned with designing complex organisational structures to accommodate environmental complexity. Recognising the interconnectedness between the many variables of complexity, those that will be covered in this section includes organisational structure, technology, task, and the environment. Irrespective of what has been singled out as a variable of complexity, the philosophical position that underpins the following section is the implicit assertion that organisations have an objective existence that can be measured, classified and described, most often in terms of structural form.

Structure as a Feature of Complexity

In this section, it is clear that for those writers who identify structure as a feature of organisational complexity that the ontological status of structure is not under question (see Reed, 1997 for the agency/ structure debate). Any discussion of structure thus refers to the organisational form that involves the distribution of authority and hierarchy through the structuring of particular activities by means of functional specialisation, role specialisation, standardisation and formalisation (see Pugh, Hickson, Hinings & Turner, 1969). To ensure the meaning of structure can embrace both traditional (eg. Blau & Scott, 1963; March & Simon, 1958; Pugh *et al.,* 1963; Roberts & Grabowski, 1996) and contemporary (eg. Clegg, 1990; Hancock & Tyler, 2001) perspectives, structure will also refer to the interactions or relationships among component parts of organisations (eg. Drabek & Haas, 1974; Hatch, 1997; Miller, 1993; Silverman & Jones, 1976; Thompson & McHugh, 1995). Structure is thus best understood for the purpose of this chapter as "the arrangements or relationships that permit the co-ordination and control of work" (Perrow, 1967, p. 195).

One of the earliest writers to label organisations as complex in his book *Complex Organizations,* Etzioni (1961a) fails to provide any explanation of why he selected complex to describe organisations. The definition he does provide omits the defining adjective "complex" with only a definition of organisation in which he adopts [Talcott] Parsons' view they are "social units which are predominantly oriented to the attainment of specific goals" (1961a, p. vii). It is apparent nonetheless from his preface that the

discussion on complex organization is based on the bureaucratic characteristics specified by Weber within large scale organizations. This position is more clearly articulated in yet another publication of the same year (Etzioni, 1961b, p. ii) in which he states clearly "...organization stands for "complex bureaucratic organization." So, one of the earliest discussions of complex organisations established the concept of complex organisation as a feature of large, bureaucratic structures.

What exactly are the features of bureaucratic organisations that Etzioni (1961a, b) labelled as complex? Weber's complex model of bureaucracy (Burrell, 1996) has been refined and reworked (Thompson & McHugh, 1995), yet it continues to provide a framework for systematic analysis of formal organisations (Blau, Heydebrand & Stauffer, 1966; Pugh *et al.*, 1963). With an emphasis on structures, there appears general agreement that Weber's identification of the twenty-six characteristics of the "ideal type" of bureaucracy included such features as the division of labour (specialisation), formal selection and promotion procedures based on merit and technical expertise; the presence of career paths for employees; clear lines of authority embedded within hierarchy; the use of rules and regulations (formalisation), centralisation of decision-making, the need to separate personal and organisational lives as well as maintain impersonal and distant relationships within the workplace (see Blau *et al.*, 1966; Clegg, 1990; Hall, 1996; Hatch, 1997; Perrow, 1972; Weber, 1947). More than a mere list of structural features, Weber's formulation of bureaucratic structures introduced interdependencies, which in their interactions contribute to the formulation of organisations as complex (Blau *et al.*, 1966). Etzioni's (1961b) assessment of what constitutes complexity within organisations is thus both a feature of, as well as the product of, bureaucratic organisations. For Etzioni (1961a, b) then, the concept of complex organisation was indicative of both the size "large scale" as well as the organisational structure, "bureaucratic".

Etzioni's claim of a correlative relationship between organisational size and different forms of complexity was supported by other researchers of that time (eg. Blau, 1970; Blau *et al.*, 1966; Meyer, 1972), although at least one study (Hall *et al.*, 1967), did suggest the correlation was not as strong as other researchers had argued. Etzioni's view of the large-scale bureaucracy as a complex organisation has also been challenged in a more recent study of organisations. Thompson and McHugh (1995) begin their discussion on organisations with an examination of the features of large-scale organisations, which they too refer to as bureaucracies. Although they explain that bureaucracies emerged as work became more complex and difficult to manage, the

authors do caution against the practice of labelling these organisations as "complex organisations". This ascription of "complex" to large scale bureaucracies, they argue, has had the effect of both limiting the questions of how organisations became complex, as well as obliterating differences between organisations.

Identifying some of the variety of what they refer to as organising logics in *work* organisations [their emphasis] that challenge the conventional bureaucratic approach to organisational tasks they nonetheless do not challenge the notion of complex organisations. For Thompson and McHugh (1995), it is organisations *per se* and not just large-scale bureaucracies that are complex. It appears their challenge to the use of the word "complex" is not because they disagree with the concept but paradoxically because they believe its use obscures the complexity of organisations.

In yet another early book entitled *Complex Organizations,* Perrow (1972) defended the organisational form of bureaucracy against attacks from other organisational theorists. Perrow (1972) too suggests complex organisations are bureaucracies; and bureaucracies are complex organisations. Yet, despite the title of his monograph, Perrow (1972), like Etzioni (1961a, b) offers no reasoning for his inclusion of the adjective complex to describe organisations. What Perrow (1972) does clarify however, is his position that bureaucracies, although offering structure and form that may be superior to all others, nonetheless concentrates power and control into the hands of a very few. Perrow's (1972) stated fear is these few masters [of industry] may use the social resources at their disposal for ends we may not be aware of, or may have to accept, because we cannot conceive other alternatives. For Perrow (1972), the complexity of organisations can be found within the idea "things are not as they seem". Pursuing his thesis that organisations are tools within the hands of their masters, Perrow (1979, p. 247) in a later edition of his book concludes;

> When examined closely, what appears to be quite rational (the division of labour, hierarchy, rules, specialization) in terms of technical efficiency, comes to have many other meanings, such as maintenance of class relations, deskilling, legitimising myths, obfuscating ceremonies, and the production of ideologies.

For Perrow (1972/1979), organisations are complex not just because of their form and structure, but because of the multiple meanings that are present and possible and plausible. Just as with the previously mentioned authors, the position has been presented that complex organisations are large-scale and bureaucratic within which complex activities are contained and conducted. What Perrow (1972) contributes to this analysis however, is the awareness that not only is the organisation complex, but its complexity

makes it difficult to know. In this sense, Perrow (1972/ 1979) presents complexity as both a structural variable as well as an epistemological contributor to organisational analysis.

Unlike Etzioni (1961) and Perrow (1972/ 1979), Hall (1996) does not limit the label of complex organisation to large-scale or bureaucracies although he does argue complexity is a basic structural characteristic, "linked to the fate of the organization and the fates of the individuals within organizations." (p. 64). With a flourish of hyperbole, Hall (1996) suggests like Thompson and McHugh (1975), that all organisations (he specifically includes gardening clubs and the military), exhibit interesting forms of complexity. Reflecting his stated position that complexity is a structural characteristic, Hall referred to three elements of complexity based on numbers of different occupations or units and divisions (horizontal differentiation), the levels of the organisational hierarchy (vertical differentiation) and how these are dispersed across locations (spatial dispersion). Having clarified the variables of organisational structures, Hall (1996) then concludes the elements of complexity lies in the operational activities of command, coordination and communication created by those organisational structures. For Hall (1996) complexity is both a feature of as well as the outcome of organisational structures and activity.

From this discussion, it is clear that for early writers such as Blau (1970), Etzioni (1961) and Perrow (1972), focussed on the internal aspects of organisations, complex organisation was a description of formal organisational structures; at the same time as features of organisational structures were used as a measure of organisational complexity. The phrase "complex organisation" was thus used to give meaning to the complex interrelationships that emerged between the many components of bureaucratic structures. Moving on to examine how organisational researchers made sense of organisational complexity in light of contingent complex environmental factors, I will briefly examine some of the theories of organisational structure embraced by the term of structural contingency theory (Donaldson, 1995). The first of these will examine the identification of technologies as a significant variable of organisational complexity.

Technology as a Feature of Complexity

For Woodward (1958), the most significant variable that contributed to organisational complexity, was the technologies required to transform environmental inputs (such as materials, labour and information) into outputs (such as products and services). Although her emphasis was on the relationship between differing

technologies and organisational design (organisational structure), what she contributes to this discussion is her identification of technological complexity as a significant variable. Classifying three basic forms of technologies from least complex to more complex, Woodward (1958) identified unit or small batch (custom-made, boutique manufacturing), large batch or mass production (production-line, routinised, mechanised) and continuous processing (series of machine or process transformations, composition of materials themselves transformed) technologies. In this context, technical complexity referred to the degree of mechanisation and dimensions of routineness/ non-routineness required in the manufacturing process. The relationship was thus established by Woodward (1965) between routineness of work and organisational complexity; with her findings that the less routine and more complex the technology, the greater the number of levels of management and administrative positions required. In this way, the development of organisational structures to meet the demands of technologies contributed to organisational complexity.

Woodward, a pioneer of organisational theory (Hatch, 1997) was not the only researcher to establish a relationship between technologies and organisational complexity. Perrow (1967) indeed argued that Woodward (1965) was strictly speaking not dealing with technology, but with type and size of production run, layout of work and type of customer order. Perrow (1967) differentiated his work from Woodward's by defining technology as "the work done on raw materials" (p. 195). Unlike his book on complex organisations published in 1972, Perrow (1967) in this paper was concerned less with organisational complexity and more with the task of developing a framework to compare organisations. Nonetheless, of relevance to this chapter was the link he established between the variables of stability or variability of raw materials to be processed, the variability and analysability of the technologies required to process the materials and the subsequent task and social structures required to control and coordinate production. In this paper, Perrow (1967) suggested the exceptional and non-routine technologies required to work with materials that cannot be standardised, lead to high interdependence between control and coordination structures. Although he quibbled about her description of technologies, Perrow (1967) nonetheless reached a similar position to Woodward (1958) in arguing the relationship between technologies and the subsequent structures that both contribute to and address the demands of organisational complexity.

Another researcher who isolated the variables of technologies and organisational complexity was Miller (1959/1973), a member of the Tavistock group that developed

the socio-technical systems perspective (Trist & Murray, 1990). Miller (1973) made explicit his attention to a complex system and highlighted how a complex organisation system differed from a simple organisation or system. Like Woodward (1958) and Perrow (1967), Miller (1973) turned his attention to the technologies and systems of production. In his paper he was at pains to ensure he did not automatically equate large-scale systems with complex systems; he cited as an example a large yet simple production system in long-wall coal-mining. For Miller (1973), the essential dimensions of what he called the task structure were territory, technology and time; the greater the differentiation that emerged from these dimensions the greater the complexity. This is best understood from an example Miller provided;

> When all three dimensions of differentiation occur (if, in the example of the workshop, several products are manufactured in each of the three workshops on three shifts) the theoretical choice of order of differentiation is greatly increased (1973, p. 267).

The greater the differentiation, the greater the number of sub-systems and as suggested by Thompson (1972), the consequence of this is the greater the interdependencies between different organisational sub-systems. Perhaps the most significant outcome of the differentiations along the dimensions of time, technology and territory are the management systems that are required. According to Miller (1973), a simple organisation with little differentiation has a management system inherent in the internal relationships; a complex organisation with its multiple sub-systems requires and includes a differentiated management system. As with Perrow (1967) and Woodward (1958), Miller argued the existence of a relationship between technologies and the complex structures required to control and coordinate organisational processes (see Hall, 1996).

Jaques (1990), another of the early Tavistock researchers (Trist & Murray, 1990) directed his attention to the particular requirements of task, and unlike the previously mentioned writers, did not discuss technology as a variable in complexity. In the section that follows, two significant variables of complexity are discussed with an explicit emphasis on task and the thinking required to perform that task. Although complexity is once again located within bureaucratic structures, the focus is not on the structure *per se*, but how work is distributed through those structures.

Task and Cognition as a Feature of Complexity

In distinguishing between two kinds of complexity, Jaques (1990) referred first to the;

> complexity found in nature, in the external world of material and social processes in which we act; and since I am concerned with how we operate in this world of process, how we solve problems and carry out tasks, I shall refer to this complexity outside us as *task complexity* (p. 44).

Jaques (1990) then described what he called cognitive complexity, which he suggested is the internal patterning of the "external information which we have to keep in order" (p. 44). In differentiating between the complex state of the external world and the internally complex patterning required to process that complexity, Jaques (1990) also identified what has been suggested represent the dual ontological and epistemological claims of complexity.

Adopting a micro unit of analysis, Jaques (1990) developed a hierarchy of complexity of task in which he suggested task complexity is a measure of the complexity of the pathway to reaching the organisation goals ascribed by work. Arguing that complexity exists "in reality", Jaques (1990, p. 43) developed a model of seven orders of complexity within organisational life that parallelled the organisational hierarchy. For Jaques (1990), his highly complex and structured typology of complexity was of relevance to "large-scale hierarchical bureaucratic work systems" (p. 44) and served as the rationale for structural hierarchy – with work distributed to appropriate levels in the hierarchy according to both task and cognitive complexity required. Linking time and cognitive capacity required to complete a task, Jaques (1990) argued the greater the complexity of the task, the greater the cognitive complexity and timeframe required to complete the task. It is apparent then that Jaques (1990), despite his attention to the individual as the unit of analysis within an organisational system, located his clearly defined complexities as yet another implicit feature of bureaucratic organisations.

Adopting a different approach to focussing on task as the variable of complexity, and in contrast to Jaques' (1990) detailed definitions, yet another pair of researchers, Hage and Aiken (1970), who carefully defined, each in turn, the individual words "social", "change" and "organisation" of their book title *Social Change in Complex Organizations* omitted any formal definition of complex. With such attention to linguistic detail, one wonders why complex was considered not worthy of further definition. Hage and Aiken (1970) used as their unit of measure the task requirements of

individuals and subsequent occupational membership and performance with the understanding "the number of occupations, especially those requiring knowledge is a measure of the degree of organizational complexity" (1970, p. 16). Those organisations with many diverse occupations such as hospitals or universities were considered high in complexity. This measure of complexity was determined by the number of occupations located within an organisational boundary (Hage & Aiken, 1970). Adding to these dimensions of horizontal and vertical differentiation mentioned earlier (see Hall, 1996), additional measures of task complexity within an organisation included the extensiveness of training and subsequent professional development required and the skill level of its practitioners in performing their designated tasks. From within this framework, hospitals, universities and chemical companies are provided as examples of organisations of high complexity in contrast to retail stores, churches and police forces described as low in complexity.

Once again from this brief discussion on writers who identify task complexity as a variable within large organisations, complexity has been identified as a variable of organisational life; in this instance, as evidenced by the complexity of the tasks required by organisational members to ensure the fulfilment of the organisational goals. Moving from this attention to task complexity, the next section will examine those writers who identified the relationship between organisation and environment as the major source of complexity for organisational experience.

Organisational Environment as a Feature of Complexity

In contrast to the position that complex is a feature of organisations *per se*, is the view that the complexity of environmental pressures contributes to the complexity of organisational processes and subsequent organisational structures. In this context complex appears to describe the factors that contribute to environmental uncertainty, constant change and shifting markets (eg. Galbraith & Lawler, 1993; Lawrence & Lorsch, 1967). Complexity is thus a condition not just of organisational features, but is also a descriptor of the environment and the organisation's relationship with its environment.

Early organisational theorists included Burns and Stalker (1961) whose contribution to understanding organisational complexity was to identify that different environmental conditions called for different forms of organisations. Recognising that the most effective organisational forms which they typified as mechanistic or organic are contingent upon conditions of complexity and change in the environment, Burns and

Stalker (1961) formed part of the group of structural contingency theorists (Donaldson, 1995). Once again though, despite the attention to issues of environmental complexity, the focus of attention of these two writers was firmly on ensuring organisational structures were adapted to meet the demands of the environment.

Developing the ideas of Burns and Stalker (1961), Lawrence and Lorsch (1967) showed that environmental factors varied in their influence on different sub-units or departments within the same organisation. They argued that because of the differing environmental influences, different organisational and management structures were required within one organisation. For Lawrence and Lorsch (1967), organisations could be characterised along the two dimensions of differentiation and integration – that is, the extent to which the organisation is broken down into departments determines its degrees of differentiation; the extent to which various departments must work together in a co-ordinated fashion determines degrees of integration. Lawrence and Lorsch (1967) argued that the stability or turbulence of the environment varied across departments which affected the routineness and subsequent complexity of work processes. Again, it is the factor of routineness and non-routineness of work processes that contributed to the development of relevant structures required to adapt to environment complexity, and in so doing added to organisational complexity.

The identification of the differences that may exist between different sub-units within one organisation was to serve as a precursor to the position known as the open systems approach (Baker, 1973; Thompson & McHugh, 1990), in which concepts of systems drawn from the natural sciences were used to understand problems within social sciences (Baker, 1973; Kast & Rosenzweig, 1992; Katz & Kahn, 1978). Identifying within (social) organisations the attributes of living systems, the external as well as internal environment assumed a supreme significance for systems thinking.

The dynamic interrelatedness between the organisation as a system and its sub-systems, as well as the environment, led Schein (1965), an early writer on systems thinking, to identify the organisation not merely as complex but as a complex system.[3] Despite this attribution of an identity as a social system to organisations, Schein (1965) neither offers any further understanding of an organisation as a complex system nor does he use the word complex again. As readers we are to assume because of the "trend towards systems-level concepts which take into account the interactions and mutual dependencies of internal organizational and environmental variables" (Schein, 1965, p.

[3] The chapter title in *Organizational Psychology* (1965) is "The Organization as a Complex System".

95), that intrinsic to the concept of systems is the acceptance of complex (complexity). Baker (1973), too, argued the necessity to adopt an open systems approach for the study of all living systems and offered complex organisations as an example of large social systems. With his emphasis on defining the features of systems he made no further specific mention of *complex* organisations.

J. D. Thompson (1967), considered to be one of the pioneers of the systems approach to organisational analysis (Ensign, 1998; Pondy & Mitroff, 1979; Thompson & McHugh, 1995), was another who paid attention to the issue of organisational complexity. Continuing an emphasis on internal structures (Pondy & Mitroff, 1979), Thompson's position was to argue the features of complex organisations were determined by the interrelatedness of the subsystems of organisational design and structure with the external environment. Perhaps unaware of Blau and Scott's (1963) ridicule at the notion of a more complex complex organisation, Thompson (1967) introduced the concepts of complex, more complex and most complex to describe levels of organisational complexity.

Arguing that uncertainty is the fundamental problem for, and antithesis of, all complex organisations, Thompson (1967, p.160) suggested it was incumbent on organisational members, within the acknowledged limitations of environmental factors and human behaviour, to strive for the achievement of rationality. Thompson (1967) stated his basic assumption was that organisational structure is the fundamental vehicle by which [complex] organisations achieve this bounded rationality necessary for efficiency and success. Within this framework, the significant variables within all complex organisations were, according to Thompson (1967), internal interdependence, coordination, departmentalisation and hierarchy.

Thompson (1967) then suggested that different levels or intensity of the different variables signified levels of complexity. For instance, in his identification of three forms of interdependence; pooled, sequential and reciprocal, Thompson states "all organizations have pooled interdependence, more **complicated** [my emphasis] organizations have sequential as well as pooled, and the most complex have reciprocal, sequential and pooled" (1967, p. 55). It is very clear that for Thompson complex organisations contain complications (internal interdependencies) that seek to develop, "subject to rationality norms" (1967, p. 38) particular organisational structures to facilitate the coordination of the range of activities within the organisational task. Thompson's major argument appears to be that the most significant criteria for

identifying complex organisations is the extent of internal interdependencies and requisite management structures within the organisation (see Ensign, 1998).

Complexity Science

Despite the success of systems theory in organisational studies, over the last twenty or so years, organisational researchers have challenged the essential paradigm of systems thinking that sought to adapt organisational structures and processes to maintain stability and equilibrium (Stacey, 1993, 1996c). Dissatisfied with the limitation identified by Boulding (1956), of applying lower order levels of complex thought to understand higher order systems, complexity theorists challenged the "tunnel vision" of contemporary management thinking (Rosenhead, 1998) and have transformed complexity from being an adjective to a concept (Fontana & Ballati, 1999).

Unlike earlier organisational practitioners and writers who endeavoured to simplify complexity (Miller, 1993), adopting what is known as the complexity sciences, organisations are now studied as networked systems and for the fundamentally complex changes that emerge from the feedback loops of interactions among people in the workplace and with the environment they share (Lewin, Parker & Regine, 1998; Stacey, 1996b). It is because modern organisations are so complex, hard to predict and "exhibit surprising, non-linear behaviour" (Anderson, 1999, p. 216), contemporary writers have turned to complexity sciences to make sense of our experience of life in organisations (Sherman & Schultz, 1998; Stacey, 1996a, b, c). The complexity sciences include many theories such as nonlinear dynamic systems theory, nonequilibrium thermodynamics, the theory of self-organisation, complex adaptive systems (CAS), antichaos and chaos theory (Mathews, White & Long, 1999).

That so many theories are embraced within the umbrella of complexity sciences has militated against the emergence of one single theory of complexity (Anderson, 1999; Fontana & Ballati, 1999). Although there are differences between the theories (see Mathews *et al.*, 1999), what is important for this chapter is the general position of the science of complexity.

As with general systems theory, complexity sciences are derived from the natural and physical sciences (Stacey, 1996c), and applied to social sciences with the assumption that a "natural" state exists of order/disorder, equilibrium/ disequilibrium within social systems such as organisations (Mathews *et al.*, 1999; Stacey. 1996c). With an emphasis on the environmental complexity and increasing rates of change that create flux between order and disorder, complexity models embrace such states as

randomness, unpredictability, nonlinearity and chaos (Kiel & Elliott, 1996; Stacey, 1996a, b, c). Different forms of change, whether gradual, incremental, evolutionary or sudden, discontinuous and revolutionary are studied and noted within temporal and spatial dimensions (Mathews *et al.,* 1999). One of the most basic principles of complexity sciences is that small changes can, by means of complex feedback cycles result in ever more complex, dynamic changes of unpredictable and significant proportions (Stacey, 1996a). This state of unpredictability is a direct challenge to the cause and effect implicit in determinist, linear thinking (Kupers, 2001) and it is therefore little surprise to learn complexity science eschews traditional models of strategic enterprise-wide planning to control and manage change (Anderson, 1999; Mathews *et al.,* 1999).

In the context of complexity sciences, complexity is understood as the dynamic relationships and interactions or feedback loops between all elements of the networked systems. From this perspective, complexity is not merely a variable within organisations and/ or the environment but is the state of the entire networked system/s within which the organisation is located. With this holistic approach to complexity, it is no surprise that unlike previous work on organisational complexity, there are no prescriptions for organisational restructuring, preferred organisational designs or optimal human resource behaviours.

Culture as a Feature of Complexity

A complementary, yet quite different understanding of the complexity of human systems and organisations is presented by Czarniawska-Joerges (1992) in her appropriately named book, *Exploring complex organizations.* Presenting essentially an ontological subjectivism, she offers a cultural perspective of complex organisations. Interestingly, like the earlier-named writers such as Etzioni (1961a) and Perrow (1970), she maintains the position that complex organisations are large organisations and that large organisations are complex organisations. Despite their different ontologies, Czarniawska-Joerges (1992) introduces her book with a discussion of both those authors' perspectives of complex organisations. For this author, in fact, large and complex are the same; they are synonymous (Czarniawska-Joerges, 1992).

Despite sharing this position with other writers on complex organisations, Czarniawska-Joerges (1992) quickly parts company when she identifies the relevant variable/s that constitutes organisational complexity as cultural phenomena that are political in nature. Adopting a constructionist position, her meaning of complex

organisation embraces all structural forms; her emphasis on structure not on organisational hierarchy, formalisation and so on, but on the process of social *con*struction (and *de*struction). Challenging the accepted wisdom suggesting the larger the organisation the greater the complexity, she also rejected the idea that indicators of complexity can be found in differences in territory, technology and time (see Jaques, 1990; Miller, 1959/ 1973). Czarniawska-Joerges (1992) thus argues somewhat triumphantly, "an organization becomes complex *when no one can sensibly and comprehensibly account for all of it*." [author's emphasis](p. 36).

In her identification of organisational complexity as that point at which its complexity renders it unknowable, Czarniawska-Joerges presents complex organisations as potentially a simultaneous ontological and epistemological proposition. For, as she argues, organisations can become so complex in the reality that is negotiated, that the knowledge of that phenomenon must be similarly complex. Although Czarniawska-Joerges has adopted the subjective position along the subjective – objective continuum, yet another writer, this time from a positivist framework has also successfully integrated the ontological and epistemological dimensions of organisational complexity. To discuss this author it is necessary to return to the systems approach, for it was Boulding (1956), a contributor to General Systems Theory who developed what he referred to as the hierarchy of complexity.

System Complexity

In conducting research for this chapter, this model of complexity stood out as a potential framework upon which to locate the many meanings of complexity previously mentioned. Although the idea was rejected because it was felt the focus would shift from exploring complexity *per se*, to classifying ideas of complexity according to Boulding's hierarchy, I nonetheless consider it worthy of more detailed discussion. For in his construction of complexity, Boulding's (1956) work (see Table 2.1) provides an appropriate and elegant segue from the identification of complexity as an ontological question to the introduction of complexity as a matter of epistemology.

Although his study was broadly on systems and not just the systems of organisations and their environments, Boulding's (1956) classification of complexity nonetheless has relevance to this discussion. Pulling together processes "essential in the development of organization, both in the biological and social world", Boulding constructed an arrangement of "levels of theoretical discourse" (1956, p. 202). What is apparent in his hierarchy is the drawing together of the two dimensions of complexity;

for Boulding (1956), the greater the complexity of the relevant system, the more complex the knowledge that system requires.

Table 2.1. **Boulding's hierarchy of system complexity**

Level	Characteristics	Examples
1. Frameworks	patterns, typologies, classification systems	lists, catalogues, organisation charts
2. Clockworks	cyclical, dynamic, predictable, states of equilibrium	economic cycles, solar system, machines
3. Control systems (thermostat)	self-control, regulation according to externally prescribed target, feedback	thermostat, homeostasis
4. Open systems (the cell)	self-maintaining structure, beginning of "life", throughput of material, reproduction	cell, river, flame
5. Living systems (the plant)	division of labour, differentiated and mutually dependent parts, "blue-printed" growth, primitive mechanisms for absorbing or processing information	plants
6. Animal	self-aware, mobile, capable of processing information, can process images, knowledge structure	horse, cat, whale
7. Human	self-consciousness, able to produce, absorb and interpret symbols, sense of passing time – history, present, future and life and death	humanity
8. Social organisation	value systems, shared systems of meaning,	organisations, civilisation
9. Transcendental	"inescapable unknowables" (p. 205)	aesthetics, metaphysics.

Source: Based on Boulding, (1956, pp. 202-205)

In examining the hierarchy it is apparent that Boulding begins with the most simple system and then traces the acquisition of greater complexity through each level of the hierarchy. Within the hierarchy, all lower level systems are incorporated within the levels that follow it; in other words each higher level incorporates lower levels. Although each level contains characteristics of the levels that precede it, it also has characteristics unique to that level.

For Boulding, the first level "was that of a static structure" (p. 202); this framework level described what he called "the geography and anatomy of the universe" (p. 202). Essentially based on description of patterns, classifications and order, this first level of complexity provided "the beginning of organized theoretical knowledge in almost any field" (Boulding, 1956, p. 202). Notice that even from the most simple of complex structures, Boulding establishes a nexus between the complex nature of an object and the complexity that is required to know that object. As he moved through the different levels of complexity, Boulding identified the tendency of all systems, including social systems to establish equilibrium. This tendency to equilibrium thus limited the complexity of the system; in the early levels, either through dynamics which were predictable and cyclical or in the higher levels through processes of information gathering, processing and transmission. These systems include the development of values, emotions, philosophical thought, the emergence of art and aesthetics and so on.

For Boulding, the advantage of identifying the complexity of systems allows the identification of the gaps in theoretical and empirical knowledge and "prevent[s] us from accepting as final a level of theoretical analysis which is below the empirical world which we are investigating" (1956, p. 207). Although he accepted theories about lower order levels can be applied to systems of a higher order, he argued for the need to "break out" of those lower order systems and "utilise systems which are more directly appropriate to its universe (p. 207).

When examining the previous discussion on complexity within organisations from the perspective of Boulding's hierarchy, it is very clear that most approaches are clustered around the lower levels of the hierarchy. Indeed, it is this very point that Pondy and Mitroff (1979) make in their complaint that theorists apply theories from levels 1-4, such as the mechanical, physical and natural sciences to research and theorise human organisations. The complexity of bureaucratic structures, the attention to task, the focus on technology all limit the perception and understanding of complexity to lower levels within the complexity hierarchy. Although the complexity

sciences moved beyond mere mechanics, it does appear that by remaining locked into the natural and physical sciences for inspiration and not progressing through the hierarchy to the human and social systems, the complexity scientists were again limited in their potential to capture and theorise human potential. For, what Boulding seems to be suggesting, is that in limiting our view of the complexities of what is to be researched, we are also limiting the complexity of what can be known about the researched. As Hatch (1997) notes, theories that are based on the lower level systems do not examine and capture the unique characteristics of the higher order systems.

Boulding's hierarchy with his mechanical and classificatory approach to systems, despite being open to the self-same criticisms he has made of others, is nonetheless a useful model to consider the contribution of organisational analyses to our understanding of organisational complexity. Hatch (1997) in her analysis of Boulding's work also makes the salient point that located at level 7 of the hierarchy, the human system has incorporated not only all the previous six systems, but is also embedded within systems located in levels 8 and 9 – social organisations and transcendental. She states (1997, p. 37);

> That means, that organizations, our subject of study, are more complex than we ourselves are, and furthermore, that we are embedded in organizations. Most other systems you encounter and attempt to study are at the same or lower levels of complexity, while much of the domain of organization theory is located above your own level of complexity...It is one of the few subjects that you can study from the perspective of a participant (that is a subsystem) and whose complexity supersedes, and often overwhelms, your own.

It is this sense of being overwhelmed by the complexity of what is being researched that perhaps leads organisational commentators to then construct complexity as an epistemological consideration. Before moving on to the next section, I shall offer a brief summary of the discussion to date.

Ontological Summary

From the preceding discussion it can be asserted that one of the most basic postulates of the mentioned organisational writers is that organisations are empirical objects (Clegg *et al.,* 1996), a feature of which is organisational complexity, which like other aspects of organisations can be researched, identified and represented. This ontological tradition of organisational theory has been critiqued for instance by Chia (1997) for its commitment to a modernist rationality predicated on the existence of an

independent reality and determinist causality. In this chapter, diverse theoretical perspectives have been presented on the different characteristics or variables of organisations considered instrumental in the definition of complex organisation. The features of complex organisations that have been investigated include organisational structure, technology, task, the environment and for the complexity scientists, all members within the networked system.

This list is by no means exhaustive, for it is not the intention of this thesis to include all aspects of organisations that organisational researchers and writers have deemed to be complex. That would be a thesis in itself. Rather, the aim of this section has been to identify just a few of the relevant variables identified as contributing to the designation Organisations **are** complex. For instance, organisations have structures. Organisations are staffed by people with tasks. Organisations are negotiated order (Silverman, 1970). Organisations are systems of co-operation (Barnard, 1938). Organisations are socially constructed truths (Astley, 1985). The particular variables may vary, but the complexity of organisations is an ontological given. Irrespective of the variables that have been isolated in the examples cited thus far, despite the variation in emphases, each of the writers has made an ontological claim, not just about organisations, but also about the existence of complexity. This perspective represents just one of the two identified approaches to the construct of organisational complexity. In the section that follows, the second perspective, the epistemological dimension to understanding organisational complexity will be explored.

Organisations are Complex – An Epistemological Postulate

Introduction

Consider the following ways in which organisations are regarded. Organisations are complex because the different ways of knowing organisations render organisations un-knowable (Nord & Connell, 1993). It is difficult to make sense of organisations (Weick, 1995), although some have tried to make sense of management (eg. Alvesson & Willmott, 1996). Organisations are unmanaged because they are unmanageable (Gabriel, 1995). Organisations are complex phenomena that require complex theories (Pentland, 1999). Organisations invoke the philosophical paradox of being seen and in the seeing are not seen (Clegg, 1990; Morgan, 1997; Poggi, 1965).

In attempting to deal with these issues, this section of the chapter provides commentary on organisations examined not from an ontological perspective but from the perspective of the episteme of complexity. This section is thus predicated on the understanding that the complexity of organisations lies not on the presence of particular ontological variables, but on the vast potentiality of what may be known and more importantly, what may never be known, about organisations. The attempts at researching some of the richness of organisational experience through multiple perspectives, dimensions and theories will be briefly explored in this section. So will some of the more recent efforts to capture and represent the complexity of organisational experience be mentioned.

A feature that is common to all that follows is the awareness, stated explicitly or not, that organisational complexity is, what Tsoukas and Hatch (2001, p. 986) refer to as "observer-dependent". That is, the complexity of an organisation depends on how an organisation is described and interpreted. Thus, it can be argued, complexity of organisations is not a matter of ontology, but is clearly an epistemological issue. Because organisations are perceived as complex, what will be quite clear in the following section is the necessity researchers have felt to move beyond the certainty of just one theory or approach, to consider multiple theories, perspectives, paradigms; it is for this reason I have referred to the plurality of multiplicities.

Plurality of Multiplicities

With the advantage of some thirty years distance and hindsight, it has been suggested that the field of organisational studies in the middle of last century was deceptively simple (Burrell, 1996). For those who offered organisational analysis at that time, it would appear the simplicity was not readily apparent; in 1972, Fred Luthans asked if it was possible to find a way out of what he referred to as the theoretical jungle of management studies. For Luthans, the jungle was articulated by Harold Koontz who a decade earlier had identified "six different theoretical schools of thought...management process, empirical, human behaviour, social system, decision theory and mathematical schools" (p. 41). In providing an answer in the affirmative – that yes, it was possible to find a way through the jungle - it is apparent Luthans did not ask a rhetorical question. And indeed the question may only have been raised because he thought he did have an/ the answer.

For Luthans (1972, p. 45), "recognizing the complexity involved in managing modern organizations", the path out of the jungle was another theory - contingency

theory. Although Luthans believed contingency theory to be an appropriate theoretical model to accommodate the complexity of organisational knowledge, some thirty years later this position has been challenged by two different sources. The first, is the challenge to the theory's level of complexity, for Ofori-Dankwa and Julian (2001) have recently characterised contingency theory as a most basic of simple theories.

The second challenge to contingency theory is in its role as the theoretical saviour of organisational studies. Adopting a contrary view, Burrell (1996) has actually argued that it was contingency theory that undermined any possibility of a unified theory within organisational studies. Examining the history of prevailing Western organisational theory, Burrell (1996) suggests it was the erasure of political and philosophical conflict implicit within Weberian sociology by Talcott Parsons and his colleagues and their insistence on theoretical coherence, which paradoxically established the ground for fracture, disaffection and contestation.

Irrespective of one's position on the value of contingency theory, what is clear is that Luthans' (1972) discomfit at "the theoretical jungle" was an expression of confusion at the epistemological uncertainties occasioned by the different theories of organisational studies. What he therefore sought was a generalised metatheory of management or organisational studies that would embrace all that could be known about organisations. This sense of trying to contain all that can be known about management within one readily identifiable theory had resonance with his contemporaries, Lawrence and Lorsch (1969). For Lawrence and Lorsch (1969) though, the complaint was not about the multiplicity of theories but the segmentation of research and subsequent generalisations from limited cases. They wrote;

> ... because large organizations are so complex, researchers usually study only segments and limited aspects of their operations...nevertheless the findings of these studies have often been generalized to all organizations (Lawrence & Lorsch, 1969, p. 2).

As with Luthans, it is clear Lawrence and Lorsch (1969) were arguing for a meta-approach to organisational research that would encompass the organisational field in its entirety. This criticism that organisational analysis is not conducted on a "whole" organisation (rather than the study of segmented and limited operational aspects), implied a deliberate recalcitrance by other researchers in their efforts to understand organisations. On the other hand, to suggest that any analysis could provide totalised knowledge of organisations and that they themselves were exempt from such criticism

appears in these early years of this new postmodern millenium, to be either naïve or disingenuous. Although Lawrence and Lorsch (1969) contributed to the development of contingency theory, which Luthans (1972) believed provided the panacea to the confusion of theoretical diversity and Burrell (1996) characterised as "shouting down the other voices" (p. 645), they clearly held the positivist faith that an organisation could be known.

Any suggestion that an organisation could be known in its idiosyncratic and individual entirety has been shattered by more recent commentators such as Clegg and his co-authors (1996). Representing the view of many contemporary organisational writers, Clegg *et al.*, (1996) have made it abundantly clear, the body of literature devoted to the attempts to know organisations is now so vast and diverse as to render "true" knowledge an implausible and impossible achievement;

> To engage in the study of organizations...becomes increasingly difficult for any individual to do justice to the wealth of extant material...[noting] scholars can profess only a passing acquaintance with the vast majority of the literature (Clegg *et al.*, 1996, p. xxii).

Referring to what Weick (1999) has called "the proliferation mess" (p. 803) of theories in organisational studies, Clegg *et al.*, (1996) appear to suggest the discipline is so large and I would add, complex, that any knowledge of organisational theory (and organisations) is limited. What is also clear from Clegg *et al.*, (1996), is the awareness that irrespective of one's position on the ontological dilemma of reality, any totalising claim to complete knowledge and understanding of just one organisation, let alone organisations in general, can be readily challenged. It is the awareness of the impossibility of an agreed complete body of knowledge that has contributed to what I have identified as this second approach to the ascription of complexity to organisational analysis.

There has clearly been a significant shift in sophistication and complexity of organisational theories since Luthans (1972) despaired that the traditional management process had failed to unify management theory. Faced with the existential limitation of any single theory or method, practitioners in organisational studies have tended to adopt an assortment of approaches drawn from sympathetic and related disciplines such as sociology, psychology, anthropology, political, physical and biological sciences. Indeed, it will be argued that organisational studies is a multidisciplinary study because of its inherent epistemological complexity. Not limited by the constraints of disciplinary boundaries, organisational researchers have also utilised multiple dimensions (eg.

Piderit, 2000), multiple methodologies (eg. Wolfram Cox, 1997), multiple paradigms (eg. Hassard, 1991) and/ or multiple perspectives drawing on an array of differing theories (eg. Astley & van de Ven, 1983; Bolman & Deal, 1997; Gabriel, 2002; Hatch, 1997; Morgan, 1997) within their analyses of organisations. Their rationale for the multiplicity, diversity and plurality of each of these approaches is best typified by Hatch (1997) when she notes "Organization theorists often justify the diversity of organizational theory and its multiple perspectives by pointing out the complexity of organization" (p. 7). Hatch continues;

> ... organizational theorists encounter a large and complex phenomenon with perceptual equipment that handicaps them with respect to knowing in a holistic or total way...Only when viewing these numerous perspectives all at once do you get any sense of the magnitude you face when confronting the study of organizations (1997, p. 7).

For Hatch and the other writers who work with multiplicity and plurality, the focus of complexity is not, for instance, necessarily on the specifics of organisational structures or task; instead, the complexity lies in their attempts to know and understand organisations.

The breadth of these endeavours has meant it is not humanly possible to detail each trend, each nuance, each approach, each metaphor, each theory, each paradigm and/or school of thought within the field of organisational studies. Indeed, it has been suggested (Kilduff & Mehra, 1997; Parker, 1995) that irrespective of our theoretical preference, we may not want to claim it is ever possible to have all the answers about organising and organisations. Nonetheless, a brief taste of the plurality of approaches within organisational studies shall be mentioned to illustrate the proposition that organisational complexity is an epistemological consideration.

Multiple Disciplines

How then to deal with the complex nature of organisations? Not surprisingly because organisations are so complex and difficult to know or make sense of or understand or find the truth of organisational researchers have adopted different disciplinary approaches to organisational analysis (Heller, 2001). The complexity of knowledge about organisations that arises from this polyphony of multidisciplinary discourse has been noted by Strati (2000), when he argued that "organizational knowledge is therefore as composite, hybrid, confused, paradoxical and multifaceted as the sociological, psychological, anthropological, economic, semiotic disciplinary

corpuses, and indeed business administration and management studies" (p. xii). The point that Strati appears to be making is that the knowledge of organisations is as complex and multidisciplinary as the many disciplines from which it is drawn. Implicit in his statement is the position that organisational studies, by its very nature is a composite discipline; that is, the multidisciplinarity is its essential nature. Brown (1997) too has suggested that "multidisciplinary research into management is the only game in town...management is, in its very essence, multi-disciplinary, rather than mono-disciplinary, in nature" (p. 23).

Although both Strati and Brown make similar points about the multidisciplinary nature of study, the reader will have noted that the former makes reference to organisational knowledge; the latter to management. Is this discrepancy a problem? I suggest there is not, for as Brown (1997) also notes, what is taught and researched in universities is variously known as management studies, business management, management sciences, administration and management, organisational theory, organisational sciences or a variation on that theme. And with the suggestion that organisational studies is synonymous with administrative science (Zald, 1996), it is clear the domain of what constitutes the field has fluid and shifting meanings.

Further it is argued that because of the complexity of organisational experience, the epistemological imperatives have shaped this multidisciplinary nature of the research and teaching agendas in the field. As a field of intellectual endeavour drawing on a diverse range of disciplines, organisational studies is thus blessed with a rich reservoir of paradigms from which its researchers can explore their truth and understanding of organisations. It is thus not surprising, that in their pursuit for the elusive and complex knowledge of organisations, research is conducted from quite different paradigms (eg. Fabian, 2000; Hassard, 1991, 1993; Lewis & Grimes, 1999; Pondy & Boje, 1980; Schultz & Hatch, 1996); which practice has invoked the fury of more than one commentator (Donaldson, 1995; Pfeffer, 1993). The following section shall now offer a brief discussion of the multiple paradigms.

Multiple Paradigms

Burrell and Morgan (1979), pioneers of meta-analysis of organisational theories and mentioned in the earlier discussion on epistemology and ontology, are recognised for their ground-breaking work on paradigms (Clegg & Hardy, 1996; Hassard, 1993; Thompson & McHugh, 1995). Reflecting the multidisciplinary nature of organisational studies, through their analysis of the four major world views or paradigms within the

social theory that prevailed at that time, Burrell and Morgan (1979) identified the possibilities available for organisational theory development and research (Burrell, 1996; Morgan, 1981). Each of the paradigms characterised by Burrell and Morgan (1979) as functionalist, interpretive, radical humanist and radical structuralist identified a basic structure of social thought based on a cohesive set of underlying reality assumptions. These sets of assumptions, codified into two dimensions were based on assumptions about the nature of social science and assumptions about the nature of society. The first dimension was concerned with a researcher/ writer's position on the objective and subjective dilemma; the second with a researcher/ writer's position on what Burrell and Morgan (1979) labelled the dimensions of regulation and radical change. With the identification of quadrants that reflected four distinct paradigms, Burrell and Morgan (1979) argued the paradigms were incommensurable. Explaining the incommensurability, Clegg and Hardy (1996) identified the ideological and language differences that preclude any communication between the paradigms.

The work of Burrell and Morgan (1979) has been criticised and critiqued[4] (eg. Donaldson, 1988; Gioia, Donnellon & Sims, 1989; Gioia & Pitre, 1990; Hassard, 1988; Hassard, 1990; Lewis & Grimes, 1999; Pfeffer, 1993; Whitely, 1984; Willmott, 1993). Irrespective of the content or efficacy of the criticisms, Burrell and Morgan's categorisation of multiple paradigms did nonetheless bring close attention to the ideological premises of the essential being and knowledge of organisations as well as the pluralism of theories and perspectives that had developed based on their relationship to these ideologies (Burrell, 1996). Their other contribution, despite their argument that one's ideological placement in any one of the designated paradigms was incommensurable with any other paradigm, was paradoxically to popularise the possibility of multi-paradigmatic research and writing (see Gioia & Pitre, 1990; Hassard, 1991; Lewis & Grimes, 1999; Schultz & Hatch, 1996).

Mention has been made of the multiple paradigms and theoretical diversity that exists within organisational studies not because of the intent to defend anv particular position, but to illustrate yet again, the extraordinarily complex ways in which organisations are known and not known. Irrespective of one's view of the commensurability or otherwise of paradigms, that the debate has been waged gives further weight to the notion that organisational complexity has an epistemological dimension. At its most simple level, what the work of Burrell and Morgan (1979) has

[4] Debate around Burrell and Morgan's position on paradigm incommensurability has achieved the status of a "Paradigm War" (see Connell & Nord, 1996a ; Jackson & Carter, 1993).

done, is make explicit the extensive range of theories that are drawn upon to understand or create further knowledge of organisations. This proliferation of theories would again suggest the interrelatedness of the complexity and organisations. That is, the greater the complexity of the organisation, the more complex the organisation is to know. This complexity thus contributes to the idea that the more complex it is to know, the more complex the tools to know an organisation contribute to the greater complexity.

Clegg *et al.*, (1996) in their commentary on the theoretical and paradigmatic pluralism of organisational studies, offered reasoned argument and modelled behaviour[5] in favour of "bringing in ...not screening out, alternate views" (p. 7) with an emphasis on thinking that "emphasizes ambiguity, contradiction and difference" (p. 7). From these comments, it is apparent there is an acceptance amongst some within the organisational studies field, of the value of encouraging theoretical diversity to allow expression of the complexity of knowing organisations. Faced with such confusion of theories it is little wonder the field of organisation studies has developed a range of different, and at times, competing and contradictory theories (see Clegg, 1990; Gioia & Pitre, 1990; Hatch, 1997; McKinlay *et al.*, 1997; Scherer & Steinmann, 1999; Weick, 1999). Or that organisational studies has fostered and contains a range of different research methodologies (see Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2000; Guba & Lincoln, 1998)

Interestingly, despite these efforts at utilising theoretical diversity to capture the breadth of the complexity of organisational experience, the use of multiple paradigms has also been criticised, not for its efforts at an holistic approach, but because of the fragmentation this has caused to the field (Pfeffer, 1993; Whitely, 1984; Zald, 1996). Despite his disquiet, Zald (1996) does suggest however the fragmentation of organisational studies can also be understood as a measure of its success. Commenting on "the colonization of the life world" (p. 252) by organisational studies, Zald (1996) notes the use in particular of the literary and linguistic turn from the humanities. Although Zald (1996) argues these moves may have contributed to the perceived fragmentation of the field, he nonetheless also concedes they have contributed to the depth of our knowledge of organisational life.

In finishing this section, it is clear the many theories that are captured by the Burrell and Morgan (1979) typology of paradigms, contribute once again, to the notion

[5] Although Clegg *et al.*, (1996) sought to model theoretical diversity in their selection of papers in their *Handbook of Organizational Studies*, one reviewer (Ackroyd, 1997), argued it was more a North Atlantic Treatise of Organizations. This criticism highlights two points. The first, is to make comment on the extent of the knowledge and scholarship of the organizational studies field, which is as global in its reach and endeavours, as the organisations that are researched. The second, that shall be noted in greater detail in Chapter 4, is an example of the Westerncentric nature of the current organisational studies field.

of the complex nature of organisations. For what the classification of theories within the quadrants of paradigms do suggest, is that the knowledge of organisations is not fixed or certain; our understanding of organisations will vary according to our world-view. The development of additional trends within organisational studies will now be discussed that highlight once again, the complex nature of understanding organisations. To do this, the discussion will begin with a reference to paradigms in order to move to what is referred to as "the linguistic turn" in organisational studies.

Multiple Understandings

Barry and Elmes (1997a) refer to Bruner (1986), who suggests there are two ways we construct and organise our reality – the first is through paradigms (or world views) and the second, through narratives. For Bruner (and Barry & Elmes), our commitment to our own particular paradigm is to reduce uncertainty; on the other hand, the use of narrative leads, not to certainty, but to "kaleidoscopic understandings" (Barry & Elmes, 1997a, p. 847). This movement away from paradigmatic certainties into the unknown possibilities of kaleidoscopic understandings, leads to an examination of additional epistemological responses to organisational complexity, of which the narrative mode is just one, within the linguistic turn.

In this section, what is considered to be organisational complexity has arisen from the problematisation of traditional truth claims of organisations (eg. Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2000; De Cock, 2000). For instance, organisations are complex, because, with the disavowal of any objective, scientific and absolute truths of organisations, any claim to certainty or not-complex has been lost. From these critics of traditional "scientific" research, the need is championed for a reflexive dynamic between knowledge and the ways of doing knowledge (Calás & Smircich, 1992 cited in Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2000). This means that "serious attention is paid to the way different kinds of linguistic, social, political and theoretical elements are woven together in the process of knowledge development, during which empirical material is constructed, interpreted and written" (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2000, p. 5). As Alvesson and Sköldberg (2000) explain further, taking such an approach calls for an awareness of the theoretical assumptions and the importance of language in the construction of the interpretation. Predicated on the view of the socially constituted nature of reality (see Berger & Luckmann, 1991), and the historical context of knowledge and truth (Barry & Elmes, 1997a; De Cock, 2000), Alvesson and Sköldberg's (2000) call for reflexivity in organisational studies thus requires attention by researchers in their knowledge

production endeavours (eg. Bauman, 1979; Johnson & Cassell, 2001; Hatch, 1996; Putnam, 1996; Woolgar, 1988).

What is clear from this position of reflexivity, is the essential instability of knowledge and the central role of language in the formulation of, and representation of that knowledge. For those who adopt what is known as this linguistic turn, Alvesson and Kärreman (2000) make the point that an obvious metaphor for organisations has emerged, in which organisations are viewed as texts. With the belief that "organizations exist only in so far as their members create them through discourse" (Mumby & Clair cited in Grant, Keenoy & Oswick, 1998, p. 3), any suggestion that organisations can be known is fleeting and illusionary. From this perspective, the positivist assumption that language mirrors reality is problematised; instead language is understood as "ambiguous, unstable and context-dependent" (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2000, p. 1). So too, suggests Alvesson and Kärreman (2000), should the knowledge claims be scrutinised; the scrutiny they note can occur on the language itself, on how the language is used and on the research process and the production of texts.

Adopting this perspective, it is argued that "the study of discourse is emerging as one of the primary means of analysing complex organizational phenomena and engaging with the dynamic, and often illusive, features of organizing" (Oswick, Keenoy & Grant, 2000, p. 1115). Organisational discourse analysis takes many forms and as Grant, Keenoy and Oswick (2001) note, it is also multidisciplinary in nature. Again, as with much of the previous discussion thus far, this multidisciplinarity has contributed to a proliferation of perspectives and approaches that make simple description difficult. Some of the approaches, according to Grant *et al.,* (2001) embraced by discourse analysis include metaphor analysis (discussed below), stories and narrative (discussed below), conversations (eg. Ford, 1999), textual deconstruction (eg. Kilduff, 1993), Martin, 1990) and drama (Mangham, 1986).

Again, what each of these approaches contributes to organisational studies is the destabilisation of any sense of certainty, thereby undermining the possibility of a simple, unproblematised construction of organisational knowledge (De Cock, 2000). With this vast multiplicity of possible interpretations derived from organisational discourse, it is again made very clear, that organisational complexity is more than an ontological feature of organisations, but is an epistemological matter that requires attention and consideration.

This essential unknowingness of organisations is illustrated by Barry and Elmes (1997b) who make the point that, "narrativity emphasizes the simultaneous presence of

multiple, interlinked realities, and is thus well positioned for capturing the diversity and complexity present [in this instance] in strategic discourse" (p. 430). There are, it appears, three narrative approaches that currently prevail within organisational studies; narrating organisations, collecting stories and organising as narration (Czarniawska, 1997, cited in Tsoukas & Hatch, 2001, p. 984).

The first, it is suggested, involves the telling of stories about organisations using a narrative structure, and can be the basis of case-study research (see Buchanan, 2003; Hamel, 2000). The second narrative approach involves storytelling within organisations to "capture the narrative mode of meaning construction" (Tsoukas & Hatch, 2001, p. 985). Examples of this approach are found in the works of Boje (1991) and Fineman and Gabriel (1996). The final approach, according to Tsoukas and Hatch (2001), falls within interpretive studies which Czarniawska claims, "further[s] our understanding of the complex and unpredictable – the major concern and interest of current organization studies" (cited in Tsoukas & Hatch, 2001, p. 985). Examples of this approach to narrativity include those efforts to use the interpretive devices of literary theory to offer analysis of organisational phenomena; an example of this is found in Barry and Elmes (1997) who provide a narrative view of organisational strategy.

Before concluding discussion of the linguistic turn in organisational studies, attention shall be directed to the use of metaphor, which far from being a mere linguistic device, has contributed to the development of a framework around which multiple perspectives of organisations can be structured (se Morgan, 1997). Morgan (1997) also argues that in their use, the role of metaphors is to reveal the complexity of organisations.

Notwithstanding the critics of the use of metaphor (Cazal & Inns, 1997; Mangham, 1996; Pinder & Bourgeois, 1982), and reflecting the pervasiveness of metaphors in organisational literature, organisations are commonly portrayed in organisational analysis as entities they are not. For instance, at times organisations are beasts; as organisational observers we only see this when we visit the zoo (Perrow, 1980). Organisations are spider plants (Morgan. 1993). Organisations are soccer fields in which the field is tilted, goals are shifted and organisational members may or may not touch the ball (Weick, 1985). Organisations are not only theatrical productions (Mangham, 1978; Mangham & Overington 1987), they provide the stage upon which employees perform in the organisational dramas (Höpfl & Linstead, 1993). Organisations are tools (Perrow, 1972). Organisations are random streams of events populated by a random set of individuals at a random point in time, which in their

random interaction of decision-making simulates the random collection of waste in garbage cans (Cohen, March & Olsen, 1972). Organisations, in their omnipotence are psychic prisons in which members' unconscious desires and anxieties are acted out and acted upon (Morgan, 1997). Organisations can be experienced by its participants as places of hostility and punishment, and as madhouses (Sievers, 1996, 1999). Organisations can also be understood by its members as agencies of socialisation or colonisation (Alvesson & Willmott, 1996), and instruments of domination (Morgan, 1997).

It is clear, that just as for Morgan (1997), metaphors contain both an ontological as well as the epistemological dimension, the focus of those who utilise metaphor in their organisational analysis, do tend to concentrate on the knowledge production, knowledge creation or knowledge advancement qualities of metaphors. The efficacy of the particular metaphors to extend our knowledge and understanding of organisations is at this stage, not what is at issue. What is important is that in the portrayal of organisations from a metaphoric perspective, the complexity of our understanding of organisations is highlighted. And, in taking this approach the epistemology of organisational complexity is made apparent.

In concluding this section of the chapter, it is clear that for those who offer analysis of organisations using devices, techniques, interpretations and theories from the literary disciplines, that organisational complexity is a matter of epistemology. Because of the essentially unstable nature of meaning derived from analysis from this literary turn, there can be neither certainties nor fixed realities. The complexity of organisations is thus not a matter of the reality of its structures, its tasks and its technologies for instance, but the varying perspectives that are constructed to make organisational experience comprehensible.

Before concluding this section that examines the epistemological dimension of complexity, there are two further bodies of theory within organisational studies that offer positive contribution to the casting of organisations as epistemologically complex. Although these approaches may not make direct reference to complex organisations or organisational complexity, their very presence lends weight to the episteme of organisational complexity. The first, offers some discussion about the epistemological complexity that is apparent in the psychodynamic recommendation to "not know", while the second provides a brief discussion about complexity implicit in what is referred to as "the agnostic approach" to organisational knowledge. What is common to both of these approaches is the awareness that because the nature of knowledge about

organisations is not fixed, is out of consciousness and is context-dependent, that organisational complexity is an epistemological given.

A Psychoanalytic Approach

In examining the psychoanalytic approach that follows, reference will again be made to an approach that embraces complexity as both an epistemology as well as a matter of ontology. Although this group of organisational writers argues with some vehemence about complexity as a constituted feature of organisations, the decision to defer discussion to this section on epistemology is because of their unique perspective on organisational knowledge. For what is a remarkable paradox implicit within this work is that any knowledge of organisations can only be acquired through the adoption of a stance of "not knowing" (Bain, 1999; Eisold, 1997; Menzies Lyth, 1990). From such a position, organisational complexity is fundamentally a product of the "unknowability" of organisations. They are complex because they cannot be known; they cannot be known because of their complexity.

To explain this further, consider the proposition that organisations have personality (Stapely, 1996) and can be considered neurotic (Kets de Vries & Miller, 1984). Or the view that organisations can be placed on the couch (Kets de Vries, 1991), and psychoanalysed (de Board, 1978; Diamond, 1993; Gabriel, 1999). It is clear that from this perspective, often referred to as psychodynamic[6], organisations have a human dimension that by its very essence is complex. For those researchers who work within the psychodynamic tradition (eg. Anderson & White, 2000; Bain, 1999; de Board, 1978; Eisold, 1997; French & Simpson, 1999; Hirschhorn, 1988, 1999; Lawrence, 2000; Stapely, 1996), organisations are complex phenomena because of the complex nature of human activity that occurs within them.

From this perspective then, psychoanalytic study of organisations identifies as a variable of complexity, the conscious and unconscious mental processes present in organisations (Lawrence, 2000). Contrary to the earlier discussion of organisational writers who identified variables such as the task and structures as contributing to organisational complexity, the psychodynamic approach argues it is the functioning of the collective mind within organisations that is a feature of organisational complexity. It is apparent then, that organisational theory from this position casts organisational

[6] In Australia in the late 1990s, was a move to refer to working in the psychodynamic tradition as socio-analysis; an approach that integrated elements from psychoanalysis, group relations, social systems thinking, social dreaming and organisational behaviour (Bain, 1999).

complexity as a matter of ontology; as social and psychic constructions, organisations are complex. However, with this belief in the reality of organisational life, writers from the psychodynamic school are also conscious of the difficulty in knowing organisations.

For a researcher working from this perspective, is the awareness that because the complexity of organisations is based on the inner, hidden, unknown and unconscious element of human activity, any knowledge claim of organisations represents very little of what may be known. This understanding of the existence of the unconscious has been dismissed by Alvesson and Sköldberg (after Ricouer) (2000), who have called into question psychoanalytic practise. For Alvesson and Sköldberg (2000), psychoanalysis is part of the hermeneutics of suspicion, because of the implied suggestion that any self-consciousness is illusory and a denial of the more unpleasant unconscious. Irrespective of one's view on this, it is the perception of the unknowability of organisations that means organisational complexity, from the psychodynamic perspective is a significant epistemological issue.

An Agnostic Approach

Finally, the concept of not-knowing is a theme picked up by two writers who are not from the psychoanalytic school. In their argument for an agnostic approach to organisational studies, Connell and Nord (1996a, b) and Nord and Connell (1993) make reference to the stream of experience as patterns of multiple sensory and cognitive moments that are our own. And, they argue, the stream of experience is an individual experience irrespective of our knowledge and awareness of others' stream of experience. Although Connell and Nord (1996a, b) assert this stream of experience they add they do not know the nature or the origin of the stream of experience. This not-knowing they call agnosticism. They add, "We do not claim that ultimate knowledge is impossible, simply that we do not have, and do not know how to obtain, such knowledge at this time" (Connell & Nord, 1996a, p. 408).

With the admission of not-knowing, Nord and Connell (1993) value the conversation and discourse between the various streams of experience. It is in this spirit of not-knowingness that subsequent chapters of this thesis will attempt to draw on a range of different approaches to organisational analysis and representation to value the organisational experience of the site of my research. This agnostic approach to organisational studies is one that honours complexity rather than attempting to manage or simplify the complexity (Miller, 1993).

Epistemological Summary

There are among researchers in organisational studies, those for whom organisational complexity is an epistemological assumption. From this perspective, knowledge of organisations is uncertain, contested and unstable. Testament to this view is the vastness of the field, which contains a breadth of paradigms, metaphors and theories of organisations, identified from an extensive list of relevant disciplines. Contrary to any notion that the multidisciplinarity of approaches, paradigms and so on may oversee the creation of an accepted orthodoxy in organisational studies, this theoretical diversity has lead to the awareness that organisations cannot ever be "known". Whether it be the attempts to offer understanding of the unconscious dynamics enacted within organisations, the interpretations of organisations derived from analysis of their textual identities or the readings of organisations derived from the many metaphors used to refer to organisations, the complexity of organisations cannot be avoided.

Can organisations be known? Tsoukas and Hatch (2001) have argued that for those for whom organisations are complex, their complexity makes any knowledge limited and incomplete. Faced with this inherent paradox, the complexity of organisations is thus understood as reflexive phenomena. Adopting the spirit of agnosticism from Nord and Connell (1993), the complexity of organisations can thus be understood as both a statement of ontology as well as epistemology. Referring back to the hierarchy of complexity detailed by Boulding (1956), it is in the acknowledgement of the complexity of organisations that renders organisations complex to know, that the level of research can develop into higher order analyses of human, social and transcendence. For it is only in the efforts to identify the complexity of organisational complexity that the knowledge of the complex system can begin to be understood.

Concluding Comments

The research question that was the genesis of this chapter required a study of organisational literature to identify the assumed difference between organisations that are complex, complex organisations and organisational complexity. This question was formulated at the beginning of this enquiry. Now, at the point of conclusion after extensive study and thought, it would appear there was indeed little significant difference between organisational complexity, organisations that are complex and complex organisations. Apart from the quite specific meaning accorded the more recent field of organisational studies derived from complexity science, the literature review

revealed that the concept of complex was used with a degree of surprising fluidity and considerable lack of clarity across the discipline of organisational studies. As has been detailed in some depth, complex organisations and organisational complexity are terms that have been used interchangeably across the decades by a range of writers from a divergent and disparate selection of theoretical bases.

I am aware that despite the breadth of writers included in this net of complexity major contributors to organisational theory may possibly have been excluded. For instance, there were some early "foundational writers" (Kilduff, 1993) who wrote not of complex organisations, but instead of either formal organisations (eg. Blau & Scott, 1963), or more simply without adjectival embellishment, organisations (eg. March & Simon, 1963). Although it has been suggested that formal organisation and complex organisation has been used interchangeably (Brinkerhoff & Kunz, 1973; Silverman, 1970), in the instance of Blau and Scott (1963), the term "complex organisation" is actually eschewed.

For these authors the use of complex is misleading because organisations vary in size and complexity and to use complex as a variable may lead to odd expressions such as "a very complex complex organisation" (p. 7). They also argued that because formal human-made organisations can not rival the complexity of the social organisation of modern society (see Boulding, 1956), that organisations do not warrant that title. Despite Blau & Scott's (1963) disavowal of the use of complex to describe organisation, there have been many others, including their contemporaries who have selected to use that concept.

What has emerged however, through the review of organisational complexity scholarship, is the awareness of the extensive range of meanings ascribed to the concept of complex/ complexity within organisational literature. And, even more significantly is the realisation the concept of complex/ complexity has been used in both an ontological as well as epistemological context. That is, complex has been used to describe an established feature of organisational phenomena, as well as describe multiple knowledge claims of those same organisational phenomena.

In summary, it is not just organisations that are complex but so too is the knowledge of organisations (see Scherer & Steinmann, 1999). Different variables and features of organisations and their environments have been identified as indicative of organisational complexity. In addition the size, the breadth, the extent of the complexity of organisational studies is noted (see McKinley *et al.,* 1999 for their comment on the burden of excessive information processing in organisational studies).

The interdisciplinary nature of the study of organisations (Brown, 1997; Heller, 2001; Strati, 2000), the multiple paradigms (Burrell & Morgan, 1979), the multiple metaphors (see Aiken & Palmer, 2000; Grant & Oswick, 1996; Morgan, 1997), the variety of topics (Clegg *et al.*, 1996), the different analytic approaches (eg. psychoanalysis and discourse analysis) and the diversity of theory development (Calás & Smircich, 1999; Weick, 1997), all provide indicators as well as contribute to the complexity of the study of organisations.

Despite the extensive sweep in this chapter that has been cast over organisational studies in the last forty years, there is one recent cross-disciplinary trend, organisational aesthetics/ aesthetics and organisations that has yet to be mentioned. Its omission is not because it has been overlooked, but rather, because of its significance to the thesis, it has warranted a separate chapter. The aesthetic turn in organisational studies has paradoxically contributed to the growing awareness of the complexity of organisations, as well as being adopted in response to that complexity.

Having identified two quite different but commensurable approaches to our understanding of complex organisations, I consider the challenge for any attempt at the representation of organisational complexity is to recognise both dimensions. In other words, complex organisations and organisational complexity require consideration from both ontological as well as epistemological positions. In subsequent chapters, I shall argue the adaptation of techniques from Cubism enhances the potential to represent the multidimensional nature of organisational complexity. Before moving on to a discussion of Cubism it is first necessary to examine in some detail the aesthetic turn in organisational studies. For, it is within this cross-disciplinary context that this research can be located.

CHAPTER 3

AESTHETICS AND ORGANISATIONAL STUDIES

Purpose

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a contextual rationale for the use of Cubism as the artistic style that serves as the inspirational template of this thesis and whose trace (Derrida, 1974) is apparent throughout its pages. The concept of aesthetics is explained in the chapter, and the links between aesthetics and organisations explored. It is argued that the suggested use of Cubism is just one more example of the aesthetic turn within organisational studies.

Introduction

This thesis is premised on the appropriateness of the artistic practise of Cubism to serve as the theoretical framework for the representation of organisational experience. Because the thesis will draw extensively from the visual arts and literature it is necessary to provide a disciplinary context for this approach. Despite the extensive literature available in organisational studies derived from cultural theory, the practise of those who turn to material from the arts (eg. Special edition of *Tamara* on Art and Aesthetics in Organisation Studies, 2, 2002) tends to locate their discussion within the area of aesthetics (eg, Barrett, 2000; Linstead, 2002). This turn to aesthetics in organisational studies thus provides an appropriate cross-disciplinary rationale for the use of Cubism as a method of representation of organisational experience. Cubism is not usually linked to the representation of organisational studies (see Björkegren, 1993), and although Burrell (1996) and Hatch (1997) make reference to the metaphor of collage (just one Cubist style) for organisation theory, as far as I can ascertain, Cubism has not been used before as a model of representation within organisational studies.

It has been established in Chapter 2 that organisations are indeed complex. Their complexity is both in their essential being as well as in our attempts to know and understand them. The interdisciplinary nature of organisational studies both reflects and contributes to the complexity of organisational studies. This sheer complexity of organisations leads to the creation of new ways to understand, make sense of or analyse organisational experience. These efforts to study meaning have included close attention

to organisational symbolism and the cultural artefacts found within organisations. It is from these studies that organisational researchers [usually] influenced by the work of the Standing Conference on Organizational Symbolism (SCOS) have developed a study of the aesthetics of organisations (eg. Carr & Hancock, 2003; Gagliardi, 1996; Linstead & Höpfl, 2000; Strati, 1999; *Tamara,* 2002).

Aesthetics

Originally introduced as a branch of philosophy, aesthetics was conceived as a study of perception through the theory of art and beauty (Saw & Osborne, 1968; Smith, 1998) and the "aesthetic object" has traditionally been associated with a socially constituted or constructed [artificial] object whose main purpose is contemplation (see Björkegren, 1993; Saw, 1960; Stokes, 1961). With a greater emphasis on the specific study of beauty than on the more general question of perception, aesthetics soon however developed into a philosophy of [good] Taste. But the study of aesthetics was not to remain within the confines of philosophy. Popularised by the exaggerated dandyism of good taste cultivated by such "aesthetes" as the Irish writer Oscar Wilde, aesthetics was co-opted into daily language late in the nineteenth century (Saw & Osborne, 1968). Today, the *New Shorter Oxford Dictionary* (1994) defines the concept of aesthetics as the philosophy of art and the beautiful as well as the science of sensuous perception. This dictionary meaning retains both the philosophical root of aesthetics and the sense of good taste. But aesthetics is also considered to be more (Dale & Burrell, 2003; Saw, 1960; Wasserman, Rafaeli & Kluger, 2000).

Smith (1998) in his discussion of Kantian aesthetics stated that aesthetic judgements are best described as personal, disinterested and universal. And, he added, that because of the requirement for disinterest (see Crowther, 1993), aesthetic judgement must be of the form of the object and not its content or emotions evoked by the object; disinterest cannot be compromised by sentiment, pleasure and desire. Although the aesthetic judgement that is derived from this contemplation of made objects is clearly subjective, the emphasis on form nonetheless appears to prescribe an objective logic. Despite this apparent paradox, Smith (1998, p. 34) quotes Kant, "Taste lays claim simply to autonomy. To make the judgements of others the determining ground of one's own would be heteronomy". In the arts, aesthetic sensibility was exhorted to respond to formal values (values of form and style) and not seek to find

meaning in the content. With an emphasis on qualities such as values, aesthetics encouraged attention to the incorporeal and immaterial.

Aesthetics and Organisational Studies

With this as its philosophical origins, aesthetics have been taken up by scholars in organisational studies, adopting a position best articulated by Strati (1999) when he referred to aesthetics as "...an epistemological metaphor which problematizes the rational and analytic analysis of organizations". (p. 7). As Linstead and Höpfl (2000) suggest, this problematisation of the rational has emerged with the increased attention paid to the study of meaning, artefacts and organisational culture in organisations. With an emphasis less on 'disinterested' aesthetic judgement of form, and more on the *Shorter Oxford* suggestion of sensuous perception, what underpins Strati's (1992, 1998, 2000a, 2000b) many writings is the idea that aesthetics and its attendant features of taste, smell, vision, hearing and other senses provide specific forms of knowledge. Attention to aesthetics can thus contribute to the identification, the acknowledgement, the unveiling of tacit knowledge within organisations. The underlying assumption for Strati (2000b) is that not only is an organisation a social and collective construct but the construct, which is not entirely cognitive, is also derived from knowledge-creating faculties of all the human senses.

The implication of this construct is that organisations are both known and analysed as we think them to be - but we must also contemplate the ways in which our senses contribute to the tacit knowledge we may have of an organisation. The use of our faculties, of which the cognitive is just one, forces researchers to move beyond mere analysis of the rational operations of organisations to not only be conscious of one's own sensory and emotional responses (Wasserman *et al.*, 2000), but to the experience of the organisation that may be transmitted consciously or unconsciously by organisational members. It is this dimension of knowledge-construction and knowledge identification of aesthetics that Gagliardi (1996) makes reference to when naming the theory of knowledge together with cultural anthropology, psychology of perception, literary theory and so on as disciplines from which aesthetics must draw material.

Very simply, the aesthetics of organisations legitimates the researcher's knowledge of an organisation that may be intuited by the smell, the look, the design, the feel or the "reading" of an organisation. In addition to this sensory or perceptual

knowledge, Gagliardi (1996) also refers to aesthetic experience as a form of action (expressive versus instrumental) and as a form of communication (different to speech).

Rather than engaging in the benign analysis of organisational "taste", the inclusion of aesthetics to organisation studies has interestingly served as an adjunct to analyses about the enactment of power, politics and domination in organisations (Dale & Burrell, 2003; Guillén, 1997; Strati, 1992). It is in this spirit for instance, that some researchers have studied the architecture of buildings to ask how they (buildings) "contribute to the ideological, political and economic structures of domination?" (Dale & Burrell, 2003, p. 155). Taking a contrasting view to the use of aesthetic epistemology, is the position suggested by Kornberger and Clegg (2003), when they refer to the architecture of organisations not for their symbolism but for their ontological materiality and spatial complexity. Guillén (1997) on the other hand, seeks to resurrect the architecture of scientific management as a lost aesthetic. Adopting a different approach, Wasserman *et al.*, (2000) studied the emotional reactions to aesthetic cues in bars and restaurants. Finally, Strati (1992), has used principles of aesthetics to describe the physical environment of a Chairman [sic] and his secretary to provide different organisational knowledge.

From these few examples, it is apparent aesthetics in organisational studies contributes not just an epistemological perspective, but also an ontological consideration. Aesthetic studies in/ of organisations requires then, not just an awareness of one's sensory response but some consideration of the materiality of the organisational physical presence, the ideological dimension of organisational experience and the possible symbolic meaning of many cultural or organisational artefacts.

It is not just these aspects of aesthetics that necessarily define the study of organisations. Over recent years the use of aesthetics within organisational studies has attained a much broader focus that now embraces what has been referred to as aesthetic discourse (Nissley, 2002). Not dissimilar to organisational discourse, aesthetic discourse includes the use of organisational stories and the narrative (eg. Barry & Elmes, 1997; Boje, 1991, 1995; Boje, Luhman & Baack, 1999; Gabriel, 1995), literature (eg. Czarniawska-Joerges & de Monthoux, 1994; De Cock, C. 2000; Höpfl, 1994; Sievers, 1996), drama (eg. Höpfl & Linstead, 1993; Höpfl, 2002; Mangham, 1978; Mangham & Overington, 1987), organisational songs (eg. Nissley, 2002; Nissley, Taylor & Butler, 2003), music (eg. Barrett, 1998, 2000; Hatch, 1999; Humphreys, Brown & Hatch, 2003; Weick, 1998).

Aesthetic discourse also includes reference to artistic styles such as surrealism (see Carr & Zanetti, 1998, 2000) and artists such as Mondrian, to analyse organisations (King, 2003). Indicative of the growing acceptance of aesthetics to organisational studies is the inclusion of a stream devoted to Art and Aesthetics at the Critical Management Studies conference, 2001 from which Carr and Hancock's (2003) edited volume was published; the formation of the Aesthetics, Creativity, and Organization Research Network (ACORN); the biannual Art and Management conferences sponsored by Essex University and the programme called Academy Arts, sponsored by the Academy of Management annual meeting that showcases creative presentations of art, poetry and performance.

Concluding Comments

In summary, the use of aesthetics has made a significant contribution to the study of organisations; either for its attention to the tacit knowledge we have of organisations; the focus on symbolism and cultural artefacts or the use of different cultural and artistic media to throw different light on organisational experience. What is also apparent in the field of aesthetics is the unstated acceptance of an external entity known as an organisation that can be known in a multitude of ways by observers, participants and/or researchers. With its embrace of the ontological claims of organisational presence and epistemological claims of multiple truths, aesthetics thus provides an appropriate disciplinary framework within which the varying complexities of organisational experience can be presented. In the context of this thesis, the contribution of the discipline of aesthetics provides some support for the use of an artistic form (Cubism) to represent the organisational complexity evident in my research.

With the conclusion of the examination of issues pertinent to aesthetics and organisational studies, the issue of representation can now be tackled. It is argued in Chapters 4 and 5 that Cubism is an art of modernism. It is for this reason that modernism needs to be explored not, as is so often the case in current scholarship, to argue a postmodernist perspective, but to once again locate Cubism within a relevant context in which to understand its contribution to representation. And it is essential for the subsequent discussion to be clear about modernist/ Cubist approaches to representation. It is this approach that will inform the representation of the organisation in following chapters.

CHAPTER 4

THE COMPLEXITY OF REPRESENTATION: MODERNISM IN AESTHETIC AND ORGANISATIONAL STUDIES

Purpose

Fundamental to the second premise of the thesis, which argues for the development of a representational model with sufficient complexity to represent the complexity of organisational experience, is the requirement to include a focussed discussion on representation. The purpose of this chapter is then to introduce issues of representation within current scholarship. In addition, because Cubism is considered to be "the theme of Modernism" (Clark, 1999, p. 175), the purpose of this chapter is to initially explore modernism from an aesthetic and cultural perspective. Shifting the attention away from cultural considerations, the chapter will then examine how modernism is portrayed within organisational literature. Noting the marked discrepancy between the understanding of modernism by the cultural writers and organisational studies scholars, the Cooper and Burrell (1988) model of two modernisms is presented. The chapter will then offer some insight into the postmodernist rejection of modernist representation. It will then be argued at the conclusion of this chapter that notwithstanding the putative points of departure between modernism and postmodernism, the particular representational style of Cubism which moves between the two polarities, is a modernist art with a postmodern turn.

In summary, the purpose of this chapter is to address research question 2: *How can the apparent confusions between the different discipline-based constructions of modernism be accommodated in this thesis?*

A Note to the Reader

In this chapter, reference will be made to the many and contested concepts of modernism and postmodernism. Commentary will also be provided on the points of conflict that are waged around what is referred to as the totalising metanarratives of modernism (eg. Lyotard, 1984). Before embarking on the analysis of modernism in organisational and aesthetic studies there is however a point that does need to be made.

That is, irrespective of where critics and supporters are located on either the continuum or the binary divide of modernism and postmodernism, the debate is overwhelmingly Westerncentric in its vision. It is the concept of modernism as experienced by Europe and the United States that is privileged; the experiences, cultures, histories and developments of the citizens of other continents such as Asia and Africa are ignored, marginalised and passed over (Clegg, Sewell & Linstead, 2000). Unfortunately, despite acknowledgement of this considerable omission, the Westerncentricity of materials is so pervasive in the literature on modernism, postmodernism and organisational studies, that this hegemonic insult will be perpetuated throughout this thesis. This limitation shall be discussed in greater depth in the final chapter.

The Challenge of Representation

Representation is hard to avoid, for the experience of one thing standing for another serves as a central motif to much of Western culture (Boyne, 1988). But representation is a difficult and slippery notion. Representation is not just an issue of representation, for representation cannot be discussed without reference to what is true and what is real (Kilduff & Mehra, 1997). How do we know what we know? How do we know what is true? How do we know that what we know is real? How real is what we know? Is our sense of reality not framed by our knowledge; our knowledge grounded in reality? This ontological and epistemological conundrum is more clearly enunciated by Gary Zukav (1980) when he notes;

> 'Reality' is what we take to be true. What we take to be true is what we believe. What we believe is based on our perceptions. What we perceive depends upon what we look for. What we look for depends on what we think. What we think depends upon what we perceive. What we perceive determines what we believe. What we believe determines what we take to be true. What we take to be true determines our reality (Zukov [sic], 1980 cited in Grant *et al.*, 1998, p. 13).

Harding (2003, p. 152) too, states that the favoured ontology, epistemology, ethics, ideology of an individual or a social group forms a "network of belief"; and although there is unlikely to be total coherence between these beliefs they are at least partially embedded within each other. Thus what we know to be true and real depends upon what we think we know to be true and real. Accepting the essential instability of reality and truth, how then can there be agreement on what should be represented and how that representation should occur. How can what is not known be represented? To

address this question requires detailed analysis of the role that language contributes to representation.

Language

One of the earliest typologies of language was developed by the linguist and structuralist de Saussure (1974), who spoke[7] of the sign, the signifier and the signified. In his theory of language, de Saussure (1974) argued language is a system of arbitrary signs – the sign being the union of the signifier used to describe the form that signifies, and the signified which is the idea or concept. The signified is the meaning, the concept, the idea of what the signifier stands for (Culler, 1976). Together the signifier and the signified constitute the sign. From this semiotic position, the representation or sign "speaks" on behalf of its object (Lynch, 1994). And yet it needs to be remembered that the connection between the signifier and the signified is not natural, but arbitrary.

For instance, there is thus no natural reason why the sound used to say the word 'apple', in English or its shape on a page must stand for the concept of an apple. Note that apple in Spanish is manzana; in Italian, mela; in Maori, àporo; in Maltese, tufieha and in Chinese, 苹果. Yet, despite this disparate and seemingly unconnected verbal/ written representation of apple, within the social context within which apple or manzana or 苹果 is communicated, the sign has meaning.

Consideration also needs to be given to the symbolic nature of language, for there are other ways in Western cultures of understanding the sign for apple. Traditionally, in European art, apples have been used as a metaphor for women's breasts (Frascina, 1993). According to Hall (1984) an apple also traditionally represented fruit from the Tree of Knowledge. In addition, a painting of an apple may also signify the Fall of Man [sic] within a canvas that tells a tale of deceit and seduction (Hall, 1984). The apple is thus a signifier for the signified female and/ or knowledge and/or sexual narrative. In this context, a representation or the sign of an apple can also be understood as a symbol.

That apple does stand for the concept of apple in English, is because there is a convention among English speakers that that will be so; indeed, all our acts of communication, whether written, spoken or visually communicated, rest upon social conventions (Frascina, 1993). These conventions ensure the sign has meaning, although the signified, ie. the symbolic, may not always be apparent. What is also apparent is the

[7] The de Saussure book was compiled by former students from lecture notes delivered in Geneva in alternate years over the period 1907-1911 (Culler, 1976).

awareness that in establishing the arbitrary signs, that each of these signs have values that locate the sign within an endless relationship of referentiality. Again, with apple as the example, the meaning of an apple can be understood as a fruit, and in its referential relationship to a fruit, it is established that an apple is not another fruit called an orange; nor in being a fruit, is an apple a book. Thus in the referential relationship, what is established is a relationship of exclusion and difference (Barthes in Frascina, 1993).

Representation thus has meaning only in relation to an other; its essence is defined by the other. The sign is a derivative of the signifier and the signified. Paradoxically, because the existence of the sign is different to the signifier and the signified, the representation can also be understood as separate to the represented signified. The significance of this paradox is clear when we explore the relationship between the signified and the sign. For it is within the transitional space between the two that questions about the ontological status of what is being represented and the epistemological truth of the representation must be raised.

It is apparent from this previous discussion that the sign for apple is invested with meaning and its depiction as apple, whether symbolic or descriptive, stands for or represents something outside itself. The primary assumption then is that language is a tool or dependent signifier for representing a reality "out there" (Xu, 1999). And despite what is known to be arbitrary, that is the assignation of a particular word to describe a phenomenon whose meaning is only carried because of social convention, there is still belief that language has an objective reality beyond the phenomenon to which it refers (eg. Bourgeois & Pinder, 1983). From the latter perspective in which language is perceived as a mirror of reality, arguments are made for the use of a "literal" language in the representation of an externality "out there" (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2000). But for others (see Calás & Smircich, 1999), it is because of the arbitrariness and socially based nature of language, there is "no stable structure on which meaning can rest" (p.653).

What is apparent is that in all the preceding discussion is the implicit assumption of the existence of an external reality that can be (as)signed a label, a word and a referent to offer meaning to that reality. It is this commitment to the presence of an external reality, typified as the ontology of being "...whereby reality is taken to be made up of things, entities, isolatable experiences" (Chia, 1995, p. 585) that is considered the ontological hallmark of modernism.

It is from this point that this chapter needs to consider the varying manifestations of modernism. With Cubism being recommended as a representational form, comes the need to consider modernism in aesthetics; because the thesis is located within

organisational studies, there is a requirement to also examine modernism from within that field. For what will emerge, are the quite extreme positions on the constitutive features of modernism within the respective fields. And what is important then, is the how these differences are played out in what is referred to as "the crisis in representation" (Calás & Smircich, 1999; Linstead, 1999).

With little agreement about the various elements of modernism, a decision has been made to offer some comment on the "feel" of modernism in aesthetics and in organisational studies. In so doing, the material will drift from specific reference to representation to the social, political and philosophical features of modernism. Having identified some of the identifying qualities of modernism, the chapter will then return to representation; this time offering a critical analysis of modernist representation from the postmodern perspective.

Modernism, Modernity and Modernisation

So many volumes, conferences, lectures have been devoted to modernism, modernity and modernisation in so many disciplines, it is difficult to draw boundaries around those aspects of modernism that are relevant to this discussion of representation of complexity. Modernism is the subject of discussion in disciplines such as art, architecture, literature, organisational studies, philosophy, cultural studies, and anthropology amongst others. Any effort to bound modernism is fraught, with little agreement within, let alone across disciplines to settle on an agreed meaning of what constitutes modernism (see Alvesson, 1995, Hassard, 1993; Power, 1990; Smith, 1995; Stanford Friedman, 2001; Vargish & Mook, 1999). To commence this discussion I shall however, offer one reviewer's distillation of the multiple elements within the many definitions of modernism;

> From our fin-de-siècle promontory we can see modernism as an historical period, a *zeitgeist*, an aesthetic doctrine, a constellation of artistic styles, an intellectual orientation, a moral disposition, a condition of life (Allen, 1999, p. 90).

What Allen makes clear is that for some writers within some disciplines, modernism can be bounded by particular years within our relatively recent human history (eg. Clegg, 1990; Gergen, 1992); for others modernism is a style (eg. Smith, 1998), a way of being in the world (eg. Berman, 1983), a moral (eg. Bauman, 1991; Ritzer, 2000), and an epistemological position (eg. Chia, 1995; Cooper & Burrell,

1988). Contributing to the multiple and often conflicted claims about modernism, is the additional disagreement about what constitutes the companion concepts of modernity and modernisation (see Everdell, 1997; Featherstone, 1988; Stanford Friedman, 2001). In some ways, Allen's summary of modernism assumes a benign set of different approaches that belies the extent of the contestation. To give just a hint of the flavour of the contested positions, it is worth noting the extent of disagreement even amongst art historians who shared the view of modernism as an historical period.

The first modernist painting according to one art historian (Clark, 1999), was [the French painter] David's painting in 1793 of the assassination of Marat by Charlotte Corday during the French Revolution. Even if the specificity of the year and the particular painting are suspended, but then generalised to be a period late in the eighteenth century, others such as Schwarz (1997), have located the emergence of modernism in the latter decades of the nineteenth century. For another writer (Featherstone, 1988), modernism in the arts began in the earlier decades of the nineteenth century. For Barzun (1975, 2000), modernism "proper" emerged in the early years of the twentieth century and his paper specifically includes *avant-gardism* within the modernist framework. Roberts (1988), on the other hand, begins his paper with the statement that for him *postmodern* art is art since World War 1 – commencing with the art of *avant-garde* movements. According to this small, but representative selection of art historians who all argue the existence of modernist art, the emergence of modernism is thus thought to have occurred at some point during a period that spanned three centuries and included artistic styles that some have classified as modernist, whilst others have designated them postmodernist (Hassard, 1999).

Within such a slippery and contested definitional framework is it possible to reach some consensus about modernism? The answer is clearly in the negative. Nonetheless, what I shall suggest is there are aspects of intellectual and artistic developments generally understood to be modernist that can inform our thinking about the broader issue of representation (see Smith, 1998; Stanford Friedman, 2001). For reasons of consistency, and because of the centrality of Cubist principles in later attempts to represent organisational data, materials relevant to aesthetics, the arts and literature, in addition to writers from organisational studies shall be referred to. The purpose, irrespective of the source, is to extract from the enormous body of scholarship those ideas of modernism that are relevant to representation. Attention will then shift from the discussion of modernism from a cultural studies' perspective to the portrayal and understanding of modernism within organisational studies.

To do so however, requires a brief digression to discriminate between modernism, modernity and modernisation. Everdell (1999) describes this process as cutting modernism "loose from a populous entourage" (p. 6), that for Everdell, included industrialism, capitalism, Marxism and the Enlightenment. With far greater attention to the similarities, dissimilarities and infinite nuance of meaning between these particular words, Stanford Friedman (2001) also noted the fluidity of meaning derived from the lack of agreement in their individual identities. For instance, if there is no fixed meaning of modernism, how is it possible to differentiate its meaning from that of modernity or modernisation?

Although Stanford Friedman (2001) has devoted a very detailed and insightful paper on examining just this very question, in this thesis, following Hancock and Tyler (2001) and Featherstone (1988), modernism will refer to the cultural or intellectual movement that included art, aesthetics, architecture, literature, drama and philosophy. Notwithstanding the previously mentioned divergence of opinion about the years in which modernism was said to feature, there appears not to be any commentators who have not included the years of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries within the modernist purview. Accepting these fall within the years of modernism, as an artistic style practised by artists, writers, poets, sculptors, composers and dramatists in the first two decades of the twentieth century, Cubism and Cubist artists clearly fall within the modernist canon (eg. Clark, 1999; Featherstone, 1988; Hassard, 1999; Smith, 1998). What will also become apparent in Chapter 5 is that not only did Cubism fall within the period that defined modernism, but the temperament of Cubism represented the spirit of modernism.

In order to pursue an exploration of modernity and modernisation, it is necessary to consider the broader social and political milieu, for it is in the broader social context of modernity and modernisation that modernism developed. No matter the argument about its specific spread of years of modernism, the modernisation project is generally understood to span the period of rapid growth and change in Western culture (Berger, 1965; Chiari, 1970; Featherstone, 1988). During this time, the experience of sound, light, speed, distance were expanded by the mechanical and technological advancements in ground and sea transport, flight, radio transmissions, photography and moving pictures.

These scientific and technological developments were to impact not just daily living, but more fundamentally the way people thought, now expressed in the philosophy, literature, artistic and cultural activities of the period (Harvey, 1990; Smith,

1998; Vargish & Mook, 1999). This was also the time when Western society began to be dominated by a capitalist (market) economy with a complex division of labour, of industrialisation, of mass production of goods and culture and of growing urbanisation (Hollinger, 1994; Schwarz, 1997).

In turn, these developments contributed to the growth of bureaucratic administrative structures, the public/ private divide and the growth of the liberal-democratic state with political and ethical individualism and ideas about self and an optimistic conception of human history (Hollinger, 1994; Rothstein, 2000). Modernity has been summarised thus; "It [modernity] points to a social order which has turned from the worship of ancestors and past authorities to the pursuit of a projected future – of goods, pleasures, freedoms, forms of control over nature, or infinities of information" (Clark, 1999, p. 7).

The excitement and potential of the new technologies and attendant benefits of efficiency, control and specialisation, were mediated by alienation and disquiet, and as Berger (1965) notes, the early years of the twentieth century witnessed increasing levels of anonymity for its participants, as the scale of life became larger and larger. In the pursuit of the projected future, the progress of modernity was thus responsible for greater scale economic oppression of working classes in Europe and the colonised nations, the displacement of communities, the growth of anti-capitalist forces (such as unions and socialist and communist parties), the demands for democratic rights for all people irrespective of gender or property ownership and the commodification of art and culture (Adamson, 1999; Chiari, 1970; Smith, 1998). The artistic response and desire for new ways thus emerged from the despair or what Clark (1999, p. 31) calls "the disenchantment of the world" and what Weber referred to as the "iron cage" of modernity.

As can be seen, modernisation refers to the rapid technological and economic developments and subsequent impact on the social values and structures that prevailed at that time. Although it has been suggested (Featherstone, 1988; Harvey, 1990) the period that spanned the modernisation project can be understood as modernity, Hancock and Tyler (2001) argue the dual dimensions of material change wrought by modernisation and ideational developments of modernism during the period are best represented by the concept of modernity. This notion of modernity that suggests the mutual interplay between the changes of modernisation and the ideas of modernism is one that shall be used in the discussion that follows.

Referred to as the project of modernity (Habermas, 1987), the revolutionary changes that occurred with modernity, fractured traditional perceptions, questioned established truths, made possible new expressions and representations and mainstreamed popular culture. The past was being overtaken by the future (Smith, 1998). Certainty was replaced by the chaos of uncertainty (Harvey, 1990). Clark (1999) refers to modernity's "continual two-facedness" (p. 411) – turning from the past to the future, the acceptance of risk, the malleability of time and space but at the same time hankering for "the bedrock of World/ Nature" (p. 10).

Faced with this "Janus-faced" dilemma (Marsden & Townley, 1996), Schwarz (1997, p. 4) noted further that modernists "sought to find an aesthetic order or historic pattern to substitute for the crumbling certainties of the past". But Schwarz went on to argue these efforts could only partially succeed because in modernity "fragmentation...undermines the possibility of a unilateral perspective giving shape and coherence to a single vision" (Schwarz, 1997, p. 4). Modernist thought championed no one perspective (Hancock & Tyler, 2001). Where certainty had affirmed a single vision, uncertainty fractured and fragmented. Where a single vision had affirmed the certainty, fragmentation was uncertain.

One analysis of these developments experienced in Europe during this period of early modernity identifies the decline of seamless continuity and the emergence of discontinuity as the hallmark of modernist thought (Everdell, 1997). Tracing the development of thought during the nineteenth century that led to giving up "stubborn old beliefs" [in objectivity, in single perspectives, in "steadily and whole" and so on], Everdell (1997, p. 347) identifies five major and related ideas that he argued define modernism – subjectivity, reflexivity, relativism and inductive scepticism - which all boil down to the fifth and final idea. "The heart of modernism is the postulate of ontological discontinuity" (Everdell, 1997, p.341). In other words, according to modernist thought, despite what may be a semblance of continuity there exist discrete phenomena separated by empty space. Things are not whole and stable. Things can fall apart and fragment. The separateness of the phenomenon means things are difficult to grasp. And things may not be connected (Allen, 1999).

This theme of other-ness or non-connectedness resonates with what Vargish and Mook, (1999, p. 14) describe as the "epistemic trauma" of modernism when they argue, "This traumatic otherness stems in part from a conscious refusal by modernist artists and other thinkers to give their audiences the kind of spatial and temporal orientation that art and literature had been providing since the Renaissance..." What Vargish and

Mook (1999) suggest is the breakdown of conventional representations of space and time created new and multiple perspectives. This challenge to the certainty of objectivity leads to subsequent and profound implications for human subjectivity (Herwitz, 2000). Again, these writers suggest that modernist thought created uncertainty or "trauma" by the breaking down of what was known and true.

This section began with a paragraph that distilled many elements of modernism into a few brief lines. It shall conclude with a quotation that offers a summary of significant elements of modernism;

> An aesthetic self-consciousness and reflexiveness; a rejection of narrative structure in favour of simultaneity and montage; an exploration of the paradoxical, ambiguous and uncertain open-ended nature of reality; and a rejection of the notion of the integrated personality in favour of an emphasis upon the destructured, dehumanised subject (Featherstone, 1988, p. 202)

This passage highlights the elements of self-consciousness, reflexivity and fragmentation of modernism that challenged the certainty of the "whole", the real, the known and the true.

What has been presented to date is a selection of views about modernism essentially from the perspective of writers from the cultural tradition. Although there is not necessarily consistency about where to lay the boundaries of modernism, there is nonetheless considerable agreement about the constituted nature of modernist art. There is the view that modernism represented a break from the past, from tradition, from continuity and from order (Stanford Freidman, 2001). There is the sense that the modernism represented in this chapter includes the subversion of social and cultural order by a rejection of realism, the fragmentation of perception and through the artistic expression of moral disenchantment and disquiet. There is the rupture from certainty and the subsequent indeterminacy and alienation. From the material presented thus far, there is certainly a consistency to the motifs embodied within modernism, modernity and modernisation.

It is when we turn our attention from those who write in the cultural disciplines, to writers from the discipline of organisation studies, that the fractured nature of modernism itself becomes glaringly apparent. Because this thesis is concerned less with the process of organising or organisational being (Chia, 1995), and more on representing the experience of employees within organisations, the modernist perspective on organisations is now provided as prelude to the discussion on representation that will follow.

Modernism and Organisational Studies

Modernist scholarship dominated management and organisational studies until the late 1970s and early 1980s (Alvesson & Deetz, 1996; Jaffee, 2001), from which point the modernity project has been under concerted challenge and attack and the label of modernism scorned by its critics. What is it about modernism that has invoked this scorn and contributed to its portrayal as a pejorative (Alvesson, 1995)? Why has there been "a yearning for alternatives" (Hassard, 1993, p. 121) to modernism?

Although modernism embraced positions as ideologically diverse as Taylorism and Marxism, Chia (1995) argued nonetheless that modernist scholarship is more concerned with what he refers to as a,

> 'state of rest' [which] is viewed as normal and hence implicitly privileged in social analyses whilst 'change' is considered accidental, transitory or even malfunctional. Thus properties such as unity, identity, permanence, structures and essences, etc, are privileged over dissonance, disparity, plurality, transience and change" (p. 581).

This portrayal of modernist scholarship that privileges permanence over change, unitarism over pluralism and unity over dissonance is a far cry from the modernist position presented in the previous section. How can Chia's estimation of modernism be reconciled with yet another, that states modernity to be "the turning from past to future, the acceptance of risk, the omnipresence of change, the malleability of time and space" (Clark, 1999, p. 11)? So too, is Chia in stark contrast to the view that modernism is characterised by "ephemerality and change" (Harvey, 1989, p. 10) and that modernity "so clearly assumes change: nothing can be modern without change" (Rothstein, 2000, p. 359).

Irrespective of whether Chia (1995) has engaged in what Alvesson (1995) has referred to as "the rhetorical strategies" that caricature modernism, there is nonetheless significant criticism and rejection of the modernist turn in organisational studies. In identifying the points of departure between modernist scholarship and its critics, it is necessary to include detail of how modernism is manifest within organisational studies.

Essentially, modernism is predicated on a belief in a reality "out there" that can be identified, measured and represented free from ideological or philosophical interference (Agger, 1991; Bentz & Shapiro, 1998; Hatch, 1997; Jaffee, 2001). This

empirical approach to reality is further supported by modernist assertion of the predictive powers of science with a belief in the capacity of science to provide emancipation from myth and traditional values (Alvesson & Deetz, 1996). In addition, modernist thought was based on notions of the inevitability of mechanical and biological processes that were given the status of immutable laws (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). Although subsequently challenged as "ahistorical, isolated, inhuman [and] cold..." (Latour, 1999, p. 15), modernist scholarship glorified scientific rigour based on value neutrality or objectivity as the means to discover reality.

Perhaps best packaged by Burrell and Morgan (1979) as the functionalist paradigm [although Alvesson (1995) does suggest all Burrell and Morgan paradigms fit the modernist attribution], the essence of modernist thinking has been typified as "realist, positivist, determinist and nomothetic" (Burrell & Morgan, 1979, p. 26). To this list Alvesson (1995) adds a belief in progress, empiricism, bureaucracy and grand theory; Chia (1995) includes the triumph of reason and linearity of thinking and Gergen and Thatchenkery (1996) add the presumption of language as the carrier of truth and knowledge. Based in a tradition of the universality of scientific truths and laws, modernist organisational theories were not concerned with localised and individual knowledge, instead privileging the totalising dominant theories. In the main, it is this approach that informed the research of those writers who presented organisational complexity as a variable in the ontology of organisations discussed in Chapter 2.

Further to Latour's (1999) estimation of the glorification of scientific method in modernist scholarship, Knights (1992) makes the point that positivist thinking, one of the hallmarks of modernism (see Burrell & Morgan, 1979), is based on the assumption that scientific methods perhaps appropriate for natural sciences, are considered similarly appropriate for the social sciences. So, he notes, positivist research methods in the study of organisations involve the use of experiments, hypothesis testing and quantifications without reflexive attention "to the representations they produce" (Knights, 1992, p. 514). He then makes the further point that positivist scholarship privileges the consciousness of the researcher who is considered capable of discovering the "truth", without due regard to the process through which an "academic discipline constitutes the object of its discourse in its own image" (Knights, 1992, p. 515). It is apparent from Knights' criticisms, that he considers the modernist approach to organisational studies to be one in which the researcher having adopted a position of value-neutrality independent from the object of study, can then use particular methods with scientific rigour to discover the truth of that which is being researched.

Far from representing a benign faith in science, other authors (eg. Bauman, 1989; Burrell, 1996; Clegg, 2003; Ritzer, 2000), argued that the principles of value neutrality so important to modernists, had become synonymous with the discarding of any moral or ethical framework. These writers, concerned not with cultural aesthetics but with organisational and sociological analysis, argue that the key features of modernism were based on principles of scientific objectivity, instrumentality and rationality. Not only did these authors identify these principles as underpinning the modernist organisational practises such as scientific management and bureaucratisation, they also argued that at its zenith (or is it nadir?), the success of modernity was best exemplified by the efficiency and effectiveness of the organisational skills of the managers and employees, responsible for the slaughter of millions of Jews, gypsies, communists, homosexuals and trade unionists during the years of World War 2 (Bauman, 1989; Clegg, 2003; Ritzer, 2000). The success of modernism is thus summed up by Burrell (1996) when he notes that, "The attainments of the organized world of modernism are, in fact, built upon the flesh and bones of the dead and the methods of their speedy and cheap execution" (p. 656). Although the excesses of the Holocaust may be a far cry from the factory floors that operated according to Taylor's principles of scientific management, it was nonetheless the belief in instrumental and objective rationality, that dehumanised both the victims and perpetrators of the ideologies that underpinned modernist organisations.

These passionate critics provide a graphic illustration of what are considered to be the sins of modernism - an unquestioning belief in science to discover and rationalise truth, the use of reason and rationality devoid of morality to advance and progress (Gephart Jr, 1996), and a faith in the capacity of language to offer accurate representations of an independent and external reality.

When bundled as a homogenous portrayal of modernism, this picture of a movement of rationality without morality, instrumental neutrality and scientific objectivity is a far-cry from the modernist cultural practises detailed earlier in which realism is challenged, self-reflexivity celebrated and moral disenchantment and disquiet given expression. The confusion of the different discipline-based constructions of modernism are well exemplified by the following;

> [Modernism]...is the (illusory) break with the past, a willed forgetting of tradition, continuity, order. It is the embrace of chaos. It is the crisis of representation, fragmentation, alienation. It is indeterminacy, the rupture of certainty...Modernism is state planning. Modernism is totalization, centralized

system. Modernism is the Enlightenment's rational schemata. "Progress" – "Science" – "Reason" – "Truth…" (Stanford Friedman, 2001, p. 494).

The internal contradictions expressed in this passage, very clearly illustrate the tensions contained within the academy's scholarship on modernism. In addressing the very distinct aspects of modernism, Harvey (1990, p. 25) noted that "modernism look [sic] quite different depending on where one locates oneself and when". Similarly, Marsden and Townley (1996) in their summary of modernity were to write, "We contend that modernity is Janus-faced: it enriches and impoverishes, empowers and represses, organizes life in the workplace and atomizes life in civil society on the streets and in homes, enhances efficiency and dehumanizes" (p. 672).

Two Modernisms: Critical and Systemic

A study that endeavoured to make sense of the ambiguity of modernism (Smith, 1995) was undertaken by Cooper and Burrell (1988), who identified what they referred to as two modernisms – systemic modernism and critical modernism. Together with Featherstone (1988), Cooper and Burrell (1988) and later, Hassard (1993), traced the origins of modernism to the philosophy of the Enlightenment that elevated 'Reason' to be the highest attribute of humans [cf. Clegg (1990) and Lash (1992) who trace the origins of modernism to the concept of differentiation]. Reason, for Kant, allowed independence and autonomy of thought – both of which implied the capacity to engage in critical and rational discrimination as well as have the courage to express Kant's idea of 'dare to know' (*aude sapere*) (from Cooper & Burrell, 1988). This will for self-reflection and reflexivity was to become an essential feature of one stream of modernist intellectual engagement, called critical modernists.

In contrast to this critical stream, Cooper and Burrell (1988) then contend that reason was also appropriated by social philosophers such as Saint-Simon and Comte, whose concerns were the increasingly significant problems of government and administration brought about by the burgeoning processes of industrialisation. Faced with these new dilemmas, Enlightenment philosophy introduced early concepts of organisational thinking with reason now "appropriated by an early form of systems thinking which subverts its critical edge to the functional demands of large systems" (Burrell & Cooper, 1988, pp. 94-95). Embarking on processes of state planning, the early systemic modernists celebrated technological development, growth, large systems and progress; all underpinned by a functionalist permutation of reason.

It is clear from this brief portrayal of the divergent positions that grew from belief in reason, that modernism has two distinct versions; what Cooper and Burrell (1988, p. 95) have called *critical* modernism and *systemic* modernism. And yet despite this apparent schism between the two modernisms, there are nonetheless a number of significant points shared by the two traditions. Again, with Cooper and Burrell (1988) as the source, the two modernisms "maintain a strong faith in the idea that reason provides not only the key to unlocking the nature of reality, but that reality itself must be constituted in a manner congruent with reason" (Hancock & Tyler, 2001, p. 17). Both modernisms then, shared a belief in the desirability of a rational world "out there" and that there is a thinking autonomous subject that can make itself conscious of this external world (Seligman, 1990).

To summarise then, both systemic and critical modernisms shared faith in the universality of reason and the power of human agency and rationality to control, with the view to enhance, the quality of human existence. Steeped in the traditions from the Enlightenment, and despite some quite fundamental differences in approach, the modernisms shared a faith in reason which was equated with progress, rationality and belief in a world "out there" that could be understood and communicated to other rational beings (Parker, 1992). With the belief in the separation of one "thing" from another "thing", modernism can thus be typified as;

> a style deeply rooted in an ontology of being in which the "thingness" of things, social entities and their properties and attributes are thereby taken as more fundamentally real and self-evident than actions, interactions and relationships (Chia, 1995, p. 585).

Accompanying a belief in the thingness of things, modernist styles of thinking have privileged knowledge as the attempt to mirror the reality of the thing (Chia, 1995). It is in the efforts to capture and transmit knowledge of the thing "out there", that attention will now be directed. For, it is in this process, the issue of representation needs to be considered. Although some of the generalised criticisms of modernism within the field of organisational studies have been presented, what will follow is a more specific analysis of the problematisation of representation, known by some as "the crisis of representation" (Calás & Smircich, 1999; Linstead, 1999).

Critics of Modernism

It has been established that modernism, no matter its manifestation, sought to represent the "thingness" of the world. Notwithstanding the fractured imagery, the fragmentation of perspective and annihilation of certainty, modernist representation sought to represent reality. Indeed, it was because of the desire of some modernist artists to offer a more real reality (see Chapter 5), that images were fractured, perspective was fragmented and certainty was annihilated. It is the acknowledgement of this representational commitment to reality, that the very different, and at times, contradictory constructions of modernism have developed. For instance, it is apparent that the aesthetic modernism described early in the chapter with its reflexivity and questioning of the authority of tradition, is an illustration of the path of critical modernism; the modernist scholarship in organisational studies that glorifies reason and rationality of thought, that utilises positivist methodologies to "discover" reality and that strives for a surgical accuracy of scientific language to represent the discovered reality, can be understood as representative of systemic modernism.

Those for whom the latter manifestation of modernism is problematic at best (eg. Parker, 1992), and abhorrent at worst (see Bauman, 1989; Burrell, 1996), systemic modernist scholarship is rejected. Interestingly, in contrast to the disavowal of systemic modernism, is the subsequent co-option of many elements of the aesthetic form of critical modernism into the theoretical positions of modernism's critics (eg. Burrell, 1996; Hatch, 1997). This shall be referred to later. What is of importance to this thesis, because of the central role to be performed by Cubism in the representation, is to acknowledge the criticisms levelled at modernist representation *per se*, for in the criticisms of modernism, there appears to be no attempts to differentiate between the two modernisms (see Cooper & Burrell, 1988; Hassard, 1999). For, in order to argue for the applicability of Cubism, as an exemplar of modernism, to represent organisational data, is the requirement to address what has been identified as some of the limitations of modernist representation.

To pursue the study of representation will thus require a plunge into the turbulence of the many forces against modernism. From the previous discussion, it is very clear the modernist position has been contested, challenged, attacked and critiqued by a significant group of writers (eg. Chia, 1995; Cooper & Burrell, 1988; Derrida, 1976; Kilduff & Mehra, 1997; Lyotard, 1984; Rorty, 1991; Woolgar, 1988), referred to as postmodernists and/or poststructuralists (see Agger, 1991; Alvesson & Sköldberg,

2000; Rosenau, 1992). Acknowledging the difficulty in separating poststructuralism from postmodernism, and because of the overlap of the two intellectual traditions (Agger, 1991), for the purposes of this thesis I shall follow the example of Alvesson and Deetz (1996), as well as Rosenau (1992), and refer to just postmodernism.

Postmodernism

It is the view of some writers (eg. Colebrook, 2000; Gergen & Thatchenkery, 1996a; Hassard, 1993; Ulmer, 1983), that the problematisation of representation is the philosophical fulcrum that has polarised and entrenched competing positions between modernists and postmodernists. There should be no surprise then, that the battle between the polarised positions is not restricted to writers within organisational studies. A review of the literature across fine arts (Dunning, 1993), literature (see Rothstein, 2000; Yuan, 1997), history (see Baker, 1997; Cornis-Pope, 1992; Duvall, 1999), economics (Harding, 2003; Lawson, 2003), and physical sciences (see Latour, 1999; Lynch, 1994; Woolgar, 1988), are readily available examples that illustrate the contested nature of the modernist perspective on reality, knowledge and representation across a range of disciplines.

Rather than covering the broad sweep of views, in this instance, the discussion shall be limited to ideas and philosophies considered pertinent to organisational studies (eg. Alvesson & Deetz, 1996; Calás & Smirchich, 1999; Chia, 1995; Hassard, 1993, 1996; Jeffcutt, 1994; Power, 1990), expressed by organisational writers. Narrowing the discussion even further, rather than pursuing the argument of organisational writers such as Clegg (1990) who advance the epochal nature of postmodernism, it will be the postmodern epistemology and style of cultural production that is of concern to this chapter. This limit has been imposed because of the use of a modernist cultural and aesthetic framework (ie. Cubism) to represent organisational experience. In this context, the epochal de-differentiated postmodern organisation (Clegg, 1990), has less relevance than the postmodern challenge to the essential ontologies and epistemologies of modernism.

Postmodernism has been described as "a culture of ontological doubt" (Boyne, 1988, p. 527), in which all constituted realities, including the understandings of modernism and postmodernism, are as inherently meaningful or meaningless as any other. With this in mind, one author (Parker, 1992) has suggested any attempt to define postmodernism would be a futile task. The criticisms of modernism (see Boje, Gephart & Thatchenkery, 1996; Burrell, 1988; Calás & Smircich, 1991, 1999; Chia, 1997;

Hassard, 1999; Hassard & Parker, 1993; Kilduff & Mehra, 1997) are far-reaching, extensive, and relentless. Having launched concerted assaults on the fundamentals of traditional scholarship implicit in the concept of ontological doubt, it is no surprise then the postmodernist critique itself, has not gone without challenge (eg. Callinicos, 1990; Clegg & Kornberger, 2003; Donaldson, 2003; Parker, 1995).

The claims and counter claims of the modernist/ postmodernist positions have also been problematised because, as has been noted (see Callinicos, 1990; Featherstone, 1988; Graham & Doherty, 1992; Wellmer, 1991), many characteristics of modernism, such as the fragmentation of the subject found in cultural and aesthetic modernism, are also argued to be distinctive characteristics of postmodernism. Lash (1992, p. 164) argues, "what is usually regarded as postmodern culture is in fact really part and parcel of modernism". Citing the period that encompasses Cubism ("turn–of-century-modernism"), Lash refers to a modernism that is "anti-humanist [art for art's sake], anti-historical, is initiated by avant gardes and is self-referential" (p. 164). It is these qualities that Lash (1992) argues are usually thought to belong to the realms of postmodernism.

Even Cubism, which in Chapter 5 is described as quintessential modernism, has been accorded the status of postmodern. For instance, Gertrude Stein, a Cubist writer has been described as "decidedly postmodern" (Berry, 1992, p. 4); Hatch (1997, p. 54) refers to the use of collage (a decorative technique popularised by the Cubists) as a postmodern metaphor for organisational theory and Burrell (1996) states "the key form of discourse in postmodernism is the collage or montage [a modernist technique used in film]" (p. 655). Indicative of the confusion, is the awareness that this reflexive uncertainty can claim both a modernist and postmodernist epistemology.

Despite all the acknowledgements that postmodernism cannot be defined and the qualifiers that are used when offering description of postmodernist scholarship, I shall exercise some pragmatism and include a contribution from Alvesson and Deetz (1996, p. 205), who offer a very detailed and inclusive summary of the essential components of the postmodernist frame;

> … (a) the centrality of discourse – textuality – where the constitutive powers of language are emphasized and 'natural' objects are viewed as discursively produced; (b) fragmented identities, emphasizing subjectivity as a process and the death of the individual, autonomous, meaning creating subject where the discursive production of the individual replaces the conventional 'essentialistic' understanding of people; (c) the critique of the philosophy of presence and

representation where the undecidabilities of language takes precedence over language as a mirror of reality and a means for the transport of meaning; (d) the loss of foundations and the power of grand narratives where an emphasis on multiple voices and local politics is favoured over theoretical frameworks and large-scale political projects; (e) the power/knowledge connection where the impossibilities in separating power from knowledge are assumed and knowledge loses a sense of innocence and neutrality; (f) hyperreality – simulacra – replace the 'real world' where simulations take precedence in contemporary social order; and (g) research aims at resistance and indeterminacy where irony and play are preferred to rationality, predictability and order.

From this summary of postmodernist thought, of particular significance to this thesis are those aspects of postmodernism that critique the modernist approach to knowledge production and representation within organisational studies. Reading the detailed summary by Alvesson and Deetz (1996), the central role of language and representation is very apparent. How then is this issue of the use of language to represent the phenomena [whether being or becoming, (Chia, 1995)] within organisational studies played out?

As mentioned earlier in the chapter, modernist scholarship is premised on the idea that the scientific study of organisations can uncover the truths of the independent reality. Representative of this stream of modernist research, authors Bourgeois and Pinder (1982; 1983) argued the use of literal language, freed from "the use of unconstrained tropes" (Bourgeois & Pinder, 1982, p. 641), is all that is required to represent the truth and reality of the researched object. These authors, said to represent positivist scholarship (McCourt, 1997), argued "the description and explanation of physical reality can be conducted with precise scientific procedures that make use of unambiguous language processes (Bourgeois & Pinder, 1983, p. 609). From this perspective, modernist scholars believed in the necessity of an increasingly refined scientific language to achieve the correct transmission of truth and reality (Bentz & Shapiro, 1998; Linstead & Grafton-Small, 1992).

To assist with the critique of this modernist approach to textual representation (in contrast to other forms of cultural representation), discussion will focus on three areas of significance; language, language in use and the production of research texts (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2000). As mentioned earlier, the varying perspectives on language and representation are considered one of the most significant tensions between modernism and postmodernism. What shall become apparent is that much of the

material that follows has been touched upon earlier in Chapter 2; for, it is perhaps no surprise that just as the modernist position was well represented in the ontological understanding of organisational complexity, those for whom organisational complexity is an epistemological construct, can be generally found within what is considered to be postmodernist. Some of the points that divide the modernists and postmodernists in the three areas identified by Alvesson and Kärreman (2000), shall now be examined.

On the issue of language itself, the difference can be simply characterised as postmodernists argument that language is "ambivalent, evasive, metaphorical and constitutive, rather than [the modernist position which argues language is] unequivocal, literal and depictive" (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2000, p. 151). Chia (1997) too points out, that despite the arbitrary nature of the relationship between the signifier and the signified and its composition of the sign discussed earlier, language within the modernist framework is considered an adequate means to describe reality. Chia (1997) also noted that for researchers operating from the modernist tradition, "[L]iteral, precise, and parsimonious language is encouraged because these are deemed to be more able to accurately 'capture' and represent reality as it is in itself" (p. 690).

Critics of the idea of language as a mirror of reality (eg. Rorty, 1980), have argued that language is instead ambiguous, metaphorical, context-dependent and active. And, as was identified in the construction of the de Saussaurian typology mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, language is a system of distinction, which for Cooper (1989), means language is built on the repression of meanings that are hidden by the presence of the sign. From this position, any claims that language can establish the reality of a situation, relies on what Alvesson and Kärreman (2000) refer to as "shaky foundations" that need to be deconstructed.

Influenced by the French philosopher Jacques Derrida (1974, 1978) who argued that all texts, despite their truth claims were essentially literary, modernist discourse has been subjected to intense analysis using the technique known as deconstruction (eg. Kilduff, 1993; Martin, 1990). With the intent to reveal "the dependence of the text on hierarchically ordered binary oppositions (such as male/female, mind/body)" (Kilduff, 1993, p. 15), attention is drawn to the interplay between the two binaries, one of which is suppressed and marginalised. These acts of deconstruction that surface the silenced, the neglected and excluded from the self-acclaimed scientific objectivity of modernist organisational texts, call into question all organisational discourse.

Representative of a proliferation of research into organisational discourse (Grant, Keenoy & Oswick, 2001), analysis is therefore conducted in discourse both as a

form of speech as well as texts. In problematising the modernist commitment to the capacity of scientific discourse to represent objective reality, discourse analysis highlights the contribution of discourse to the socially constructed reality of organisational experiences as well as demonstrates how discursive practise informs the "reading" and "writing" of organisational issues (Iedema & Wodak, 1999). From within this approach to organisational analysis, language-based issues such as metaphor (Grant & Oswick, 1996; Morgan, 1997); organisational stories (Boje, 1991; Gabriel, 1995); texts (Czarniawska-Joerges, 1992; O'Connor, 1995) and drama (Mangham & Overington, 1987), destabilise any modernist claim to a fixed and known reality that can be objectively analysed, measured and recorded.

One of the contributions of discourse analysis is the attention that is addressed to how ideas are formulated and articulated to shape and influence attitudes and behaviours of organisational members (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2000). In examining the discourse of organisations, what is examined is the ways in which organisational power is constituted and reproduced through "the structures of organisational communication, interaction and symbolism" (Iedema & Wodak, 1999, p. 11). In keeping with the notion that signs in language are referential, arbitrary and predicated on absence and difference, discourse analysis in common with deconstruction, also examines not just what is present in discursive practise, but what is absent, omitted, taken-for-granted and denied. With the suggestion that the absent and the denied have a significance to be considered in organisational understanding, discourse analysis undermines any modernist claim to the representation of empirical studies based on presence and "statistical significance".

It has been suggested that discourse analysis may not be exclusively a postmodernist approach to organisational analysis (Oswick *et al.*, 2000), and yet it is apparent that in its focus on discursive practise, the constitution and reproduction of power relations through discourse and the unstable nature of language, it is unlikely that a systemic modernist would find this an attractive or supportable activity of organisational analysis. For those with a belief in the context-neutral nature of language, and the desirability of the use of a language with scientific precision, discourse analysis may well be considered an unpleasant and unnecessary irrelevance.

The third of the areas of linguistic turn in organisational studies involves examination of the production of texts (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2000). Here the focus of attention is on the research process itself, and the use of language to convey the research process. From within this perspective, the postmodernist position makes explicit that

language constructs the reality it seeks to represent. Language is context dependant and because of its contextual nature, terms cannot necessarily be generalised or compared.

Modernist textual representations may claim the "truth status" of their research, based on the evaluation criteria of replicability and generalisability and the use of measures that are argued to be valid and reliable (eg. Miller & Friesen, 1982). For modernist research, the meeting of such criteria are guarantees of objective and scientific rigour, necessary for the representation of truth and reality. Such claims are dismissed by the postmodernist scholar with the argument that the arbitrary and context dependence of language precludes the possibility of fixed meanings (Hassard, 1993a, 1999). Scepticism towards any claims to fixed and stable meanings of text are also based on the postmodernist critique of the modernist notion of subjectivity, which Calás and Smircich (1999) have typified as assuming "that human beings are autonomous subjects, whose interests and desires are transparent to themselves and independent from the interests and desires of others" (p. 653).

In summary, from this presentation by Alvesson and Kärreman (2000) of the three different aspects of the linguistic turn, it is clear there is considerable tension between modernism and postmodernism on the question of representing organisational experience. Had the intention of this section to be an analysis of the points of departure between modernism and postmodernism, the discussion would not have ended here. For instance, taking the Alvesson and Deetz (1996) summary mentioned earlier as a guide, there are many other aspects of postmodernism that deserve attention. For instance, the postmodernist rejection of the grand theories or metanarratives of reason, science, freedom and the individual, said to represent modernist thought (Calás & Smircich, 1999; Hancock & Tyler, 2001), has been expressed as incredulity towards the metanarrative (Lyotard, 1984). For the critics of modernism, any suggestion that it is possible to develop a rational and generalisable basis to scientific inquiry that explains the world from an objective standpoint is rejected. This means that large scale projects of theory development are repudiated in favour of understanding and meaning derived from diversity and the local.

Such matters clearly deserve far greater attention. So too, does the work of many other writers that have offered criticism from both within and outside modernism. For instance, Foucault (1980) who eschewed any identity as a postmodernist, with his development of the power/knowledge connection, deserves acknowledgement for his contribution to the rejection of modernist scholarship within organisational studies (Burrell, 1988). So too, do the critical theorists (eg. Alvesson & Willmott, 1996;

Knights, 1992; Knights & Willmott, 1989; Willmott, 1993), and other critics of modernism within the modernist trajectory (eg. Braverman, 1974; Clegg & Dunkerley, 1980; Lukes, 1974) demand attention. Perhaps understood as representative of critical modernism (Hancock & Tyler, 2001; Parker, 1995), the critical theorists sought to expose organisational practises that maintained cultural and ideological hegemony and reinforced false consciousness, domination and oppression of working people. Unfortunately, to do justice to all the complexities of critiques of modernism requires more space than this chapter and thesis allows. It is for this reason, that little more than this brief mention of the criticisms levelled at modernism from within the (modernist) critical tradition, shall be mentioned.

To conclude this section on the criticisms of modernist representation, it is clear, that fundamental to the rejection by postmodernism of the truth claims of modernist scholarship, is the nexus between what is understood as reality, the discovery of that reality and the use of language in the subsequent representation of reality. Contrary to the position of modernism that assumes scientific and objective language can provide an accurate representation of reality, postmodernism exposes the instability of language, that is not only arbitrary but context-specific and therefore without certainty.

Having reached this point in this chapter, it is now necessary to return to the propositions detailed in the research questions 3 and 4, that Cubism is an appropriate representational form for organisational experience. For, as will be argued in the next chapter, Cubism is an art of modernism and as has been made apparent, the modernist approach to representation is not without substantial criticism. This conundrum will now be discussed in the concluding commentary.

Concluding Comments

The research question 2, which was explored in this chapter, asked if the apparent confusions between the different discipline-based constructions of modernism could be accommodated in this thesis. To answer that question, a generalised sweep of perspectives on modernism from the cultural and aesthetic positions as well as the organisational studies perspectives has been provided. The differences between the two positions are quite marked, and have been identified as two distinct modernisms, referred to as systemic modernism and critical modernism by Burrell and Cooper (1988). Although it is agreed there are two distinct modernisms, there is also agreement there is a number of significant points that they share. With a commitment to the

presence of an external reality, and belief that modernity represented progress, although it is it is difficult to generalise about modernism *per se*, it is not unreasonable to assign to each, the mantle of modernism.

Despite the well-recognised "continual two-faced" nature of modernism, that has even spawned the notion of two modernisms, what appears to have occurred within organisational studies, by both positivists or postmodernists, is the characterisation of modernism by reference to just one of the modernisms. For instance, the positivists who have argued the rationality of Reason, have done so with the denial of the critical and reflexive elements of Reason, apparent in the aesthetic disciplines of modernism. Postmodernists in their critiques of modernism, direct their opprobrium to the features such as the functionalism and rationality of Reason so clearly articulated by the systemic modernists. In this disavowal of just "one face" of modernism, postmodernists are also remiss in their lack of attention to the critical nature of modernism. Of course, the same accusations could be levelled at this summary because of the omission in the body of the chapter of any substantial analysis of those within the tradition of critical modernism.

What this chapter has clearly shown is that the ideas of modernism and postmodernism are inherently as incomplete, ambiguous and contested as the other. In addition, it has been noted that one of the responses to the presence of elements of critical modernism, whether in organisational studies or aesthetic and cultural studies, is their co-option by postmodernist thought. It is in this context, disjuncture, discontinuity, reflexivity and representation that have been identified as symptoms of modernity (at least in relation to modernist aesthetics and cultural studies), are also taken up as indicative of the postmodern turn (Featherstone, 1988; Lash, 1992). In a similar vein, many aspects of critical modernism and critical theory that has challenged the totalising ideologies and practises that control, marginalise, silence and repress individuals (Alvesson & Willmott, 1996; Kincheloe & McLaren, 1994), have also been taken up by postmodernist thought.

I feel it suffice at this stage to acknowledge the existence of considerable scholarship that sees modernist representation as problematic without arguing the correctness of the modernist position. Having said that, the issue of the criticisms of modernist representation will not be ignored or avoided. As Parker (1995, p. 553) notes with a jaunty confidence, "you do not need the postmodern label to be humble about your truth claims...versions of modernism will do fine." For Parker (1995), it is the radical stream of the critical modernism that provides him with the theoretical clarity

that avoids the relativism of postmodernism and the perils of positivism in his contribution to organisational studies. For this thesis, it is the Cubist version of modernism that will do just fine. With Parker, I too have drawn from the tradition of the critical modernism (Burrell & Cooper, 1988) mentioned earlier, and find the commitment to representation of reality together with the challenge to single truths embodied within Cubism a suitable framework within which to present organisational data.

In Chapter 2, the ontological and epistemological approaches to this thesis were identified as a position described by Purvis and Hunt (1993) as 'soft realism'; that is, a position that argues for ontological plausibility and epistemological contingency. With its commitment to the recognition of reality that can be known in many ways, critical modernist representations can accommodate the use of Cubism to represent organisational experience. Without detailed background to the essence of Cubism, the discussion on modernist representation cannot progress and it is therefore necessary to move from the broad brush and contextual background of modernism into the specifics of Cubism. For, it is only with this detail that examination of the value of the Cubist approach to representation can be truly understood. In presenting this material, the criticisms levelled against modernism can also be addressed. It is these issues that are explored in the chapter that follows.

Today I am clearly aware that, at the start, Cubism was simply a new way of representing the world (Juan Gris, 1925 reprinted in Chipp, 1968, p. 276).

CHAPTER 5

CUBISM

Purpose

The purpose of this chapter is to address the research question 2 that asks *"Can Cubism serve as a theoretical and stylistic frame for the representation of organisational experience?* To answer this question the chapter offers significant but yet generalised detail about Cubism, its antecedents, its influences, its techniques and theoretical intent in its many forms of artistic representation. The specific details of the two major styles of analytic and synthetic Cubism will be provided as "readers' notes" in Chapters 8 and 10. This chapter shall explore the potential Cubism provides to present the complexity of organisations. Cubist images, either painted, drawn, sculpted or written are complex. Organisations are complex. Rather than suggesting a simplistic and formulaic relationship of parallels, this chapter will argue that the complexity of Cubist representation can accommodate and enhance the potential to capture the complexity of organisational experience.

Despite what has been hailed as a revolutionary assault on Western artistic traditions, in its commitment to the ontology of "thingness" (Chia, 1997), it will also be clear that Cubism is nonetheless an art of modernism. The chapter will establish that, with an ontological assumption that eschewed an objective reality, Cubism was nonetheless committed to the representation of a conceived reality that existed beyond perception. Cubism, it is argued is also a style that as an art form that challenged mono-dimensional perspective, made different knowledge claims about these constituted realities. The chapter will thus contend that Cubism, with its ontological and epistemological credentials, can provide the theoretical and stylistic frame for the representation of the experience of organisational complexity.

Background to Cubism

Beginnings

Cubism was born in Paris in the early years of the twentieth century, with some suggesting it could not have occurred elsewhere (Everdell, 1997; Fry, 1966). At that time, Paris had a tradition of intellectual freedom that attract gifted writers, artists,

scientists and painters from the United States, Spain, Italy, Russia and other European countries, creating an increasingly cosmopolitan and bohemian artistic community. Paris was blessed with wonderful art galleries and museums, exciting theatre and music and a bourgeois class who did not ostracise or punish their intellectuals or artists. Within this cultural mecca, a sufficiently large intellectual critical mass gathered to unleash new forms of art, literature and music challenging tradition and exploding new form, style, sound and script. Modernity was modern and modernism was thriving[8].

Cubism is usually understood to straddle the years prior to and immediately post World War 1 (somewhere between 1907 and 1914)[9]. Having emerged in Paris, Cubist painting, sculpture, music, literature and dance flourished and its influence was very soon felt in Europe and then the United States of America.

Cubist Artists

Although there are many artists whose works have been called Cubist, there are two painters whose names rise above all others – Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque - credited with being the dual creators or pioneers of Cubism (Berger, 1965; Cooper & Tinterow, 1983; Rubin, 1989). The other painters who were considered to have successfully understood and painted in the Cubist idiom were Juan Gris and Fernand Léger (Kahnweiler, 1969; Golding, 1988); other artists such as husband and wife Robert and Sonia Delaunay, Henri Le Fauconnier, Jacques Rivière, Marie Laurencin, Albert Gleizes and Jean Metzinger have been relegated to the ranks of minor Cubists (Cooper & Tinterow, 1983; Kahnweiler, 1969). Paradoxically, although their lights did not shine as brightly as Picasso *et al.*, it was this latter group who exhibited at the Paris *Salon des Indépendants* and thus gained early notoriety as Cubist painters. Picasso, Braque, Gris and Leger, who had each signed an exclusive contract with Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler, an art dealer, were shown to only a very exclusive group of collectors who supported and affirmed the creativity of their works. Although Cooper (1995, p. 7) identifies diversity amongst the practising Cubists, he does conclude however there were broadly

[8] "Whatever the reason, they came in droves, transient and permanent, provincials and foreigners, poets and physicists, painters and politicians, until swamping the Parisians themselves, they had made a graceful nineteenth-century city into the epicentre of Modernism. Paris in 1900 became the first world cultural capital of the twentieth century, a position it would hold for more than two generations" (Everdell, 1997, p. 142).

[9] There is general agreement that Cubism began sometime in 1907; there is some disagreement about whether Cubist period ended with either the beginning or the close of World War 1. Because the two main styles of Cubism, known as analytic and synthetic, fall within 1907 and 1914, these are the years of Cubism that shall be considered (see Golding, 1959/ 1988; Hughes, 1989).

common characteristics – "the typical Cubist picture lacks perspective and employs geometric forms, restricted colour and a liberal manipulation of visual appearances".

The art of Cubism was not restricted to visual artists. For instance, the poets and critics Max Jacob and Guillaume Apollinaire, composer Igor Stravinsky and Soviet film director Sergei Eisenstein are just a few other key artists from other creative genres whose works both before and after World War I have also been labelled Cubist (Carroll, 1997; Dubnick, 1984). Chief amongst writers of prose was the American-born and Parisian resident, Gertrude Stein. Others subsequently known as Cubist writers, included Ernest Hemingway (Brogan, 1998), T.S. Eliot, James Joyce and Wallace Stevens (Schwarz, 1997; Vargish & Mook, 1999).

Stein was a friend and supporter of Picasso, Braque and other contemporary artists and was acknowledged at the time as a Cubist author, her early works being written during the halcyon Cubists years of 1907-1914 (Chessman, 1989). She was inspired by her friend Pablo Picasso, who painted the most enduring and well known image of Stein in 1906 (Figure 5.1). Stein "painted" her own portrait of Picasso in 1912 (see Exhibit 5.1). Stein was later to serve as inspiration and mentor to writers such as Hemingway and Joyce during their post-war sojourns in Paris. It is because of her intimacy with the Cubists, her self-labelling as a Cubist author and as an author of prose as well as poetry I shall limit any discussion of Cubist writing to Stein alone.

In the context of this thesis, what perhaps is significant about each of these writers is not just their nomenclature as Cubists, but Stein, Hemingway, Joyce and Stevens are all generally acknowledged as exemplars of modernist writing (see Schwarz, 1997; Vargish & Mook, 1999). Cubism was part of the literature of modernism.

Artistic Influences

It is generally agreed that a major influence on early visual Cubism was variously known as 'Negro art', African art, tribal sculpture or 'primitive sculpture' which swept through Paris in the early years of the new century (Bois, 1987; Chave, 1994; Ettinger, 1996; Fry, 1966; Golding, 1994). The attraction for the Cubist artists in the tribal art was not only in the omission of details where only the essential features were retained, but in the sense the tribal artist tended to depict what was known, and not just what was seen (Golding, 1988; Klawana, 1994; Lemaitre, 1945). Reference is made later in this chapter to the ways in which African art served to inspire Picasso's continued search for a representational style to present the conceptual truth.

When trying to identify the antecedents and inspirations for the development of the Cubist style there is general agreement that it was the works of Cézanne who planted the seeds of Cubism (Cottington, 1998; Crowther, 1993; Golding, 1988; Kahnweiler, 1971; Vargish & Mook, 1999). One critic (Ozenfant, 1952) even suggested Cubism should be called SUPER-CEZANNISM [his emphasis]. The influence of Cézanne was not just on the visual artists; Gertrude Stein was also known to have been inspired by the paintings of Paul Cézanne (Heldrich, 1997; Wilson, 1973).[10] The impact of Cézanne's paintings on the Cubists, in which he started to "bend the rules of single-point perspective" (Vargish & Mook, 1999, p. 32), was described by Kahnweiler (1971, p. 56);

> They said to themselves, "But this house is a cubic construction that is turned in a certain direction. All this must be communicated to the spectator". So they immediately tried to give an image of objects that was more detailed, more precise, more true that can be seen from a single glance. In other words, they painted from then on at least partially what we know of the object, and not only what we see of it.

Significantly, Cézanne argued that no image could be observed free from the knowledge we have accumulated and carry by memory – our observations are always coloured by what our minds know. And so, Cézanne in his painting, sought to render an image not as "a copy" but as a portrayal of what we know as well as see in nature. In his attempts to capture what is "known" as well as what is observed, Cézanne's work was to be the precursor to the notion often ascribed to Cubism, that it was an art of conception and not perception (Chipp, 1968; Cottington, 1998; Gamwell, 1980; Kozloff, 1973; Reff, 1992).[11] For Read (1986, p. 68), Cubism was a "fusion of the conceptual or rational element in African art with Cézanne's principle of 'realization' of the *motif*". It can be said at this juncture that from both influences – Paul Cézanne and African art, the Cubists found support for their development of an art that represented their conception, as well as their perception of reality.

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[10] Fortunate indeed to have been a committed collector of contemporary artists, Stein placed her desk at which she sat to write, beneath a portrait by Cézanne. "[Cézanne's portrait] was an important purchase because in looking and looking at this picture Gertrude Stein wrote *Three Lives*... she had this Cézanne and she looked at it and under its stimulus she wrote *Three Lives*" (Stein, 1933/ 1980, p. 34).

[11] Perhaps less poetic but more accessible in understanding, Poggi (1992b) refers to conception and vision.

Conception and not Perception

Cubist artists made explicit that our knowledge of the world is carried by our memory into every perception – what we see is coloured by what we know (Steiner, 1978). Drawing upon memory as well as upon objects that could be seen, Cubism has thus been called the art of conception and not perception (Chipp, 1968; Cottington, 1998; Gamwell, 1980; Kozloff, 1973; Reff, 1992). Although the Cubists denied any philosophical influences, this notion of an art of conception and not perception resonates with the views of the philosopher Henri Bergson, who claimed that 'reality' was made up of each person's experience and intuition of the world, rather than an external objective reality (Frascina, 1993). In this context, each person's notion of reality was made up of memories and experiences of the past, which are simultaneously present in individual consciousness. With this awareness of the presence and absence of knowledge and understanding, Cubist artists were very conscious of the constitutive nature of reality they sought to represent.

This feature of Cubism as an art of conception and not perception will be a theme that is repeated throughout this chapter and beyond. This claim made of Cubism, that acknowledges the constituted nature of what is seen and thought and thus what is real and known, shall serve as a significant contribution to the representation of organisational experience. For, what will be argued, is the Cubists' commitment to the representation of conceived reality, resonates with the notion of what I have termed as an ontological plausibility; and it this that contributes to the attractiveness of Cubism as a theoretical frame for the representation of organisational complexity.

Intellectual Influences

Art historians who write of Cubism tend to locate the birth and development of Cubism within the modernity of western philosophy, science and artistic traditions (eg. Barr, 1946/ 1980; Golding, 1959/ 1988; Smith, 1998). At the time of the Cubists' artistic endeavours, their colleagues, their critics and their friends were very conscious of the Cubists' place within the prevailing intellectual milieu (see Apollinaire, 1913; Gleizes & Metzinger, 1912 in Fry, 1968). It is said the Cubists were influenced by the contemporaneous French philosopher, Henri Bergson (see Antliff & Leighten, 2001; Hess, 1975), by the scientific developments of Einstein (Berger, 1965; Everdell, 1997; Jones. 2004; Vargish & Mook, 1999), by non-Euclidian geometry (Apollinaire, 1913/1970), by the American philosopher William James who taught Gertrude Stein at Radcliffe University (Antliff & Leighten, 2001), by the developments of Idealism and

Symbolism in poetry and art (Barr, 1946/ 1980; Steegmuller, 1973), and by the linguistic developments of Ferdinand de Saussure (Bois, 1992; Poggi, 1992b).

Irrespective of whether the influences from the cultural ferment that was Paris, were formal and acknowledged, in sharing and contributing to the spirit of modernity, Cubism, it has been suggested (Smith, 1998) had a relationship of a cultural homologue with the other intellectual development. For, what was central to each of these prevailing developments was the challenge to traditional relationships of and within time and space. Previously thought to be immutable, the developments of modernity made it possible for the observer to be detached from a fixed position (Hess, 1975). Berger (1965) also reminds us that the time in which Cubism emerged, was when physical and social scientists popularised their awareness of the distorting influence of relationship (emotional, temporal or spatial) to any event. No event could thus be isolated as fixed and real.

Juan Gris is reported in Cooper (1995, p. 7) as having said that Cubism "was connected with every manifestation of contemporary thought".[12] Despite this attribution of contextual relationship, other Cubists argued their work was without influence. Because of the time lag between the publication of theories and their popularisation, Berger (1965) agrees this may well have been the case. Picasso certainly denied any association with any influences outside of painting explaining;

> Mathematics, trigonometry, chemistry, psychoanalysis, music, and whatnot have been related to Cubism to give it an easier interpretation. All this has been pure literature, not to say nonsense, which brought bad results, blinding people with theories. Cubism has kept itself within the limits and limitations of painting, never pretending to go beyond it (from an interview with Marius de Zayas, 1923 reprinted in Chipp, 1968, p. 263).

Irrespective of whether or not the Cubists had read and discussed Einstein's work on relativity or Bergson's work on time and simultaneity, intrinsic to their work was impatience with a fixed and static reality. Their paintings, fractured and fragmented, moved around the subject, and with its visual discontinuity, evoked movement and uncertainty. The Cubists were part of modernity, contributed to the modernist turn and embodied the spirit of aesthetic modernism.

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[12] The modernist art historian, Clement Greenberg is quoted in Vargish and Mook (1999, p. 28) "Cubism was more than a certain response to a certain historical moment. It was also the outcome of previous events in painting and an understanding of these is necessary to an understanding of Cubism as an event in itself".

Theory of Cubism

When turning to the theory/ theories of Cubism, the Cubists adopted a position consistent with Picasso's denial of any contemporaneous intellectual influence. Although there is an acknowledged style or styles that can be labelled Cubist, there was no ideology of Cubism and the Cubist painters themselves were, at the time, contemptuous of any efforts to develop theory or provide theoretical explanations of their work (Chipp, 1968; Hess, 1975; Kahnweiler, 1971; Kozloff, 1973). The main exponents of Cubism did not expound on their experience of Cubism while they were engaged in the Cubist manner (Chipp, 1968; Cranshaw, 1985; Roskill, 1985). André Salmon recalled Picasso saying from 1908 on, that he [Picasso] "knew nothing and desired to know nothing of Cubism" (cited in Roskill, 1985, p. 22). Kahnweiler (1971, p. 40) agreed that "Picasso carefully avoided all theory in what he said".

Despite their unwillingness to expound on the theory of Cubism, Fry (1966) did suggest the ideas and intentions of the Cubists were evident in their paintings. It was only after World War I and beyond, that Picasso and Braque verbally articulated their views for public record. Apollinaire, friend and contemporary and Cubist poet who attempted theoretical analyses in his *Aesthetic Meditations* (1913), was later dismissed with some arrogance by Braque and Picasso, as presenting extravagant claims from a person with no visual sensibility (Chipp, 1968; Golding, 1988; Roskill, 1985). Kahnweiler (1971, p. 41) who was not only an art dealer, but a publisher of Apollinaire's poetry, was to say of the poet; "Apollinaire was an admirable poet...he knew nothing about painting...and he had a kind of compulsion to say things that were not so".

It is intriguing to contemplate the development and popularisation of Cubism. Picasso and Braque, the acknowledged leaders of the new movement worked together, but in isolation from all but a select few in the artistic community. And yet despite this hermeticism, Cubism is acknowledged as the most significant development in Western art since the Renaissance with one critic stating, "it is almost impossible to exaggerate the importance of Cubism" (Berger, 1965, p. 47). Perhaps jaded by the relentless *avant gardism* of the last century, it is difficult to comprehend the extent of the challenge to Western artistic tradition posed by the Cubist artists. And yet, the powerful influence of Cubism was felt from its beginnings, with the first effort by Picasso sending shockwaves through the artistic community of Paris and beyond.

Les Demoiselles d'Avignon

It is generally accepted in the history of Cubism (Cooper, 1971; Cottington, 1998; Everdell, 1997; Fry, 1966; Hughes, 1989; Rubin, 1994; Schwartz, 1989), the first tentative Cubist painting was *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon* (Figure 5.2), a huge canvas completed by Pablo Picasso in 1907. [13] Kahnweiler (1968), critic, art-dealer and friend of Picasso wrote that in *Les Demoiselles,* which he incorrectly stated was unfinished, Picasso was confronting the basic problems of painting - representing three dimensions and colour onto a flat surface, with the need to "comprehend them in the unity of that surface" (p. 252). This, Kahnweiler wrote was "the beginning of Cubism, the first upsurge, a desperate titanic clash with all of the problems at once" (1968, p. 252).

Kahnweiler described Picasso's attempts to confront these problems all at once as rash, although he did add the painting was no less "beautiful" [his italics] for what he believed was not necessarily a success. For Kahnweiler, the contemporary critic, Picasso was an artist with a divine gift and a genius[14]. A later critic with the benefit of some temporal distance used the superlatives a "truly revolutionary work of art" to describe his response to Picasso's *Les Demoiselles* (Fry, 1966, p. 13).

What was revolutionary for Fry (1966, p. 15), was Picasso's attempt at moving away from traditions of European painting accepted since the Renaissance – in the portrayal of the human figure and the "spatial illusionism of one-point perspective". In *Les Demoiselles*, Picasso fragmented his perception, creating distinct facets and planes that fractured the subject and emphasised the different viewpoints being represented (Heldrich, 1997). The portrayal of the fleeting and fractured nature of perception, served to bind the relationship between the fragmented part and the conceptual whole. These departures from painting traditions, liberated Picasso and other artists who followed, as this allowed the re-ordering of the human image and the capacity to create illusions of three-dimensional relationships through the use of multiple perspectives. The

[13] Kahnweiler (1971, p. 38) wrote of *Les Demoiselles,* "the picture he had painted seemed to everyone something mad or monstrous." Although this painting was not exhibited for almost a decade (1916) after its completion, it did have notoriety amongst the artistic community of Montmartre (Cooper, 1995; Cottington, 1998; Everdell, 1997; Kahnweiler, 1971; Rubin, 1994). In his book devoted to this one painting, William Rubin (1994) the Director Emeritus of painting and sculpture at New York's Museum of Modern Art, details the hostility and contempt Picasso's contemporaries expressed towards the unnamed painting Picasso called *The Brothel of Avignon* but was many years later known as *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon.* Cooper (1995) and Everdell (1997) both refer to Picasso's contemporary, André Derain's comment on seeing *Demoiselles* that Picasso would soon be found a suicide hanging behind the painting, so little was understood of his work.

[14] As an art dealer, Kahnweiler was a champion of Cubism who saw his very partisan role as one that mediated the public's aesthetic knowledge and the artists' works. It was Kahnweiler who assigned most of the titles to the Cubist paintings by Braque and Picasso, to help the public "read" the pictures (Bois, 1987).

fragmentation, the multiple perspectives, and the challenge to the tradition of mimetic aesthetics embodied within *Les Demoiselles,* made a significant contribution to the modernist trajectory of the arts.

This painting continues to intrigue contemporary audiences because of the challenging aesthetic derived from its visual pluralism. Criticised for its stylistic incoherence (Rosenblum, 1976), *Les Demoiselles* is a painting of cultural eclecticism. Within its frame is a collection of culturally diverse influences that included Cézanne, Fauvism, African art, El Greco and Iberian sculpture (Barr, 1946/ 1980; Read, 1986). Crowded by such diverse styles, it is perhaps not surprising that Picasso used within this one painting at least two different ways to represent the human face and the human body (Nash, 2000) – note the mask-like features of the two women on the right that bear little resemblance to the representation of the female faces portrayed on the left side of the canvas. Although the painting was limited to a very select audience, for some years its revolutionary potential nonetheless served as the forerunner to a style of artistic endeavour that challenged the traditional representation of the human figure, moved beyond one-point perspective and integrated culturally diverse influences.

Cubist Technique

Painting

To assist with the "reading" of paintings by Picasso and Braque some examples have been included with this thesis. Cubist technique is considered revolutionary in its creation of a new pictorial vocabulary. Each element of the vocabulary of painting – space, form, colour, light and technique – was worked, re-worked, interpreted and reinterpreted (Golding, 1988). Rules of single-point perspective were discarded – not just in the portrayal of an image on a painting – but in the demands made of the viewer to share the search for a reality promised by multiple perspectives. The words used to describe Cubist technique include fragments, geometric shapes, shifting planes, atonal colour, fractured form and spatial ambiguity. The challenge to traditional painting was of course confusing and many audiences were not certain about what was being represented. Everdell (1997, p. 249) provides some clues to assist understand the technique of Cubism;

> The method was not at all mystical, however disconcerting the results. You took the motif, looked at it from several opposing points of view, divided the results into volumetric planes, and painted those planes in the place of the subject so

that they interfered with each other. The viewer who wished to could reassemble the planes and reconstruct all of the original points of view (preferably not sequentially, but simultaneously).

Despite its comparatively short life-span of less than a decade, there were nonetheless a number of different styles within the Cubist canon. The two major styles, synthetic and analytic Cubism shall be discussed in greater detail in Chapters 8 and 10 respectively.

Visual Puns

One of the features of Cubism that requires special mention was the use of visual puns by the painters, Picasso and Braque. Reflecting their cultural environment at that time, the later period of Cubism in which the artists utilised collage and *papier collé* were more likely to include artefacts from, and references to, contemporary low-brow culture. For instance, in a portrait of a woman painted in 1911-1912, Picasso added 'MA JOLIE' in large letters. This served not only as one of the titles of the painting which is known variously as *Ma Jolie* or *Woman with Zither or Guitar* (1911-1912) (Figure 5.3), but also made reference to a very popular song (pop-song) of the time (Clark, 1999; Cottington, 1998). Ma Jolie was also the pet name Picasso gave his love interest at the time (Rosenblum, 1976).

Indeed many of the most successful puns were those that were grounded in the contemporary reality of French intellectual and artistic life. The letters JOU are often combined with depictions of musical instruments, alcoholic drinks, references to women, tobacco or cigarette papers (Frascina, 1993). Consider for instance the fragment of newsprint in the painting by Picasso in *Still Life with Chair-caning* (1912) (Figure 5.4). The letters JOU are clearly visible; in fact they dominate the image. JOU. JOU is a pun. A pun on Le JOUr (the day). Le JOUrnal (the French newspaper). Un JOU (a game). And perhaps more reflective of Picasso's playfulness JOUir/ JOUissance meaning sexual pleasure or orgasm (Rosenblum, 1973; Roskill, 1985); JOUasse that means the thrill from drugs; JOUailler to play a musical instrument badly (Frascina, 1993). In a later painting *The Violin* (1912) (Figure 5.5), Picasso includes URNAL (the U partly obscured) from the same newspaper, Le Journal. In this instance though the Jou is not visible; what can be seen is URNAL. URNAL suggests urinal (Rosenblum, 1973) or literally to 'take a piss' (Frascina, 1993). Was this an example of Picasso pissing on or taking the piss out of his bourgeois viewers? Perhaps (see Poggi, 1992b). Notwithstanding Picasso's intent, the use of visual puns was to be a notable feature of the *collages* created by Picasso and Braque.

Simultaneity

As noted previously, one-of-the unique features of Cubism practised by Braque, Picasso and later their colleagues, was that objects were painted, not from a mixed and single-point perspective but combined within the same picture, several different views of the same object. Supporting the idea that Cubism depicts reality most completely, Gamwell (1980) suggests the multiple views allowed the artists to present all aspects, rather than an incomplete aspect of nature. The concept of simultaneity, stressed the role of artistic invention in selecting and synthesising the mix of remembered and seen elements of a subject (Cottington, 1998). This device, encapsulated by the idea of conception and not perception, became a major feature of the style (Cottington, 1998; Golding, 1988, 1994).

It was the artist Robert Delaunay who gave the name of *simultanéisme* or *simultanéité* to Cubism, which he was to characterise as nothing vertical or horizontal; the image deformed and broken by light and colour (Gamwell, 1980; Read, 1986). Hess (1975, p. 38) describes this phenomenon thus;

> ... perspective was dissolved, or rather multiplied. The observer was no longer fixed in the one place from which alone the picture under linear perspective looks true. The painter combines in one picture many view-points and illuminates space from many sides, including the positions from within the picture space itself. The spectator thus ceases to be mentally at rest and is taken within the system of the picture where mentally changes view-points, and is a form of movement around, through, above and below **the newly created reality** [my emphasis].

By way of explanation for this technique, Braque made comment many years later of his pre-1914 Cubism;

> The traditional concept of perspective failed to satisfy me. Mechanised as it is, this perspective never assures [ensures] [Crowther's addition/correction] the full possession of the object. It proceeds from one standpoint and refuses to budge from there. This angle or viewpoint is a totally insignificant thing. It is as though one were to draw only profiles all one's life, leading one to believe that man has only one eye (quoted in Crowther, 1997, p. 45).

Cubism demands from its audience the necessity to engage in a relationship with the artistic endeavour – and the viewer is challenged to find their own meaning and understanding from the object observed. There is no one truth of the image and yet there is always a suggestion of a reality of representation. The Cubist method is inherently

dynamic. Each painting is a "reassemblage that forces various fragments, perspectives or aspects gathered over time, into a single visual instant, a simultaneous mental construct represented in a single visual frame" (Vargish & Mook, 1999, p. 89).

If one were to understand the concept of simultaneous as being both/and, then Cubism can also be understood as an art of simultaneity. It was Golding's (1994) view that Picasso in particular, painted objects in Cubism that were themselves and not themselves; speaking of the analogy of women's bodies like guitars, dots or pegs as nipples, eyes, navels and so on. Rosenblum (1959/1976) who also noted that a book could be a table, a violin a hand, referred to this approach as the metamorphosis of the identity of objects. In many ways the label is not important. In this context, not only were the shapes and forms of the multiple viewpoints invoking the sense of simultaneity, but so too were objects such as women's bodies simultaneously women and not women and so on. Objects were both/ and simultaneously.

In the use of the technique of simultaneity to capture a greater slice of reality, a pictorial paradox emerged. The greater the pursuit of reality, the more difficult that reality was to comprehend. It is clear that Cubist painting both contains within its frame as well as invokes within the viewer an overwhelming sense of complexity, uncertainty, discontinuity and ambivalence. If one were to cast a mere glance at a Cubist painting (or turn to any of the plates that welcome the reader at the beginning of the thesis), perhaps a shape, a form or even an object may be recognised. Is that an eye? Does that shadow represent an arm? Or is it the arm of the chair? Is that curve a breast? Perhaps, it is the fret of a guitar.

A reading of the title may assist with that recognition of a fragment of the image, but the totality of the painting would doubtless remain unknown. Amongst the Cubist shapes and form and shapeless, formless brushstrokes of colour, the shifting space and multiple visions of the object/s demand we pay attention to the painting. In visual Cubism, there is repetition of shapes, perspectives and angles. In Cubist writing, it is the words, their sounds and their shapes that are repeated with only a nuance of movement and development. The repetition slows us down. We shift our (physical and metaphorical) position to see objects from more directions at once, and we search the surface to find the meaning of the depths. The motif of the painting has neither grandeur nor pomposity – in fact, because of its simplicity and relative modesty, it is the painting's composition that challenges the viewer to engage in a dynamic relationship with the painter and conduct an internal dialogue about the painting. Any emotional

response from the viewer is not to the object that is being represented, but to its manner of representation. We are not asked for sympathy but for the dedication to understand.

Writing

No where is this requirement for dedication felt more strongly than in the struggle by the reader to make sense of Stein's Cubist writings that have been called bohemian, idiosyncratic and incomprehensible (Steiner, 1978). Together with the visual Cubists, Stein's work has endured well beyond their time and she too has been celebrated as the most influential and experimental of all modernist writers (Chessman, 1989). The connection between Cubist writing and Cubist painting has often been made by critics (eg. Burke, 1987; Fitz, 1973; Steiner, 1978; Walker, 1984), not least by Gertrude Stein herself who stated she alone understood Picasso because she was doing the same thing in literature as he was attempting in art (cited in Dubnick, 1984). Some of the similarities between Cubist writing and painting that have been noted are the lack of grandeur of the subject of the artistic piece and the absence of a focal point of action (Fitz, 1973); the ways in which Cubists artists present that fragmentary nature of perception and the representation of "the integrity of the individual moment of perception before consolidation by memory into the perceptual whole" (Dubnick, 1984, p. 4) and importantly, the attempts of the literary and artistic Cubists to experiment with their respective media in their pursuit of "real" representation (Steiner, 1978).

Despite the similarities noted between visual and literary Cubism, the tools of representation they may each have used, are of course, quite different. Unlike a painting that can represent and display its entire surface all at the same time, that is simultaneously, language depends on a sequential ordering that renders verbal simultaneity an impossibility. And of course, sequential ordering implies a linear progression, from preceding to succeeding, that is necessary to provide context and meaning (Hawkes, 1997). To use language as the tool to communicate a "word representation", thus generally requires from an author a willingness to work within the interdependent relationships that exist within the linguistic framework. No such limitations exist for a visual artist who, because of the ability to see both the whole and its parts simultaneously, has the freedom to challenge the conventional placement of objects within a visual surface.

Yet another difference is apparent from the arbitrary nature of the naming of objects (Culler, 1976). Unlike painting which can provide a visual representation,

language cannot literally reproduce an object. Language can name and language can describe but any naming or description is not the thing itself. And what is more, the very act of definition is "a denegation of the thing described in the very act of translating it into words" (Schwenger, 2001, p.105). So for Stein an innovative craftsperson in word construction, the study of language and of words, of how words sound, of sentences and of paragraphs and so on was central to much of her writing (see for instance Stein, 1930).

In her comment, "A noun is the name of the calling which they have made in their time as known (Stein, 1930, p. xxiii)", it is clear that Stein was very aware of the socially constructed and arbitrary nature of language "they have made in their time". For Stein, language had a social and historical context; and yet because of its context and history, language was not fixed or immutable. It is apparent from that snippet that Stein played with her own constructions in her time (of modernism) and did not write according to the generally agreed conventions of syntax and grammar. Stein was both a product of and contributor to the modernist temperament[15]. She was also a keen observer of her own times, writing of "the reality of the twentieth century…a time when everything cracks, where everything is destroyed, everything isolates itself (cited in Walker, 1984, p. 148). Thus for Stein the material reality of modernism was expressed through her word play and linguistic defiance. Her fractured grammar, discontinuous imagery and complex structures were a celebration of her liberation from the prison of narrative convention and an embracing of the creative potential made possible by the "destruction of everything".

This feature of Stein's writing that plays with language and exposes the fluidity of meaning that arises from the contextual basis of language, is one that offers great philosophical support for the adoption of the Cubist temperament in representation of organisational experience.

Cubism and Reality

Cubist Painting and Reality

While art historians such as Fry, (1966) and Rosenblum (1976) applauded the Cubists for their revolutionary challenges to Western aesthetic traditions, there is one fundamental artistic tradition not challenged by Cubism – and that is the necessity of the

[15] Despite her most Modernist credentials Berry (1992, p. 4) argues Stein was "decidedly postmodern".

image to represent some thing or object. As Jones (2004, no page number) notes, "...Picasso and Braque were not abstract painters, and Cubism claims not to be beautiful, but true". Many observers may have been aesthetically and visually challenged by the Cubist representations of objects, and yet those objects do have a material presence. It is this modernist commitment to the representation of a reality that shall now be discussed.

Cubism has been described as first and foremost an attempt by writers and artists to achieve a truer and more appropriate reality (see Frascina, 1993; Fry, 1966; Golding, 1988; Kamber, 1971; Kozloff, 1973; Lemaitre, 1945; Vargish & Mook, 1999). Contemporaries of, and artists amongst the Cubists, referred to an inner or essential reality (Apollinaire, 1914), a profound or true reality (Rivière, 1912), made distinctions between profound and superficial realisms (Gleizes & Metzinger (1912), the realism of conception (Leger, 1913), and art as a lie that makes us realise truth (Picasso, 1923).[16] On this issue of reality, Picasso commented, it appears with some exasperation, sixty years after his Cubist period;

> ... everyone talked about how much reality there was in Cubism. But they didn't really understand. It's not a reality you can take in your hand. It's more like a perfume – in front of you, behind you, to the sides. The scent is everywhere but you don't know where it comes from (cited in Kozloff, 1973, p. 61).

Reality is not what it seems. From the distance of more than half a century Picasso argued that he, and presumably the other Cubists, struggled to capture and to represent the multiple layers of reality; the perceived and visible reality, the conceptions of those visible realities and finally, the perception and conception of the non-visible, empirical realities (eg. perfume). While there may be argument about the success or failure of this representation of the essential smell of reality, it is nonetheless abundantly clear that Cubism was firmly grounded in the belief that art was connected to the object-world it sought to represent. More importantly, I shall argue that Cubism sought to represent that object-world with as great a link to reality as possible (Vargish & Mook, 1999).[17]

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[16] All citations of the contemporary critics and artists in this paragraph were drawn from excerpts of writing reprinted in Harrison and Wood (1995).

[17] Clark (1999) expressed his fierce disappointment at the failure of Cubism to transcend what he deemed to be the limitations of representation. He quoted extensively from correspondence between Picasso and Braque in which Picasso explained at some length the "inventory" (Clark's word) of items to be included in the *Nature Morte* (*Still Life*) he was working on at the time. The list of items included a glass, a lemon-squeezer, half a lemon and a little pot with drinking straws and the light (Clark, 1999, p. 183).

What is clear is that the Cubists' work did not lose their reference to reality. Their art was not mimetic but it was nonetheless grounded in reality. What proved to be revolutionary was their work with different ways of representing that reality. And it needs to be noted once more that Cubist paintings were presented not as a valid representation of a given reality, but as just one representation of that reality (Vargish & Mook, 1999). Kahnweiler (1915, p. 21) added to this point, "On the one hand, Picasso's new method made it possible to "represent" the form of objects and their position in space instead of attempting to imitate them through illusionistic means". Apparently, Picasso was irritated by illusionism and tried to limit his "realistic" intentions as much as possible (Bois, 1987).

Continuing this theme of a sense of visual cohesion, Bois (1987) wrote not of the concepts of conception or perception, but of Picasso's awareness derived from an African mask that art "aims at the creation of signs". Tracing the vocabulary of these signs, Bois (1987, p. 47) highlights the arbitrariness of the "vocabulary" of African art thus;

> The vocabulary is arbitrary, and in consequence, extends to infinity because the sculptural elements no longer have need of any direct resemblance to their referent. A cowry can represent an eye, but a nail can fill the same function...A cowry can represent an eye but also a navel or a mouth; therefore an eye is also a mouth or a navel.

Drawing parallels between the concepts of the arbitrariness of the sign formulated by de Saussure published in 1916, and the arbitrariness of the vocabulary of an African mask, Bois (1987) suggested Picasso played with the realisation of the value of the minimum sign. Just as a cowry could be an eye and a navel and a mouth, Picasso seized on the awareness that a mere handful of signs, "none referring univocally to a referent" (p. 53) had the potential to provide multiple significations. Thus a shape could be a mouth, or sometimes a nose, or the detail of a guitar. Bois (1987, p. 53) quotes Kahnweiler;

> The Cubist painters now meant to represent things by invented signs which would make them appear as a whole to the consciousness of the spectator, without his [sic] being able to identify the details of the sign with details of the objects "read".

In their individual detail, the signs have no significance – the meaning of the painting is only apparent in the reading of the whole, which must include space for the absent or the non-sign. Kahnweiler (cited in Bois, 1987, p. 41) wrote "The forms of

these tumblers, of these musical instruments, is no degree **described** [Kahnweiler's emphasis] in its continuity; continuity arises only in the creative imagination of the spectator." The audience is invited to create their own sense of the reality portrayed by the Cubists.

It has been suggested that an indication of the connection to reality is the fact a true Cubist painting contains as subject matter only those objects which might plausibly be seen together in one place (Fry, 1966). The Cubist portraits, still-lifes and the few landscapes all contain a logic and coherence consistent with their content.[18] Although Cubist paintings did not maintain the traditional visual and spatial logic of perspective, the landscapes included images of trees and houses, the still-lifes had an object congruency and the portraits portrayed people, invariably friends and business connections, either seated or standing. The Cubists did not abandon the object-world for abstraction.

It is not unreasonable at this juncture to ask a simple question. If it is generally agreed that Cubism was an art that sought to present a reality why is there any doubt that this may not be the case? This simple question can perhaps be answered with a very simple response. The reality is questioned because the paintings do not look like an immediately recognisable reality. For instance, Picasso's painting of a toreador, *The Aficiando* (1912) (Figure 5.6) does not look like a painting of a man, let alone a person who fights bulls. Braque's painting of *Le Portugais* (1911) (Figure 5.7), bears little resemblance to any man we may have seen. It does not look like it is real. We cannot place a real or a mental image of an object or subject beside some Cubist paintings and confirm the reality of the painted image. This inability to immediately recognise an empirical visual reality, may lead us to the view the painting has no links with a known or shared reality. But, look again. These paintings do not contain unknown images; there are clear images of people (or parts of people), of part objects, of elements of landscapes. The object whose image is represented in the painting may not be clearly identifiable, but it is clear the painting is an image of an object. It is steeped in reality. By moving beyond the boundaries of the experience of one-dimensional and static perception, the artist can conceive a representation that reveals as much of the complexity of the object as the audience can perceive.

[18] Although this was not the case with the Cubist writer Gertrude Stein. For example, *Shawl* from *Tender Buttons*, "A shawl is a hat and hurt and a red balloon and an undercoat and a sizer a sizer of talks". There is clearly very loose association between objects and meanings.

What then emerges from this doubt is considerable confusion about the apparent disconnection between the "reality" of the object being represented and the "reality" of how Cubists represented that object. It is at the intersection between what is in Cubism the two quite divergent "realities" that it is clear that both artist and audience must bring perception and conception to "read" the painting. It is also at this point the "reality" of the product needs to be considered; is the reality of the painting solely self-referential or does the painting make reference to external experience? Vargish and Mook (1999) suggest the portrayal of mundane objects in Cubist art not only served as a challenge to what was expected of bourgeois high art but indeed were selected because of their relative unimportance. It was because the items were so commonplace that viewers' attention were now on the painting-as-object itself. Citing an example of Picasso's *Portrait of Ambroise Vollard* (Figure 5.8), Vargish and Mook (1999) make the point that what was significant about the painting was not Ambroise Vollard, the art dealer and subject, but the way in which Picasso represents Vollard. Cubism turned the viewers' attention from what was being represented to how it was being represented.

Cubist Writing and Reality

Gertrude Stein, in an interview with one of her editors, Robert Haas (1976, p. 25) was to comment many years later (1946) of her representation of a tumbler (see Chapter 8);

> I used to take objects on a table, like a tumbler or any kind of object and try to get the picture of it clear and separate in my mind and create a word relationship between the word and things seen ... I try to call to the eye the way it appears by suggestion the way a painter can do it. This is difficult and takes a lot of work and concentration to do it. I want to indicate it without calling in other things... [the use of the word] "places" brings up a reality.

It is very clear from this quote that Stein believed she was representing reality. It is also clear, the concepts of conceptual and perceptual are relevant when identifying her sense of representation of reality. Unlike the Cubists artists who declined commentary on their work, Stein devoted considerable efforts to explain and analyse her intentions. What she makes very apparent is her intense involvement with the perceptual – the sense of concentrated study she invokes in her previous quote. And just as important as the portrayal of what she sees, is the necessity to create word

relationships and to discover "the suggestion". That is, what Stein brings to her writing is her conceptualisation of the object, in this case a tumbler, as well as the image itself.

Her portrayal of those objects may have been obscure, but they were nonetheless, efforts at representing the presence of the object. Indeed Stein argued her work was striving for "realism". Not surprisingly, in view of the parallels between Cubist painters and Gertrude Stein, the issue of Stein's "realism" has occasioned much debate amongst her many critics (see Berry, 1992; Chessman, 1989; Dubnick, 1984; Reid, 1958; Steiner, 1978; Walker, 1984). It is readily acknowledged that Stein's works during her Cubist period, including those that appeared to be "less representational" (Steiner, 1978), were premised from a desire to represent some reality.

Stein, at least during these Cubist years, was experimenting and working hard to find a linguistic form to give expression to her understanding of her immediate reality. In so doing, Stein "created a new method of representation" that shifted from her previous attempts at "unity and closure" to a style based on "fragmentation and disjunction" (Walker, 1984, p. 130). Stein's language, syntax, use of repetition (which she preferred to call "insistence"), grammatical structure of each of the sections was her attempt to subvert linguistic conventions and literary tradition (Berry, 1992). In *Tender Buttons*, Stein (1912, p. 468) fought the restrictions of the conventional narrative referring to the demands of linguistic logic as "A sentence of a vagueness that is violence is authority and a mission and stumbling and also certainly a prison." Stein railed against the traditional narrative, for she equated it with the patriarchal authority that controlled the language and the laws that govern the prison of convention (Berry, 1992). In particular, Stein sought to privilege the present, dispensing with the narrative conventions of beginning, middle or end. Rejecting the narrative, Stein commented, "...I wondered is there any way of making what I know come out as I know it, come out not as remembering. I found this very exciting." (Stein cited in Dubnick, 1984, p. 19).

This rejection of the narrative and the passage of time, has been described as a celebration by Stein of "the present materiality of all reality" (Knight, 1995, p. 88). The past was an abstraction, a memory; the future was also an abstraction of anticipation. By asserting the material reality of the present, Stein was rejecting the abstraction of the past and the future. Stein's reality, like those of her Cubist colleagues in the visual arts may have been difficult to read, but she nonetheless was committed to a representation of a reality.

Contribution of Cubism

Many art historians and critics (Antliff & Leighten, 2001; Berger, 1965; Chipp, 1968; Clark, 1999; Cottington, 1998; Hughes, 1989; Kozloff, 1973; Lemaitre, 1945; Read, 1986; Rosenblum, 1976), have argued that practically all later styles of twentieth century painting and sculpture can be defined through either their origins in Cubism or in opposition to it. Hughes (1989) describes this with interesting and characteristic poeticism, "Cubism…becomes the tree in the primal garden of modernism, and Picasso and Braque its Adam and Eve" (p. 93). One critic more prosaically, but no less expansively, has argued the critic-poets and the artists who sought to defend and explain Cubism, realised it challenged basic assumptions underlying the tradition of Western art (Chipp, 1968). Another, suggested Cubism contributed not only to literature and pictorial techniques, but it has also brought "a fresh general conception of the world – a new trend of thought – in short, a philosophy" (Lemaitre, 1945, p. 14). And finally, one writer ascribed to Cubism the following achievements;

> … [Cubism was] fundamental in fashioning in all the arts, a lexicon for Modernism that would represent and mediate the social life of the twentieth century. In film and theatre, in music and the written word, Cubism's insistence **on the role of representation in the production of reality** [my emphasis] has been a cardinal point of reference, indeed at times, of principle (Cottington, 1998, p. 75).

It was in the observation and representation of those realities that Cubists found and expressed those latent truths. During those heady years of early modernism, reality lost its certainty – dreams were no longer the narrative of the night but windows to our unconscious; time, space and memory were no longer the guardians of the present – or was it the future; with the advent of photography, painting was longer the medium to capture the moment of reality and truth and the material object was no longer a requisite model for an artists' creation. Modernist artists were freed from the impositions of the known truth and reality. The world and its artistic representation were on the brink of transformation. This sense of the modernist assault on what was known and certain has been expressed as follows;

> For a century that questioned the very concept of absolute truth or value, Cubism created an artistic language of intentional ambiguity. In front of a Cubist work of art, the spectator was to realize that no single interpretation of the fluctuating shapes, textures, spaces, and objects could be complete in itself. And,

> in expressing this awareness of the paradoxical nature of reality and the need for describing it in multiple and even contradictory ways, Cubism offered a visual equivalent of a fundamental aspect of twentieth century experience (Rosenblum, 1976, p. 14).

Some eighty years after the emergence of Cubism, the Museum of Modern Art (MOMA) in New York City mounted a major exhibition called *Picasso and Braque: Pioneering Cubism.* Despite the many years that audiences had to familiarise themselves with Cubism, in his review of the exhibition in the influential *Time* magazine, Hughes highlighted the difficulty many had "knowing" Cubist art and noted;

> Cubism has never gone soft: it remains, after 80 years, mysterious, challenging and resistant...it is difficult, subtle, cerebral and on the whole, quite unspectacular art (1989, p. 93).

Quite unspectacular art. An art that is said repeatedly to have changed Western art. An art that has been said to revolutionise art. An art that has challenged traditions accepted since the Renaissance. But an art that is unspectacular. That a spectacular art is unspectacular is spectacular.

In challenging a tradition of mimetic representation, Cubism was considered a difficult art to see, to read or to understand. Kahnweiler remembered "groups of people writhing with laughter or howling with rage" (cited in Poggi, 1992b, p. 126), when confronted by early Cubist paintings. With no desire to expose his painters to laughter or anger, Kahnweiler stopped showing Cubist pictures publicly. Ozenfant (1952) who was variously a contemporary of the Cubists, a painter, a critic and a writer noted some forty years after the arrival of Cubism on the art scene in Paris;

> You remember how the public sniffed and snorted in those days: "You call that painting! But it doesn't look like anything." Accustomed to judge painting by what it imitated, the public vociferated or split its sides, in front of canvases in which it could recognise nothing...Because painting is a representational art and descriptive, the public expects to have representation and description handed to it (p. 73).

Cubism has been lambasted by some, for its incomprehensibility of imagery. Others have expressed disappointment about the subject matter portrayed in the many Cubist paintings. As Ozenfant commented on Cubist paintings, "They have left out woman! ...no more slices of life, or women intriguingly unveiled, or breasts bursting with sap like ripe fruits" (1952, p. 82). It has been suggested by many art critics (eg. Ettinger, 1996; Schwartz, 1989), that the great subjects for Picasso in his prolific and

long career were sex, aggression and conquest. Yet women, passion, aggression, tension are so remarkably absent that Cubism, which relied on the traditional and inoffensive such as still-life and portraits (Crowther, 1993; Klawana, 1994), has been called art without tension (Golding 1994; Hughes, 1989).

Cubism is an art without sentiment. It is unspectacular art. Its content is in the main, not controversial. Its subject matter is often commonplace and banal. Indeed much of the inspiration of subjects was drawn from the artists' daily lives – unspectacular, without nobility and common. What has challenged viewers since it first appeared in Salons in Paris and later in other European cities has not been the content but the presentation of that content. It is the visual that is shocking – the colour (or lack of), the shape, the form, and the attempts at representation.

It is Cubism's insistence on finding suitable means to represent the taken-for-granted-reality that resonates with my quest in this thesis. And although reality may be taken-for-granted, it is nonetheless worthy of further examination and clarification. Not least because so much of the appeal of Cubism lies in the raw and at times, unsuccessful efforts to represent what they considered to be, the most real of realities.

Concluding Comments

First and foremost, Cubist images whether painted on canvas or in print, were at all times grounded in a desire to represent a reality experienced by the artist. Cubist images, whether visual or literary are often very difficult to 'read'. Observers and readers alike are required to engage in a relationship with the piece of art or a passage of prose, to study and to seek to find one's own meaning of the work (Berry, 1992; Steiner, 1978). The truth of the image is opaque and uncertain and not fixed either in time or space. Cubism, no matter the medium, was an art of movement (Schwenger, 2001). The visual images were fragmented and the picture fractured. The language of Cubism was similarly fragmented and fractured. Each provided a form of representation of an uncertain, unknown and at times, unseen material world.

The emphasis in Cubism was not on the subject independent of representation but on the representation of the subject. Vargish and Mook (1999, p. 83) wrote;

> Cubist paintings say 'This is what I observe and I have observed about this visual reality. I offer it to you as an observation'. Cubist paintings are improvisations on the representations of visual reality, on what we take to be space and the relation of objects to space. The mediation, the observation and

representation of the visual reality, has become the primary subject of the painting.

What was important then for the Cubists was not the mimetic demands of realism, but the necessity to share with their audience a visual portrayal of their cognitive and sensual processes. A Cubist painting could not be read by a viewer as "Oh, this is a recognisable portrayal of a man with a guitar" but instead, "I can begin to understand how Pablo Picasso might observe, think and feel about a man playing a guitar. I can observe the process of how they the artists saw and understood the object." In other words, the audience is invited to develop some understanding of the conceptual process of the artist in addition to what is understood by the perceptual senses. From this perspective the reality of reality has minimal importance. What indeed now assume greater significance, is the observation and the representation of the reality. Not just for the painter but for the audience. For with Cubism, the audience must engage with not only the representation of the object but give attention to how that reality has been observed – both by the artist and by themselves, the viewer.

It is argued throughout this chapter that the Cubist intent to represent conception and not perception, shares a philosophical connection with what I have termed ontological plausibility and epistemological contingency. For Cubism, reality is not fixed but recognisable, and what is known, is dependent on context. With its fractured lines and fragmented imagery (Judkins, 1976); playful puns (Rosenblum, 1973; Roskill, 1985); rejection of a fixed and mono-perspective and the use of multiple perspectives (Gamwell, 1980); a self-conscious reflexivity (Baker, 1997) and a non-mimetic approach to representing their conception of reality, Cubism exemplifies the uncertainty, discontinuity and subjectivity of modernism. With a representational style that is remarkably resonant with what is considered to be postmodern (Baker, 1997; Stanford Friedman, 2001), Cubism is presented as a possible guide for the representation of organisational studies.

This chapter began with assertion that Cubism was an art of modernism, and this has been demonstrated to be the case. Modernism played with elements of reality, and yet, in its aesthetics, literary and visual Cubism shattered the certainty and complacency of realism. Their imagery was disjointed, fractured and not fixed; the reality that was expressed was one mediated by the social experience of the writer or the painter. The reflexivity of their work challenged the fixed mono-dimensions of the known world. Their work expressed and contributed to the turn of modernity in which all that had

been known was now challenged and overturned. Change was constant and constancy had changed.

In summary, the Cubists believed traditions that revered mono-dimensional perspectives fixed in time and space were an untruth. Their discontent with the untruths inspired them to capture a reality they knew as well as could see. The Cubists developed techniques they believed represented a reality and its truths. Surfaces were fractured, planes were fragmented and distorted and colours were stripped. Part-bodies and part-objects were distinct and uncertain. Ambiguous shapes could be read. Blank canvases were to be understood. Cubist art was based on a reality that was known, observed and represented. With their emphasis on representation of the reality, the painting or the prose assumed a significance to rival that of the reality – the subject – itself. Cubism was an art in which the audience was integral to the dynamic partnership committed to exploring the experience of reality represented by and in the visual and literary form.

The chapter was developed to address the research question that asked if Cubism could serve as the theoretical and stylistic frame for the representation of organisational experience. To work in this way precludes any possibility of certainty or fixed point or single (correct) reading. In order to stimulate the creative dialogue between the creator, the audience and the piece of work, the representation must be fluid, contingent and relative. The creation and reading of a Cubist piece of work is thus inherently complex because of the fluidity of its essence.

And yet, because of this essential uncertainty, Cubism is an art that invokes not just ambiguity but indeed simultaneity. For ambiguity is premised on the assumption of a correct reading that may or may not be apparent. Contrary to Rosenblum's (1976) statement that Cubism was an art of intentional ambiguity (see page 100), I consider the notion of a deterministic and privileged knowledge, to be inconsistent with the principles of Cubism. In contrast, simultaneity, embraces the possibility of holding multiple experiences and knowledges to inform the creation and reading of Cubist works. This acknowledgement of limitless experience and readings made possible by simultaneity serves as a defining element of Cubist work. What is also apparent in Cubism is the absence of privilege in the dynamic between audience and artist (visual or literary) - both artist and audience partners in the creative flux of knowingness. The audience must engage with the work without judgement and without the desire to "solve the puzzle (of the text or painting)".

It is its features that are complex, that demands the provision of multiple perspectives, that seeks to create a dialogue between the author and the reader, that

requires a reflexivity that eschews the privileging of the author, that seeks to represent a conceived, not necessarily perceived reality and that creates a complex and uncertain picture that qualify Cubism to be a theoretical and stylistic frame for the representation of organisational experience.

This chapter does not end consideration of research questions 2 and 3 that question the suitability of Cubism for the representation of organisational complexity. Each will be returned to in Chapters 8 and 10, for detail on the specific contributions of synthetic and analytic Cubism to organisational representation.

Before proceeding with the representation itself, attention needs however to be turned to the research approach and methodology that was used to collect the data to be represented. In order to place the methodology of the research into some situational context, an intervening chapter has been included to provide background details relevant to the case-study itself. In the following chapter, the story of local government reform is told.

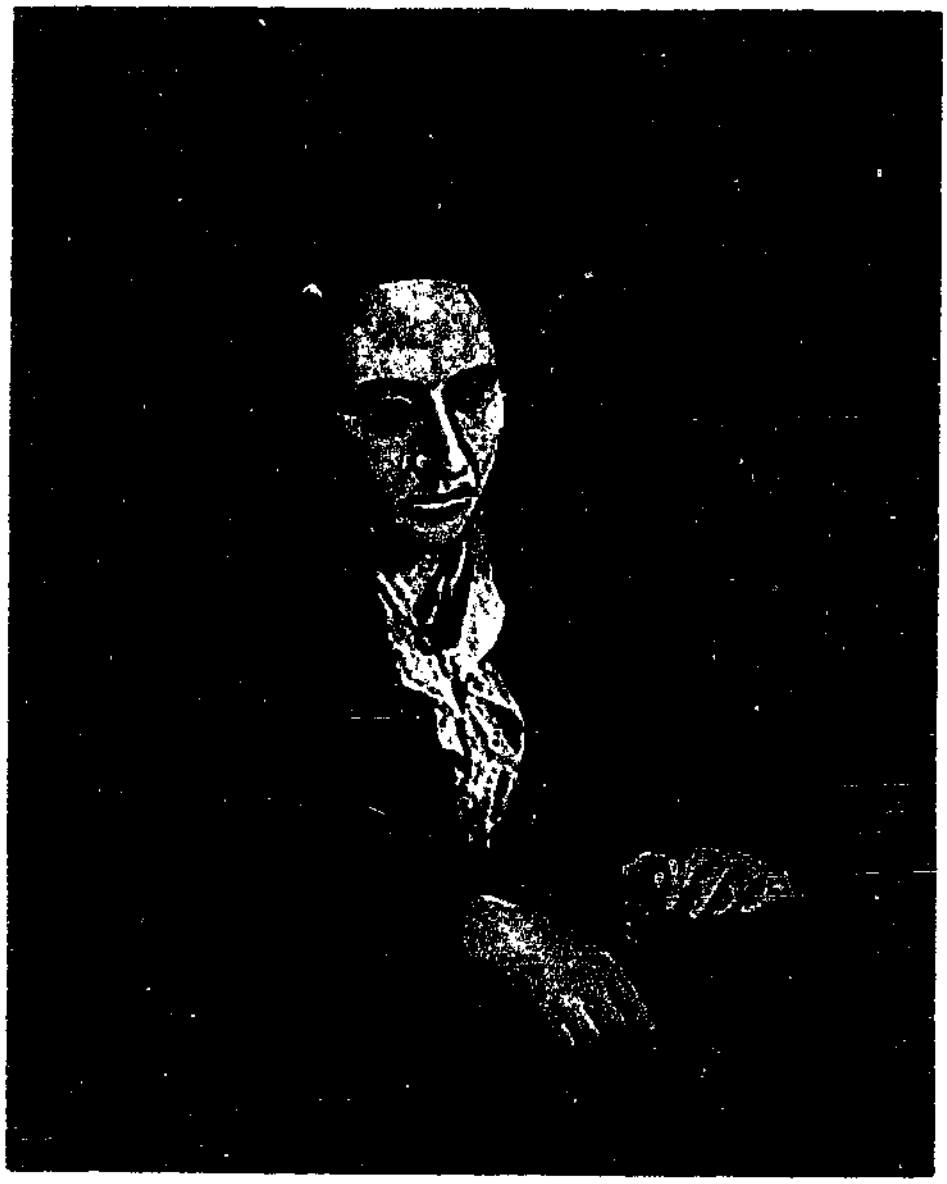

Figure 5.1
Pablo Picasso, *Portrait of Miss Gertrude Stein* (1906).
Oil on canvas, 100 x 81.3 cm, Metropolitan Museum of Modern Art

Figure 5. 2
Pablo Picasso, *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon*, 1907,
Oil on Canvas, 244 x 237cm, Museum of Modern Art, New York

Figure 5.3
Pablo Picasso. *Ma Jolie* (Woman with a Zither/ Woman with a Guitar), 1911-1912, Oil on canvas, 100 x 65 cm, The Museum of Modern Art, New York

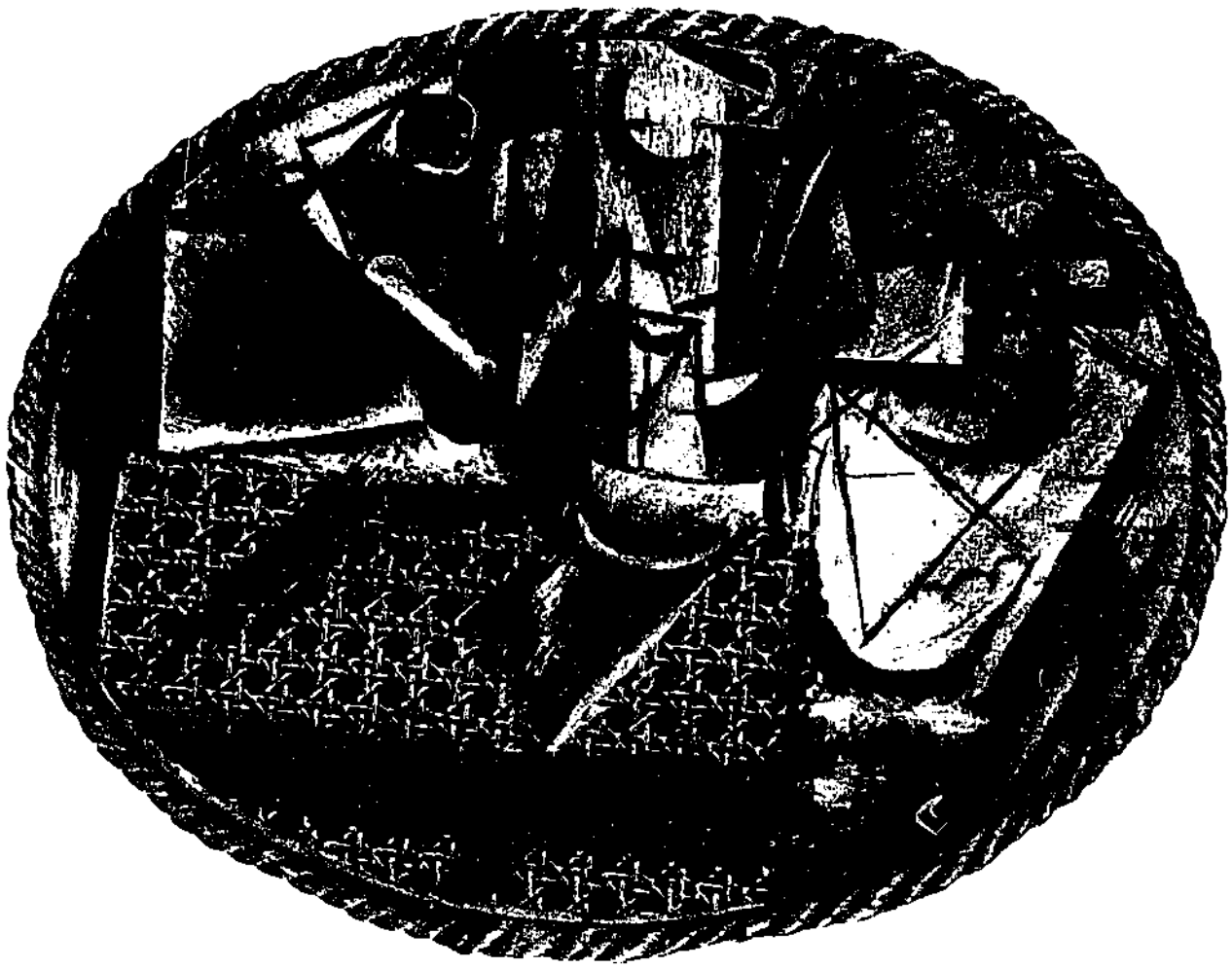

Figure 5.4
Pablo Picasso, *Still Life with Chair Caning*, 1912,
Oil and pasted oil-cloth, framed with cord, 29 x 37cm, Musée Picasso, Paris

Figure 5.5
Pablo Picasso. *The Violin*, 1912,
Papier collé, 66 x 51 cm. Philadelphia Museum of Art

Figure 5.6
Pablo Picasso, *L'Aficianado (Le Torero)*, 1912,
Oil on Canvas, 135 x 82 cm, Kunstmuseum, Basel

Figure 5.7
Georges Braque, *Le Portugais*, 1911-1912,
Oil on Canvas, 117 x 81cm, Kunstmuseum, Basel

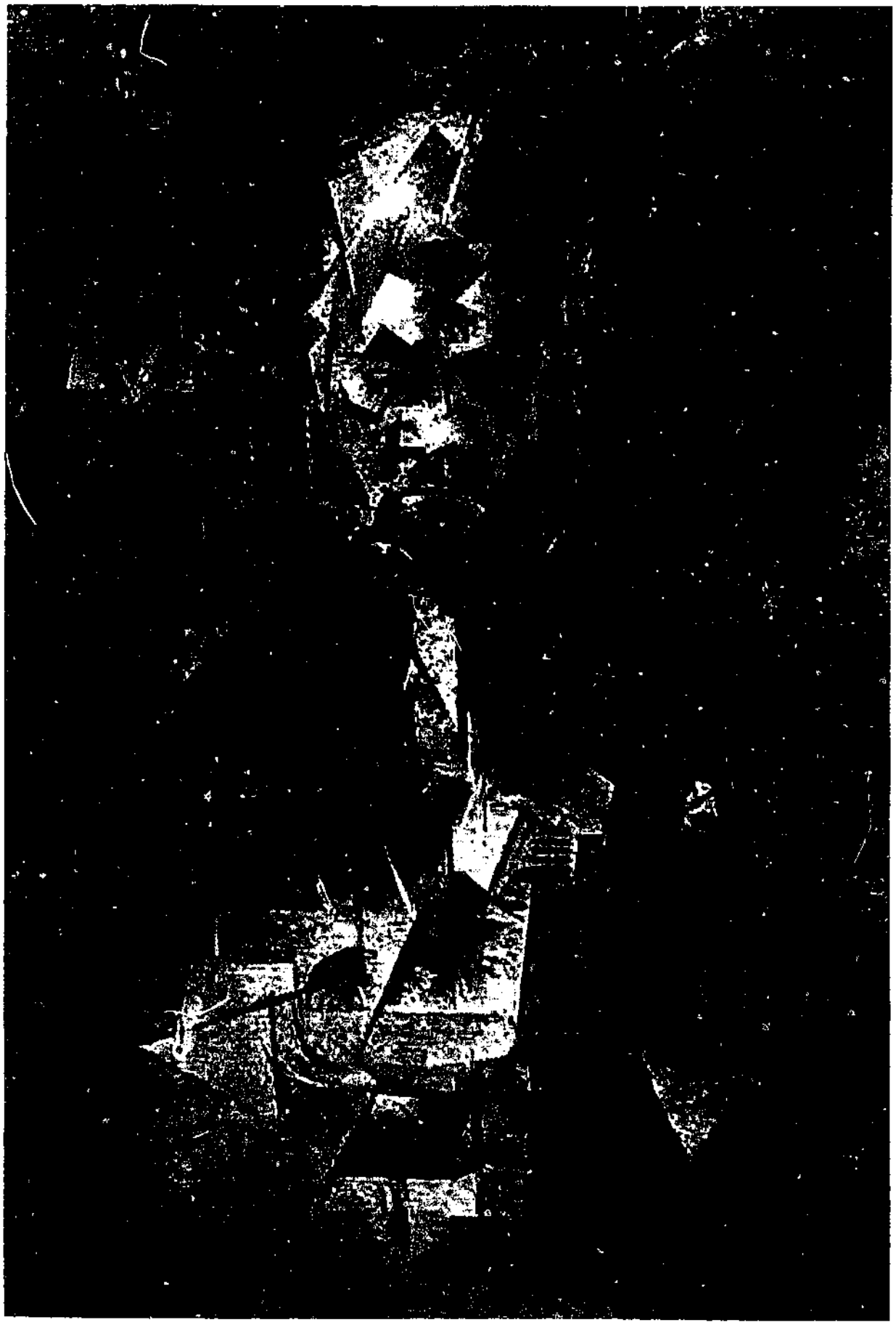

Figure 5.8
Pablo Picasso, *Portrait of Ambrose Vollard*, 1910,
Oil on Canvas, 92 x 65cm, Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow

Exhibit 5.1 Gertrude Stein, *Picasso* (1912). Reprinted in Van Vechten (1946, pp.293-295).

PICASSO

One whom some were certainly following was one who was completely charming. One whom some were certainly following was one who was charming. One whom some were following was one who was completely charming. One whom some were following was one who was completely charming.

Some were certainly following and were certain that the one they were following was one working and was one bringing out of himself then something. Some were certainly following and were certain that the one they were then following was one bringing out of himself then something that was coming to be a heavy thing, a solid thing and a complete thing.

One whom some were certainly following was one working and certainly was one bringing something out of himself then and was one who had been all his living had been one having something coming out of him.

Something had been coming out of him, certainly it had been coming out of him, certainly it was something, certainly it had been coming out of him and it had meaning, a charming meaning, a solid meaning, a struggling meaning, a clear meaning.

One whom some were certainly following and some were certainly following him, one whom some were certainly following was one certainly working.

One whom some were certainly following was one having something coming out of him something having meaning and this one was certainly working then.

This one was working and something was coming then, something was coming out of this one then. This one was one and always there was something coming out of this one and always there had been something coming out of this one. This one had never been one not having something coming out of this one. This one was one having something coming out of this one. This one had been one whom some were following. This one was one whom some were following. This one was being one whom some were following. This one was one who was working.

This one was one who was working. This one was one being one having something being coming out of him. This one was one going on having something come out of him. This one was one going on working. This one was one whom some were following. This one was one who was working.

This one always had something being coming out of this one. This one was working. This one always had been working. This one was always having something that was coming out of this one that was a solid thing, a charming thing, a lovely thing, a perplexing thing, a disconcerting thing, a simple thing, a clear thing, a complicated thing, an interesting thing, a disturbing thing, repellant thing, a very pretty thing. This one was one certainly being one having something coming out of him. This one was one whom some were following. This one was one who was working.

This one was one who was working and certainly this one was needing to be working so as to be one being working. This one was one having something coming out of him. This one would be one all his living having something coming out of him. This one was working and then this one was working and this one was needing to be working, not to be one having something coming out of him something having meaning, but was needing to be working so as to be one working.

This one was certainly working and working was something this one was certain this one would be doing and this one was doing that thing, this one was working. This one was not one completely working. This one was not ever completely working. This one certainly was not completely working.

This one was one having always something being coming out of him, something having completely a real meaning. This one was one whom some were following. This one was one who was working. This one was one who was working and he was one needing this thing needing to be working so as to be one having some way of being one having some way of workin. This one was one who was working. This one was one having something coming out of him something having meaning. This one was one always having something come out of him and this thing the thing coming out of him always had real meaning. This one was one who was working. This one was one who was almost always working. This one was not one completely working. This one was one not ever completely working. This one was not one working to have anything come out of him. This one did have something having meaning that did come out of him. He always did have something come out of him. He was working, he was not ever completely working. He did have some following. They were always following him. Some were certainly following him. He was one who was working. He was one having something coming out of him something having meaning. He was not ever completely working.

CHAPTER 6

THE REFORM OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Purpose

The purpose of this chapter is to provide details on the political and social background to the reform of local government that occurred in Victoria during the mid 1990s. To do this requires reference to the material on new managerialism, and the process of corporatisation that swept through all tiers of government, overseas and interstate as well as within Victoria. It is apparent that the agenda of change that served as the backdrop to the process of amalgamation and the basis of this case-study, was implemented with speed and tenacity in Victoria. Moreover, this case-study is also indicative of the trend throughout many Western nations for greater private sector access to the provision of local government services and the creation of larger governance units to manage local government activity (Galligan, 1998).

Background to Local Government

Local government in Australia, the third tier of government, is the site of local and community level of participation and representation (Purdie, 1976; Thornton, 1995), and is admired for its small scale and intimacy and for being close to the people (Dunstan, 1998). Because of its proximity to its constituency, local government has long been considered to have a significant role in the shaping of communities that are "civil, equitable, culturally sensitive, environmentally sustainable and democratic" (Kiss, 1999, p. 110). Described however by Finn (in Aulich, 1999a), as the Cinderella of public administration, it has no formal independent existence and with powers defined by state governments, is "the creature of state government" (Stilwell & Troy, 2000, p. 919). Stilwell and Troy (2000) also note that without formal constitutional status, state governments have removed powers and responsibilities from local government, suspended or dismissed elected representatives and officials and changed local government boundaries. Examples of these kinds of activities by the ruling state government will receive mention in the case-study. Marginalised and considered a relatively minor player in national politics, local government is also underrepresented as

a research domain (Aulich, 1999a). Responsible for such property-related services as "public works, drainage, town planning and regulation, sanitary services, open space recreation, fire protection etc" (Pullen, 1978), local government activities have been trivialised in Australia as the three R's - roads, rates and rubbish (Goldberg, 1994; Purdon & Graham, 1992). Although a relatively small player in terms of government expenditure, it nonetheless has responsibility for more than a quarter of the public sector capital formation, including roads, water distribution and sewage (Aulich, 1999b). Reflecting changes in government policy in Australia, and broad movements in local government overseas, this emphasis on property issues shifted from the early 1970s (Jones 1981, 1989; Purdie, 1976; Purdon, 1992). From that time forward, local government began to encourage community pride and participation (Hunt, 1998), and became more active providers of such human-related services as health, welfare, community development and recreation (Haratsis, 1992; Jones, 1989; Morris, 1985; Thornton, 1995).

Yet, despite its active role in Australian democratic and political life, widespread concern about poor management practice, perceived lack of accountability and irregular auditing procedures (Aulich, 1999a; Hallam, 1998; Jones, 1981), contributed to the poor reputation of local government in the community. A report commissioned by the Local Government Commission in 1985, noted that of the 210 Victorian municipalities, close to a half spent over 40% of their rate revenue on administration costs. This situation did not seem to improve and in 1993 it was revealed that for most councils, well over 30% of rate revenue was still being spent on general administration costs (*The Age* editorial, 1993). Changing demographics and unchanging internal and external boundaries had led to wide disparities in the number of voters in the ridings or wards of most Victorian municipalities (Jones, 1981; Morris, 1986, 1998; Purdie, 1976), which clearly undermined the basic democratic principle of each person's vote having equal value. Local government was perceived in Victoria as "structurally flawed and overdue for reform." (Dunstan, 1998, p. 3).

New Managerialism

In Australia during the 1980s, all tiers of government, including local government adopted an ideology of public sector reform known as corporate management or the 'new managerialism' (Gardner & Palmer, 1992; Gerritsen, 1998; Van Gramberg & Teicher, 2000). Subsequently popularised as microeconomic reforms

of economic rationalism, this ideology represented ideas drawn from market economics and corporate management (Carroll & Manne, 1992; Crooks, 1996). The espoused objective of the reform was to create more flexible organisations able to respond with greater efficiency and effectiveness (Dunphy & Stace, 1990; Paterson, 1983).

Despite the pervasiveness of these reform programs typified as 'small government', there were other currents of social reform that prevailed within the public sector simultaneously, and at times, in contradiction to the economic rationalist ideology (Aulich, 1999a; Gardner & Palmer, 1992). These included such matters as equity and social justice programs - both within the public service as well as the ideology that underpinned the rhetoric of the public provision of services (Hawke & Howe, 1992; Purdon & Graham, 1992; Sawer, 1989; Wilenski, 1986). Aulich (1999a) suggested that the presence of such divergent positions, which he differentiated as the "local democracy" and "structural efficiency" models (p. 18) created, not surprisingly, significant tension within systems of local government in Australia. Johnstone (1997) suggested a similar position, when he highlighted not only the tensions that would exist between microeconomic reform and social objectives, but that local government was given no indication of how these conflicts may be reconciled.

Economic Rationalism

In October 1992, state elections were held in Victoria. The long-term Labor government was substantially defeated by the conservative party, known as either the Liberals, or the Coalition (of the Liberal and its smaller partner, the National party). With the election of a conservative State government that had an overwhelming majority in both houses of parliament, the ideology of economic rationalism (or structural efficiency), prevailed over justice and equity and or local democracy (Aulich, 1999a; Galligan, 1998; Gerritsen, 1998). With this new government;

> under the rubric of new public management, private sector management practices, underpinned by human resource management (HRM) concepts, and a focus on entrepreneurship, efficiency and quality are imported into the public sector [including local government] (Van Gramberg & Teicher (2000, p. 477).

The new state government embarked on a substantial program of change across the entire public sector, at state and local government level. Government agencies were corporatised, and their services contracted out, privatised and/or commercialised (Brown, Ryan & Parker, 2000). Later analyses of the changes introduced to local

government at that time, included such uncharacteristic hyperbole as a "revolution", a "massive re-engineering", "radical restructuring" and the less emotive, "reform" (Blacher, 1998; Galligan, 1998; Gerritsen, 1998; Hallam, 1998). One commentator, in his estimate of the impact of these reforms was to note with uncharacteristic candour;

> To say that the Victorian state government has been relentless in its reform of local government would be an understatement as the combined effect of council amalgamations, euphemistically called restructuring, the requirement to make specific percentages of council operating budgets subject to competitive tendering, and the impost of a rate cut and subsequent rate capping has in some cases dealt a body blow to local governance that sees many councils struggling to recover (Martin, 1999, p. 26).

These reforms were modelled on those of local government implemented by the Major and Thatcher conservative governments in the 1980s in the United Kingdom, and were possibly influenced by similar reforms in New Zealand in 1989 (Gerritsen, 1998; Webber & Ernst, 1997). The changes included simultaneous government-controlled process of council amalgamations, the replacement of elected representatives by government-appointed commissioners for a period of twelve months that was then extended a further eighteen months, a staged program of compulsory competitive tendering (CCT) in which fifty percent of all council activities was to be subject to market competition (referred to in the lexicon of local government as contestability (Ernst, 1994), and the reduction of local government rates (taxes) by twenty per cent to be frozen for five years.

Consistent with the ideology of new managerialism and economic rationalism, the new credo for local government became efficiency, effectiveness and accountability (Neales, 1994; Gerritsen, 1998). It is clear these reforms were more than just to establish financial restructuring. On the contrary, it has been suggested (Aulich, 1999b), the reforms were designed to alter the core values of local government organisations which were previously based on concepts of equity, social justice and community, to values of individualism, freedom and property rights manifest in the establishment of a competitive free market economy (Ernst & Webber, 1997).

The Process of Amalgamation[19]

Under the previous state Labor government, attempts had been made in the mid 1980s to initiate reforms around boundary restructures and resource sharing in local government. The then Leader of the Opposition, Mr Jeff Kennett, who was subsequently elected the state Premier in the coalition government, stated in 1986, "We in the Liberal Party will ensure that any enforced amalgamations will be stopped" (cited in Morris, 1998, p. 31). John Cain, the State Labor Premier, faced with significant opposition within his own party and the community, abandoned his efforts at reform, announcing changes would only be made by agreement between affected councils (Morris, 1998). No further attempts at reform of local government were made by Labor.

Some six months after the election in October 1992, Kennett, the state Premier introduced legislation, without consultation, to commence a program of amalgamations in local government. This legislative initiative took the community by surprise, not least because of the expressed opposition of the Liberal Party to local government amalgamations just a few years earlier. Additionally, local government reform had not been a strong component of the Coalition's pre-election program, nor was there a widespread or general movement pushing for such reforms (Aulich, 1999a). Indeed, the coalition's Local Government Policy (Hallam, 1992), described as "low-key" by Kiss (1999, p. 111), made little mention of their intentions on boundary change, suggesting a preference for boundary change only when "driven by the community". One commentator (Kiss, 1999), indicated he believed the reforms implemented after the election, "bore only superficial resemblance to the policy platform" (p. 112). Yet another commented on "the veil of secrecy" (Willliamson, 2000, p. 7) that surrounded the reform agenda for local government.

Although the coalition's policy may not have been forthcoming about their future intentions with local government, Yehudi Blacher (1998), commenting as the Director of the Office of Local Government for the Coalition government, noted that extensive discussions had been held prior to the election, by the coalition parties with the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) the peak body that represented councils[20]. Although Blacher (1998, p.156) states that "elements of the program[21] had been the

[19] For the timeline on amalgamations, see Appendix D

[20] Local government organisations in Australia are known as municipalities, councils, shires and, to a lesser extent, boroughs. The terms appear to be used interchangeably in literature on local government.

[21] The elements of compulsory competitive tendering were made very clear; perhaps the element of amalgamations was less so.

subject of discussions", he nonetheless continues "it was therefore surprising to observe just how unprepared local government and its spokespeople were for what was to come". Thus, despite Blacher's suggestion the peak body for local government should have been aware of what to expect after the election, there is also the possibility that the intentions of the coalition were not made as explicit as he suggested.

Despite the introduction of this legislation without warning, councils were publicly "attacked [for] resisting the Government's changes" by one minister (*The Age*, 8 December, 1993, p. 5); cautioned by the Minister for Local Government, that if they did not comply with the reform program the Government would adopt "a more rigorous and regulatory approach" (*The Age*, 10 February, 1994, p. 2); and warned by the Premier, that it would be against their interests to oppose the mergers (*The Age*, 9 December, 1993, p.1). True to their word, early in the process of state-wide amalgamations, a recalcitrant council was sacked and the elected councillors replaced by commissioners.[22] The Chairman [sic] of the Local Government Board was quoted as saying at that time, those councils who entered the municipal review [and they had no choice], who thought they would come out the same were "narrow-minded and silly" (*The Age*, 29 January, 1994, p. 5). She then went on to applaud those councils who had decided to amalgamate, by describing them as having clearly shown leadership and a clear vision.

This then, was the environment that was created in which the reform of local government was introduced. Previous attempts at reform by a Labor government had failed. The coalition parties, while in opposition had opposed forced amalgamations and had developed a policy that stated, "municipalities should be given the autonomy they need to carry out their functions efficiently and effectively, in conjunction with measures to ensure accountability to the local community (*News Release*, September, 1992, p. 1). Since the election, no consultation had occurred with local government councils or their representative body and no effort was expended to convince the councils of the need to shift in the direction they sought (Galligan, 1998).

In August 1993, the Local Government Board (LGB) was established with the brief to account for the "social, economic and technological change and propose a new framework for local government in Victoria which better reflected the needs of local communities in the late twentieth century and beyond" (Burke & Walsh, 1998, p. 72).

[22] Although generally recognised as a sacking, the Premier provided another perspective. "We haven't sacked them," Mr Kennett said. "What we have done is, in fact, move the City of Melbourne into a position to bring together all the assets under a new administration to position it for the 21st century." (*The Age*, 29 September, 1993, p. 1).

All local government services were to be reviewed against "the criteria of improving efficiency and effectiveness" (Mr Roger Hallam, Minister for Local Government quoted in *The Age,* 10 June, 1993, p.16). The underpinning ideology was that of small government. The politicised nature of the LGB is perhaps exemplified by the Chairman [sic] of the Local Government Board who argued, "I think they [governments] interfere enough in your life; the fact they take your money is bad enough." (*The Age,* 4 October, 1993, p. 7).

Following a process of review, seventy five councils were created to replace the 202 councils reviewed by the Board with only eight local government areas not covered by this review process (Burke & Walsh, 1998). Of these eight, the government had made the decisions to create the Greater City of Geelong and the City of Melbourne prior to the establishment of the Board, and one council, the Borough of Queenscliffe, was not reviewed by the Board.[23] In the state of Victoria, with a population of between three to four million people during the years 1993-1995, the number of local government councils was reduced from 210 councils to 78.

Although the government denied the presence of a "master map" (Hallam, 1998, p. 103), the final number of 78 councils was very close to the "about eighty" estimate repeated often by the Premier during the amalgamation process. The government maintained that the recommendations of the Local Government Board were developed independently from the interests of the Minister and the Government (see Blacher, 1998). Despite this insistence on the separation of the Board from the government a later commentator was to refer to the amalgamations process as a "State government coup" and a "centrally directed *fait accompli*" (Gerritsen, 1998, p. 227).

Amalgamation and Bass Coast Shire Council

The local government amalgamation that serves as the basis of this research was therefore not an isolated merger, but just one small component of the extensive package of local government reform. Initially it was the larger country regions that were reviewed and amalgamated, then the city councils, then the rural areas and so on (see Appendix D for the timeline of state-wide amalgamations). This process occurred over a period of three years from 1993 until 1995.

[23] Because of the support the citizens of Queenscliff had shown for their council, the Borough of Queenscliffe was the only local government council to escape involvement in the amalgamation process. This, according to the Director of the Office of Local Government at that time, "lulled many other small councils into a false sense of security' (Blacher, 1998, p. 158).

The timetable for the review process involved notable speed (see Blacher, 1998[24]). Using the Gippsland review of which Bass Coast Shire, the case-study of amalgamation, was involved as an example, the Local Government Board was asked to review the twenty-four councils of the Gippsland region on 29 July, 1994. Submissions were to be received within a month and meetings were held by the Board with the Councils in August. The interim report was released on 10 October. In that report, it was recommended that the Borough of Wonthaggi, the Shire of Bass, the Shire of Phillip Island and small parts of the Shires of Woorayl and Korumburra be formed as the Bass Coast Shire Council. Following a further fourteen-day period for submissions and comments on that report, the final report was released at the end of November, 1994 (Local Government Board, 1994). Six new councils in Gippsland region were formed, including Bass Coast Shire Council, formed from the previous councils recommended in the interim report. The Commissioners for each of the new Councils were sworn in at the beginning of December. Bass Coast Shire Council was announced on 2 December, 1994.

Concluding Comments

This then is the background to the formation of the new Bass Coast Shire Council; just one of many amalgamations that were implemented across the state of Victoria during 1993 to 1995 as a major plank in the platform of local government reform. Driven by the ideology of economic rationalism, the Victorian state government imposed on local government organisations demands for greater efficiency, effectiveness and accountability. Adopting principles of new managerialism, the efficiencies were to be gained by the creation of larger enterprises and the introduction of the practises and cultures of the private sector. It was apparent that the state government expected substantial changes in the conduct of local government.

Intrigued by the apparent shift in core values from social justice and equity to efficiency, effectiveness and accountability, as well as the demands for corporate "professionalism" from local government, I embarked on this project to research organisational and employee responses to the substantial organisational change

[24] Blacher (1998, p. 161) was very clear about the speed of the process, indicating the government "was determined...to move at a pace just a little faster than what seemed 'reasonable' at the time". He added with remarkable candour, "It was also critical that the reform program was about a revamp of both the structure and operations of local government so that there was no single target which could be focused on by the opponents of change" (Blacher, 1998, p.161).

program. The methodological issues of that project will now be addressed in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 7

METHODOLOGY

Purpose

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss in detail the selection of the research approach, the decisions made about data sources and the subsequent data analysis. With the requirements of a Cubist representation to serve as a guide, this present chapter has a number of aims. First, it will identify the aim of the empirical research and will detail the research questions. The chapter will then address some of the assumptions that underpin the selection of the research approaches used to address those research questions. The third aim is to detail and discuss the research tools used to generate the research data; the fourth aim is to explain how the data are analysed. The fifth and final aim is to offer the ethical framework of this research.

Research Aims and Questions

As was made explicit in Chapter 1, this thesis has developed from two quite distinct, but parallel phases of the project that have coalesced into this final presentation. The first phase, the subject of discussion in this chapter, was the conduct of research on organisational change. From that data, the next phase developed to introduce a form of representation that could do justice to the complexity of the experience of organisations. In the discussion that follows on the methodology that was adopted in the first phase of the research project, occasional reference will also be made to the shift in focus from researching organisational change to representing organisational change.

The title of this research topic "A case-study of the experience of organisational change: council amalgamation in regional Victoria" provides a clear indication of the focus of the study. As detailed in the previous chapter, Bass Coast Shire Council the subject of the case-study, had been created as a result of a major overhaul of local government in Victoria. Designing the research approach for in-depth exploration and description, the research questions were developed from the literature review conducted during the initial stages of the research process. The focus of the review and the subsequent development of the questions were initially on the experience of organisational change within a single organisation.

The topic I selected to research, although ostensibly about organisational change, was to be focussed not on what necessarily occurred prior to, during and as a consequence of the change, but on the employees' and organisations' responses to those changes. Because the change that was to be researched involved the amalgamation of three organisations and a part of two others, what was also of interest was to investigate if there was any variation in responses of the employees from the different organisations. The literature review had suggested the experience of the change can be expressed in many different ways depending on the audience to whom the experience is being reported; the research therefore also aimed to establish if there was indeed any difference in the reporting of the change. In summary, at that stage, the research questions were developed to ensure whatever differences based on previous council, potential audience or position in organisational hierarchy could be expressed and identified.

With these research aims as the background, the following research questions were developed;

Research question 4. *What was the experience of organisational change for the organisations and employees involved in the amalgamation process that formed Bass Coast Shire Council?*

Research question 5. *What were the responses of the employees and the organisation of the different amalgamating councils to the process of amalgamation?*

The multiplicity of perspectives of the participants in the change program emerged, as I researched these questions. Challenged by the complexity of the organisational experiences, it was later, following the literature review of organisational complexity and Cubism, that the representational issues changed the direction of this project. The narrative of the research methodology in this chapter does, however, trace the research approach in the process of data collection and subsequent efforts to offer analysis of that data.

Qualitative Research

The intent of this thesis is to argue the case for a particular representational style rather than test or develop organisational theory. While this may appear to represent a clear shift in the direction of this project, at the time the research questions were

formulated, the research aims met the criteria of Miller and Crabtree's (1999a) exploratory research that sought to identify and describe particular organisational phenomena (Silverman, 1993). As is immediately evident from the tenor of the research questions, the emphasis was on understanding and analysing the organisational members' perspectives of their experience of organisational change. With this as the major research direction, a decision needed to be made about the research methodology to be adopted.

As Aita and McIlvain (1999) have noted, there are occasions such as the requirement to provide explanations as well as make generalisations that may require the use of either or both quantitative and qualitative research methods and sources. The research conducted by Wolfram Cox (1997) on the effects of organisational change on employees' relationships is one example of the successful use of both methods. In this instance however, interested in the socially constructed experience of organisational participants and their responses to change, a qualitative methodology was considered appropriate for this research (Kuzel, 1999).

Qualitative data is described by Miles and Huberman (1994) as usually "in the form of words and not numbers" (p. 1); a position supported by Babbie (1998), who says the distinction between qualitative and quantitative data is between numerical and non-numerical data. This simplistic portrayal of the difference of the outcomes of the two research methodologies does not do justice to what can be quite fundamental differences. For instance, it was not my distaste of numbers that precluded the use of quantification, but was the face-to-face interaction that qualitative research afforded that contributed to this choice of methodology. Interestingly, it was this, that Glesne and Peshkin (1992) considered the predominant distinctive feature of qualitative research

More importantly, the significance of numbers in the context of research lies not in the numerical value, but in the assumption that mathematics is a language that offers explanation, identifies correlations and uncovers causal relationships (Bentz & Shapiro, 1998). This expressed faith in the capacity of numbers to represent what is understood as organisational reality, serves as a distinctive point of tension between the different paradigmatic ontologies and epistemologies (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). Stereotypically, the view is that positivist researchers will opt for quantitative methodologies; anti-positivists and those who argue against numerical reductionism, will tend to choose qualitative research (Guba & Lincoln, 1998; Johnson & Duberley, 2000). Other points of differentiation are manifest in the distinction between explanations and understanding as the purpose of enquiry; the distinction between a personal and

impersonal role for the researcher and finally, the difference between knowledge discovered and knowledge constructed (Stake, 2000). Again, it was with awareness of the role of my Self in the conduct of organisational research (see Alderfer, 1988; Devereux, 1967; Fine, 1994; Hatch, 1996); the desire to understand and not offer generalised explanations (Guba & Lincoln, 1998; Johnson & Duberley, 2000) and with the belief that reality is not waiting to be "discovered" (Harding, 2003), that qualitative research approach was selected.

An additional support for this approach included awareness that qualitative research "stresses the importance of context, setting and the participants' frame of reference" (Marshall & Rossman, 1995, p. 44). It was because the research questions required an understanding of the participants' frame of reference, that it was necessary for personal engagement with organisational members – in formal interview, in conversation and in observation (see Glesne and Peshkin, 1992). This aspect of qualitative research that provided greater access to the perspective of those who are being researched (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000), also contributed to the use of this approach. Although the focus of the thesis shifted to that of representation, it was nonetheless an approach that encouraged detailed attention to the complexity of the phenomenon to be researched. As I was to note some time after the conduct of the research, the qualitative approach was also consistent with the Cubist principles of representing the conceived as well as perceived reality.

Some twenty plus years after Morgan and Smircich (1980) identified the oversimplification of the dichotomies implicit in the polarities of quantitative and qualitative methods it is now suggested again the differences are of less significance than previously considered (Creswell, 2003; Fontana & Frey, 2000). Although there is virtue in both methods (Silverman, 1993), it is clear then, from this discussion that the qualitative research methodology was selected for two fundamental reasons. The first, was that qualitative research was considered the most appropriate methodology to explore the research questions (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2000) that had been developed. The second reason was because the qualitative methodology best reflected my personal and ideological world-view (Bentz & Shapiro, 1998; Guba & Lincoln, 1998 Guba & Lincoln, 1998).

Constructivist Approach

Having opted for a qualitative orientation to the research, there were however other choices to be made. Irrespective of the particular features that may differentiate

qualitative and quantitative research, qualitative research is not itself an homogenous field of endeavour. As noted by many recent commentators (eg. Creswell, 1998; Lincoln & Guba, 2000; Miller & Crabtree, 1999a; Patton, 2002), there are a variety of traditions, philosophical and theoretical perspectives that are also represented within the current field of qualitative research. Included in his extensive lists of "paradigms", "epistemological stances and influences" and "traditions", Patton (2002, p. 79) details the different approaches and typologies embraced by his qualitative colleagues noting the frequency of positivism, post-positivism, phenomenology, interpretivism, ethnography, and social constructionism within the lists.

As has been discussed earlier, the ontological and epistemological foundations of this thesis are based essentially, on a subjective realism; that is, what is understood to be reality is contingent on the context and perspective. There is thus a requirement to utilise a research approach that assumes the existence of an identifiable reality; albeit with the belief there is no one fixed reality, but the plausible presence of multiple realities. It may appear that amongst Patton's list of research methodologies, positivism, with its premise of an objective external reality may well be an appropriate choice. For instance, in their construction of positivism, Miles and Huberman (1994, p. 4) argue "that social phenomena exist not only in the mind but also in the objective world..." However, of importance because of what will follow, they also acknowledge that knowledge is socially and historically constructed when they affirm;

> ...the existence and importance of the subjective, the phenomenological, the meaning-making at the center of social life...social phenomena, such as language, decisions, conflicts, and hierarchies, exist objectively in the world and exert strong influences over human activities because people construe them in common ways. Things that are believed become real and can be inquired into (p. 4).

From this description, it appears that despite its proximity to positivism, the position presented by Miles and Huberman (1994) is not dissimilar to those expressed in Chapter 2 referred to as the "intermediate niche" (Harvey, 1989), critical realism or my description of ontological plausibility and epistemological contingency.

What then is the research methodology that best addresses my belief in a socially constructed reality (Gioia, 2003; Patton, 2002)? With Guba and Lincoln's statement that "one need not be an antirealist to be a constructivist" (1998, p. 227), the appropriate methodology becomes more clear. From Patton's list of possible qualitative methods, the most appropriate for this research project is known as either naturalistic

inquiry (Lincoln, 1985), constructivism (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2000; Guba & Lincoln, 2000; Johnson & Duberley, 2000; Schwandt, 1998), social constructionism (Patton, 2002; Potter, 1996) or interpretivism (Silverman, 1993). Understanding there are differences between each of these approaches (see Schwandt, 1998), I also note that Patton (2003) appears to use some of the terms interchangeably. Of the possibilities, I am going to use what appears to be the generally accepted and understood term of constructivism in this chapter.

In detailing the different constructivist perspectives, Patton (2002, pp.102-103) offers the following summary;

> We can conclude by emphasizing the basic contributions of social construction and constructivist perspectives[25] to qualitative enquiry, namely the emphasis on capturing and honouring multiple perspectives; attending to the ways in which language as a social and cultural construction shapes, distorts, and structures understandings; how methods determine findings; and the importance of thinking about the relationship between the investigator and the investigated, especially the effects of inequitable power dynamics – and how that relationship affects what is found.

In addition to this extensive description of constructivism, it is worth noting the social constructions are not just those objects or experiences being studied, but also the outcome of the process co-created by the researcher with the texts (Guba & Lincoln, 1998; Miller & Crabtree, 1999a). From this perspective, constructivism acknowledges the multiple perceptions of people in their constructions of the world, as well as the multiple constructions possible by researchers in their study and analysis of their selected research phenomena.

Simply, in their socially construction, in whatever form that may take, organisations are real. As noted in Chapter 2, organisations have also been understood to be complex, both ontologically as well as epistemologically. There is thus a requirement for a methodology that can accommodate the suggestion that complexity is a feature **of** organisations, as well as a statement of knowledge **about** organisations. And finally, again as a constructivist and consistent with principles of Cubism that contributes their conceived sense of reality to their perception, in my role as researcher and representer of the organisational experience, I am aware I am also constructing my own sense of the reality I researched.

[25] Note Patton's reference to the contributions of constructionist and constructivist perspectives, without differentiating between the two.

It is apparent that working from a qualitative position requires the researcher to attend to the complexity of the many meanings ascribed to organisational experience by its participants. Because qualitative research is emergent rather "than tightly prefigured" (Creswell, 2003, p. 181), the processes that will be described tend not to be linear and sequential, and often involved simultaneous activities of collecting, interpreting and writing up the data. And because, as has been suggested earlier, humans' perspective of what they know to be real is a reflection of their world view (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2000; Gioia, 2003), there is also a requirement for the researcher to have a flexible and eclectic selection of tools of enquiry and analysis from which can be offered possible interpretations. With the complex demands for conceptual flexibility overlaid on the model of Cubism that served as my representative guide, the discussions by Denzin and Lincoln (2000), Linstead and Grafton-Small, (1989) and Patton (2002) amongst others about *bricolage* had particular retrospective resonance and relevance.

The Researcher as a Bricoleur

Building on the suggestion of nearly fifteen years ago that organisational *bricolage* is a way to proceed in organisational analysis (Linstead & Grafton-Small, 1989), Denzin and Lincoln (2000, p. 5) refers to the *bricoleur's* method as emergent construction. *Bricolage*, a French word for which there appears to be no English translation, describes the process of making do with whatever materials or tools were available (Gabriel, 2002). According to Lévi-Strauss (1966), a *bricoleur* would tend to utilise bits and pieces from a collection of objects on hand, gathered previously not for their immediate contribution, but for their potential and unknown value. The items usually are not so specialised that only an expert can use them, nor are they limited to only one use. The bricoleur "interrogates all the heterogeneous objects of which his [sic] treasury is composed to discover what each of them could 'signify' and so contribute to the definition of a set which has yet to materialize (Lévi-Strauss, 1966, p. 18)". Again, resonant with the technique of *bricolage*, the following chapter discusses in more detail the Cubist technique of *collage*, where the Cubists created visual puns from the scraps of decorating materials, shells, ropes and so on.

For the bricoleur, the ends are not clearly known at the outset, and on the other, the "reasoning" process does not use logical deduction, but is more of a creative design process. Thus, the *bricoleur* does not have a clear end in sight, but rather a vaguely defined project or sketch of an idea. The project itself will take shape and its characteristics will be determined by what is available and how it can be assembled.

Bricolage in this context thus describes the making do, the making of and the making up of the non-scientific "savage mind" – that is, the development of improvisation, creativity and the formation of symbolic process (Gabriel, 2002). For Gabriel (2002) and Linstead and Grafton-Small (1989) *bricolage* is neither a method nor a philosophy but more of a process or a mode of use by which possible meanings can be considered as sense is sought of the world.

According to Denzin and Lincoln (2000) *bricoleurs* are not bound by theoretical straitjackets and will transcend disciplines and occasionally paradigms in their quest for greater understanding and knowledge. They portray the *bricoleur* as a D-I-Y researcher who selects research strategies, methodologies, questions and approaches from what is available, from what appears to be interesting and what is thought can contribute to greater understanding and knowledge (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). A far-cry from the standards imposed by an ideal-type positivism (see Guba & Lincoln, 1998), this typification of the *bricoleur* has resonance with Miles & Huberman's (1994, p. 5), reference to the "pragmatic" and "ecumenical" nature of research.

Over the years in which this research was conducted and analysed, there certainly was a sense in which the project took shape from what was available at the time. I began with the intent of offering a psychoanalytic analysis of employees' experience of change, but became increasingly dissatisfied with the constraints (see Patton, 2002) implicit in imposing an analytic framework on others' experience. Such a position, I reasoned, could not adequately capture the multitude of experiences and responses I was uncovering in my research. Fortunately the questions I constructed and asked in interviews were sufficiently open to allow movement from just one theoretical framework to the development of a model to represent multiple analyses.

Unaware of the art critic, Gombrich's (1993, p. 98) prediction that "one day we shall all see the world in a Cubist way", but consistent with the aesthetic flexibility required of a *bricoleur* (Cedillos cited in Patton, 2002, p. 402), I independently became open to the creative potential of using Cubist styles to represent organisational experience.

As Lévi-Strauss (in Gardner, 1974) describes it, the *bricoleur* begins with an event from which s/he attempts to build a structure. It is apparent then that the qualitative researcher when working as *bricoleur* must be open to new ideas, to new possibilities and to creative potentialities in the construction of a research event (Patton, 2002). It is in the spirit of the *bricoleur* the focus of the research shifted from data collection and data analysis, to the development of a Cubist approach to the

representation of the data. Again, also consistent with the *bricoleur* who collects items because "they might come in handy" I had gathered any data I could access on the organisation I was researching from as many sources as possible. So, for instance, a brochure that was initially retained for its detailed contents, was because of its glossy presentation, later helpful for its image of professionalism promoted by the organisation. From this example, it is also clear that *bricolage* also describes the opportunist element of making do with what is available within the research process (Gabriel, 2002).

There are many aspects of *bricolage* that make it a suitable approach to the conduct research if working from a Cubist perspective. For instance, the feature that values the bits and pieces of life, not just for the purpose for which they were designed, but for their potential each bit holds. The feature of *bricolage* that provides a flexible and eclectic approach to the processes of data collection and subsequent data analysis and acknowledges the multiple sources of inspiration and influence parallels for instance, Picasso's Cubist painting, *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon,* with its eclectic mix of styles, influences and techniques. The feature of *bricolage* that is based on the assumption that knowledge is emerging, improvised and never absolute, again reflects the reflexive and relative truths represented in Cubist works. It is these features of *bricolage* that I feel justify its use as an appropriate research approach for this project.

Choice of Single Case Study

The research strategy of this project was a single-organisation case study (Stake, 1995, 2000; Yin, 2003) designed to explore in depth the organisational experience within a real-life context (Yin, 2003). The research questions for this project were particular and based on a single case study of one organisation, Bass Coast Shire Council, an organisation within local government in Victoria, Australia. Contrary to Yin's (2003) approach to case study, it was not the intent of this particular case study to either develop or test theory, to offer comparisons across different councils or to develop an analysis of the state-wide impact of organisational amalgamations. In this instance, the exploratory nature of this case study is on the selected and multiple layers of organisational experience – not to theorise the experience of organisational change, but to build support for the development of a particular form of representation that captures those layers of organisational experience. It is because of the possibility of in-depth investigation (Hamel, 1993) the single case-study was selected. Conscious that an

approach that does not seek to generalise experience has its many critics (such as Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Yin, 2003), nonetheless with a rationale supported by Stake (2000) the focus is on the particularity of a single-case.

In understanding this approach to the use of case study, different categories have been developed by researchers. For instance, within Stake's (2000) categorisation of case studies, this approach can be understood as an *instrumental* case study. While the case study itself has an interest, it ultimately may only be of secondary importance in our understanding of something else. In this context, the particularity or its generalisability of this particular organisation is of no consequence; the examination of the case is to pursue the development of a representational model of an organisation, any organisation, and this case study is just one example of an organisation. This statement may appear as if I am suggesting the experience of the organisation and its members is of no consequence – to the contrary. It is **because** of the depth of the experience of the organisation, irrespective of its uniqueness or typicality that I seek to develop a new way of representing that experience.

Within Yin's (2003) typology of different applications of case studies, this approach can also be understood as a descriptive case study which seeks to provide in depth description of the organisation within its own context. It was also, as Stake (2000, p. 437) noted "because in all its particularity **and** [the author's emphasis] ordinariness, this case itself is of interest."

In its ordinariness, is the case typical (Yin, 2003) of the experience of local government reform? Indicative of the under-representation of local government as a research domain (Aulich, 1999), and despite "the most extensive public sector re-organisation ever undertaken in Australia" (Hallam, 1995 cited in Digby & Kennedy, 1998, p. 189), there are surprisingly few publications that detail any analysis of the Victorian local government reform project. Amongst the few, is included a monograph produced as an outcome of a community project, that detailed the impact of the reforms on the citizens and community life in seven regions in Victoria (Robson, 1997). Another, written by a senior manager within local government offered a "superficial overview" of the experience of the first amalgamation in Victorian, the Greater City of Geelong (Savery, 1997, p.164). A third (Williamson, 2000), provided a brief discussion on the changes to citizenship as a result of the reforms in three metropolitan councils. None of the reports offers any insight on the experience of employees also impacted by, and responsible for, implementing the reforms. A comment by Savery (1997, p. 163) does however appear to offer a reasonable summary of the situation when he notes, "It

appears that the majority of the remaining [all others excluding Geelong] municipalities are experiencing similar difficulties associated with the reform process, although to varying degrees."

While it is not possible to categorically establish Bass Coast Shire as a typical case-study, it will be nonetheless possible to suggest it does share similarities with the experiences of the other amalgamated councils. Because the experience of the council is both typical and particular there will be no attempt to generalise this experience (Stake, 2000) as indicative of all rural and regional councils in Victoria during the period of amalgamation. The research design is thus ideographic rather than nomothetic as its focus is on an intensive study of a particular phenomena rather than an extensive study from which to establish generalisations (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2000; Guba & Lincoln, 1998).

Although I intend to direct my focus on the representation of the experience rather than pursue the truth and detail of that experience, it is still worth including the following comment to serve as a note of warning. Written by two of the earliest supporters of Cubism in visual and plastic arts, Gleizes and Metzinger (1912/ 1968, p. 215) stated, "Not to discern at first contact the individuality of the objects which are the motives of the picture; the charm is considerable, but it is also dangerous". It is necessary therefore to keep in mind the individuality of the organisation which suggests the requirement to present the organisation with integrity – to include features that affirm its uniqueness, that capture its complexity and that prompt resonance with the reader (Stake, 2000). What is imperative is to represent the organisation in such a way as to be recognisable to the reader - not necessarily as **the** organisation but as **an** organisation. For, as Gleizes and Metzinger note above, it is the intrinsic particularity of the object, which in this case is the experience of the organisation that serves as the motive for its portrayal.

Research Procedures

My first contact with the organisation, Bass Coast Shire Council was by telephone when I contacted the person responsible for Human Resources in the organisation to outline my request to conduct research within the council. The initial response was one of interest, and I subsequently submitted a proposal to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), which was later discussed at a meeting with both himself and the Human Resources (HR) officer. Entry into the organisation for purposes of the

research was achieved at that meeting, and it was decided the Human Resources person would be the organisational contact with responsibility for circulating a letter of introduction for me to all members of staff (Appendix B). Not only was he my organisational contact, with the imprimatur of the CEO, the HR officer subsequently became my informal organisational sponsor or "gatekeeper" (Creswell, 1998). As a person with some years in one of the amalgamating councils, and with a position that placed him in regular contact with staff, senior management and the appointed commissioners, the relationship quickly developed to that of my key informant (Gilchrist & Williams, 1999; Spradley, 1979) on the organisation.

I was given open access to all staff who wished to speak to me as well as access to all files and documents, minutes of council meetings and any other documents that were relevant to my research and did not contain material of a personal and confidential nature. I was given access to photocopying facilities and an office was always made available when I was "on-site". I was also allowed access to any and all of the council buildings and no rooms were designated as out-of-bounds. Observations and conversations therefore occurred in offices, at the reception desks, in the staff room of the main council building and even in the ladies' amenities.

Research Site and Participants

The choice of Bass Coast Shire as the research site was based on pragmatic criteria (Glesne & Pushkin, 1992; Yin, 2003); it had recently experienced significant change and it was geographically proximate to my place of employment. This single organisation or the unit of analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994) that was the subject of the case-study had been in operation less than two years and was created by the amalgamation of three previously stand-alone local government councils and parts of two other councils[26]. The members of the new organisation had been with their former councils for periods of two years to over two decades and all had experienced significant change in the period immediately preceding the conduct of this research. The attention of the research was on the response of the participants to those changes that occurred because of and during the period of the amalgamation (Chapter 6).

To facilitate access to staff, the HR officer provided me with a phone list of the staff. Because I indicated I wanted to interview a cross-section of staff from four of the

[26] The new council was staffed by employees from the former Shire of Bass, the Borough of Wonthaggi and the Shire of Phillip Island. Only one employee from Inverloch from the former Shire of Woorayl moved to the new shire. Although the Wattle Bank and Lance Creek districts from the Shire of Korumburra formed part of the new council, no employees from that shire joined Bass Coast.

councils that formed the newly amalgamated council, he also noted the council where the employees were previously employed. Of the 75 permanent and full-time staff on that list, employed at the time the interviews were conducted (February, 1997), 45 had been previous employees of the amalgamated councils. Of those 45 employees, I interviewed 21. I shall now explain the rationale for the sample.

Until immediately prior to amalgamation, each of the Shire Councils had been managed by two senior staff – one, the Shire Engineer and the other, the Shire Secretary. Despite the introduction of a corporate management structure, councils still differentiated their staff between the "outdoor" and the "indoors" staff – the outdoor staff included building approvals, road repairs, garbage collection, environmental health inspectors and so on who traditionally reported to the Shire Engineer. The indoors staff were administration, customer services staff, rate collection, policy and planning staff and so on and they traditionally reported to the Shire Secretary.

Of the six senior managers who had been involved in the three councils both during and after the amalgamation, five were still employed by the Bass Coast Council. Because of their proximity to the councillors and their involvement in decision-making before, during and after amalgamation, I thought their political significance (Miles & Huberman, 1994) to the organisation justified interviewing them all. With the exception of these senior staff, the criteria for selection was to ensure maximum variation sampling (Patton, 2002) across males and females, former councils and inside and outside staff to obtain a broad range of information and perspectives. Although this *a priori* approach to the sampling characteristics may have limited other selection criteria (Aita & McIlvain, 1999), consistent with the concept of sampling saturation (Kuzel, 1999), there was a quite a deal of repetition and common perspectives expressed across the interviews. In addition, because each also contained material unique to the particular individual I am reassured a broad range of perspectives from within the organisation has been represented.

The breakdown of the interview sample group is detailed in Tables 7.1 and 7.2 based on gender, previous employer, location of work and organisational position prior to amalgamation.

Table 7.1

Interviewees - Gender and previous employer

	Borough of Wonthaggi	Shire of Bass	Shire of Phillip Island	Shire of Woorayl	Total
Female	3	1	4	1	9
Male	4	5	3	0	12
Total	7	6	7	1	21

Table 7.2

Interviewees - Location of work and organisational position prior to amalgamation

	Senior Management	Supervisory	Non-management	Total
Outside	2	1	3	6
Inside	3	2	10	15
Total	5	3	13	21

To address the research questions five, six and seven, that examined responses to the amalgamation process in general and, in particular, sought to establish if there was a variation in response according to the different councils, it is apparent when reading Table 7.1, that each of the main councils was well represented amongst the interviewees. Although the interviews of only one council were used in Chapter 9 that explored the responses from the different councils to the inevitability of the

amalgamation, any or either of the councils' interviews would have been suitable. Similarly, in Chapter 11 in which a portrait of the council employees is crafted, the voices of no one council has numerically dominated the interviews.

It can be seen that more males were interviewed than females; this was however representative of the disproportionate numbers of males (31) amongst the 45 employees who met the criteria I had established for interviewing. As for the apparent discrepancy in Table 7.2 between the numbers of outside and inside staff who were interviewed; unfortunately this is a reflection of the relative accessibility of the staff. As their designation suggests, the outside staff were not based at the shire offices, and were thus less likely to be readily available for interview. In addition, in the weeks prior to the interviews, the outside teams had successfully won the competitive tender to provide road maintenance and parks and gardens services to the council. As service providers, the work teams now had to provide detailed accounts of their allocation of time. Because of this pressure of time, agreement to be interviewed had to be negotiated not just with the interviewees but with their team leaders. Because I experienced resistance from one of the team leaders and was also aware of the pressures for accountability, I was loathe to pursue more interviews with the outside staff. The potential of this discrepancy to have skewed the portrayal of the employee responses is taken up in the final chapter.

In Chapter 11 that presents interview data from each of the councils, the interviews have been coded according to former shire, and then randomly numbered. No interviewee can therefore be identified except by former employer. Phillip Island interviewees are coded as PI, Wonthaggi interviewees as W and finally, the Shire of Bass as SB. Because of the need to maintain the anonymity of the one employee from Woorayl, her interview data are coded as Borough of Wonthaggi comments.

Data Sources

Research questions 4 and 5 required an exploration of the organisational and employee responses to the amalgamation and in particular, the individual councils' responses to the experience of amalgamation. The amalgamation of the councils, detailed in the previous chapter, was formally announced early December, 1994. The Coalition government that introduced the reforms was elected in 1992 and the first hints of local government reform emerged in the daily press in the first half of 1993. It was around this time that mention was also being made in council minutes of the impending

reforms. Thus, to address the research questions 4 and 5, I limited the period to be studied to the years 1993, 1994 and 1995 which were the years that immediately preceded and followed the amalgamation. To address research question 5 required an examination of the different reports of the amalgamation from the media, council and official documents and from personal recollections in interview.

Thus, to address the two questions that informed the conduct of the research within Bass Coast Shire, I adopted a research position consistent with constructivist enquiry (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2000; Johnson & Duberley, 2000; Miller & Crabtree, 1999; Patton, 2002), and identified the many sources of data identified by qualitative researchers (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996; Silverman, 1993; Yin, 2003). Data were therefore sourced from the local and daily metropolitan press, from council minutes and documents, from interviews, from conversations, from observation and consistent with the constructivist approach to research, from my self. Each shall now be discussed in detail.

It is clear that amongst the data sources are records that offer accounts as they occurred, such as council minutes and newspaper reports. Yet other sources make comment on what has occurred. Alvesson and Sköldberg (2000) differentiate between such sources referring to "remnants" and the "narrating" sources respectively (p. 70). Remnant sources are regarded as an indication that something has happened; narrating sources "says something about something that has happened" (p. 70). Although the research purpose was based on meaning and understanding (Bauman, 1978), it is necessary to establish criteria for the assessment of the authenticity and validity of the respective sources. For Alvesson and Sköldberg (2000), because remnant sources are a record **of** an event their authenticity is greater than narrating sources which are **about** an event. While aware of the necessity to subject source material to scrutiny (see Bentz & Shapiro, 1998), because this study involves an understanding of the organisational members' response from their perspective, the remnant sources are important for their recording of what occurred; the narrating sources for what is understood and remembered. This means that each are treated as relevant sources for the study of employee and organisational responses to organisational change (Guba & Lincoln, 1998; Schwandt, 1998).

Council Documents and Press Reports

As mentioned, the Chief Executive Officer of Bass Coast Shire very generously made all archived materials of the previous councils available to me for my research.

Specifically, the research data were derived from organisational documents that included submissions to different government bodies, and in particular the Local Government Board. Minutes of Council meetings, including *in camera* sessions, from each of the three major councils involved in the amalgamation were read and noted. So too, were minutes of sub-committees of each of the councils. One of the councils, Phillip Island, had an internal newsletter prior to amalgamation which was made available for my research. The person who had responsibility for the Phillip Island newsletter continued to produce a weekly newsletter for the newly amalgamated Bass Coast Shire Council. Again, I was provided with a complete set of newsletters. One of the interviewees made mention of a training package she and her colleagues had developed, to deliver to the rest of the staff on customer service. These training notes were provided to me. The limited correspondence and notices from the Office of the Local Government and the Local Government Board were read. Coalition party documents, local newspaper reports and reports of the amalgamation process from daily metropolitan newspapers also formed a considerable part of the research data. Council documents distributed to the community were also collected. Three small written items presented as fiction, but understood as a "factional" account, were also included in the sources of data (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2000).

Observation

The data were gathered over a period of two years that included two substantial breaks from the project. The interview schedule, transcription and scanning of council documents required regular visits to the organisation – again, determined by the accessibility of the employees to be interviewed, by the availability of an office in which I could work and my teaching schedule. During the course of the research, the organisation was visited close to thirty occasions, and I spent approximately one hundred and fifty hours on-site. The regular visits to the organisation at its multiple sites occasioned opportunities for direct and unstructured observation (Miller & Crabtree, 1999a; Patton, 2002) from which extensive fieldnotes were recorded on departing the organisation or as close as possible to the visit.

In my observations I paid attention to communications between staff, between staff and myself, how others' were talked about, friendships and tensions and to the general "feel" of the council. Although the council building was in a state of flux with plans for renovations I took note of office and space allocation, who shared offices and where office equipment was located. I also noted what has been described as the

"material culture" (Hodder, 2000, p. 707) of the organisation and the way in which the council visually represented itself with its logo, employees' uniforms, their name-badges, the signage on cars, the signage as I entered the council boundaries and around the towns.

Semi-structured Interviews

Interviews, which constitute Alvesson and Sköldberg's (2000) understanding of "narrating sources", were selected as a key source of data because of the capacity to explore in depth the experience of organisational members. Described as a "conversational research journey" (Miller & Crabtree, 1999c, p. 91), the formal interviews were semi-structured (Fontana & Frey, 2000; Miller & Crabtree, 1999a, b) and open-ended (Yin, 2003). Questions common to all interviews, including "rapport-building" employment history questions (Miller & Crabtree, 1999c, p. 96), were asked (see Appendix C). In contrast, the frequent "interviews" held with the HR officer as my key informant, were unstructured "guided conversations" (Miller & Crabtree, 1999a, p. 19; Yin, 2003, p. 89) in which background materials were provided and observations explored, clarified and interpreted (Spradley, 1979). Because I was interested in understanding how the interviewees might choose to talk about their experience rather than being limited by my imposed question sequence, the discussion for the most part traversed territory determined by interviewees. Having said that, I am also aware that consistent with the unspoken hierarchical relationship of interviewer-respondent (Miller & Crabtree, 1999c; Silverman, 1993), I ensured I asked all my questions.

Having established the criteria for the people I wished to interview, I then contacted staff by telephone or personally when I was on-site to arrange a meeting time. Although I wanted to ensure appropriate representation of different groups in the interview schedule, the research was designed to identify individual and not group perspectives on the amalgamation (see Miller & Crabtree, 1999). Acknowledging the argument forwarded by Gabriel and Schwartz (1999) that membership of groups or subsystems within an organisational system creates different experiences according to different memberships, I nonetheless adopted the position of Hirschhorn (1999) that each individual carries their own individual response to organisational change. My preference was therefore for individual interviews, but because they were initiated by the participants themselves, two group interviews were conducted – each with three participants.

Although Fontana & Frey (2000, p. 649) do make the point that group interviews are ordinarily associated with focus groups, in these two instances the group interviews were similar to an individual interview but held with three people. Even though all participated, and no one voice dominated, it is nonetheless difficult to establish how much of the individual content was established by the group culture (Fontana & Frey, (2000). Different positions were stated, but there was also a lot of agreement and reinforcement of views. As self-selected groups this perhaps should not be a surprise.

All but two of the interviews were conducted within the Bass Coast Shire workplaces in Wonthaggi, Inverloch and Phillip Island. They were held in either the employees' offices, in a meeting room or in the office I had been allocated for the period of time I was conducting my research. One of the interviews was conducted by telephone and another of the interviews was conducted in a person's home. Because of the need to ensure interviewees' comfort and cooperation (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992), all interviews took place in the venue and time specified or requested by the interviewees.

When permission was granted, the interviews were audiotaped and transcribed. Recognising the complicated and time-consuming process of transcription (Miller & Crabtree, 199b), the transcriptions were as much as possible verbatim, and included repetition and pauses. The intonations were not noted in the transcription but field notes taken after the interviews recorded memories of the emotions expressed non-verbally (such as crying, frustration) and experienced. The transcripts were then returned to the interviewees for any alterations or modifications. Only one person made changes to their transcript material. A total of five people declined to be audio-taped, including the telephone interview, and extensive notes were taken during the interview – verbatim where possible. These notes were typed up as soon as possible, and once again provided to the interviewees. No alterations of these notes were made. During the course of the interviews, reference was often made to specific documents or materials. Some of these were provided to me either through the post or at my subsequent visit. These included the copies of the organisation's internal newsletter, training notes, fictional and other creative writings.

The individual and group interviews took from sixty to 120 minutes. One person was interviewed twice because at the end of the first interview which needed to conclude because of another appointment, the interviewee indicated there was further material he wished to discuss. Each of those interviews was of approximately one hour's duration.

There were in addition two other interviews conducted as part of the research but these figures have not been included in the sampling schedule. The first was with the Chief Commissioner of the Bass Coast Shire who had previously sat on one of the councils of the amalgamating shires. The second was conducted with a senior public-servant who had had significant responsibility and involvement in the Office of Local Government both prior to, and during the process of the reform of local government. He was not involved however, with the specific implementation of the amalgamation of Bass Coast Shire. The material from both these interviews provided detailed political contextual information that, although assisted in the process of corroboration of background material, was not included in the subsequent presentation of the data.

Self

Importantly, and consistent with other researchers (eg. Alderfer, 1988; Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2000; Berg & Smith,1988; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Kilduff & Mehra, 1997) added to this list of sources of data is the researcher herself as a research instrument, for in addition to the skill of observation and interpretation is the need for intensive self-reflection, self-criticism and introspection (Patton, 2002). After each of the visits I made informal notes about my feelings, my responses to the interviews or other exchanges and my interpretation of events. On-going reflection and self-analysis was required to process the research experience.

Arguing against positivist research in which the researcher is "repressed and suppressed" from the research (Alderfer, 1988, p. 37), a constructivist researcher identifies the necessity for sufficient self-insight to be aware of one's own biases and perspectives to minimise the self's influence on observations and listenings (Huffington & James, 1999; Miller & Crabtree, 1999c). It is also argued for instance by Smircich (1983) that in the use of the researcher as a research instrument, the researcher can use her own experience within the organisation to complement other sources. Often referred to as parallel process or the more clinical terms of transference and countertransference (Devereux, 1967; Smith & Crandell, 1984), attention to this process can prove to provide a very powerful source of data about the researched (Hirschhorn, 1990).

Over the course of this research project, and amongst the innumerable drafts of the thesis, I have written in, and subsequently attempted to erase the intrusive self from the research. Perhaps the most powerful influence of my self that I have identified within the research process was my unconscious motives in the original choice of topic and my valency for, as well as unpreparedness to identify particular themes (see

Schapper, 1997). Recognising my contribution to the research process, it is my hope that in excluding as many of my projections as I am capable of identifying, from this final report, I have given space for the participants' experience of organisational change at Bass Coast Shire to be represented.

Data Analysis

As previously noted, my interest in the research was not primarily in what happened during the course of the organisational change but in organisational member's responses to those changes. The changes were imposed from forces external to the organisation and involved changing relationships, changing job titles and so on. It also involved the ending of three organisations, from which a new organisation was constructed. The focus of the data I collected from the multiple sources was to understand how organisational members responded to these and many other changes that occurred because of the amalgamation.

Adopting what Miller and Crabtree (1999a) refer to as "immersion into and experience of the text and then emergence, after concerned reflection, with an intuitive crystallization of the data." (p. 23), I read, re-read and read again and again the interview transcripts, newspaper cuttings and council documents. Following the advice of Coffey and Atkinson (1996), I attempted on-going analysis of the data while still in the data collection phase of the research. Using my own experience with the researched (Borkan, 1999), I immersed myself back in the moments of the interviews, recalling the interruptions, the phone calls, the moods that were transmitted on the tapes. I remembered how I felt when I was interviewing the employees, what I thought of them and how our brief relationship was acted out on the tapes and in my notes. I developed images of the unknown actors who served on the councils as they assumed personality and life from the frequent reading of the council documents and motions. I constantly questioned my role as the researcher in this process of research, and sought to disentangle my projections from the organisational data.

As a *bricoleur*, I not only gathered bits and pieces of materials as part of the data collection, I also used different theoretical frameworks to inform the reading and re-reading of the materials (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Conducting research in an organisation that experienced significant change, I not surprisingly, referred to the literature on organisational change I had previously reviewed. Then, reflecting my disciplinary background in group and organisational dynamics based on the works of

such writers as Bowlby (1975), Bion (1961, 1985), Klein (see Segal, 1973) and Winnicott (1953), the material was analysed from a psychoanalytic perspective, to identify the occurrences of defensive mechanisms such as splitting, projection, idealisation and denial. Having constructed research questions about the employees' responses to the change, both the psychoanalytic literature on organisational dynamics was continually reviewed, as well as the developing literature on emotions in the workplace. Finally, with the requirement to gain as much understanding as possible of employees' perspectives (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. Silverman, 1993), the literature on narrative and metaphor was also referenced to assist the interpretation of not just what was said, but how it was said (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996).

With this collection of frameworks providing an interpretive and sorting guide, different highlighting pens and sticky notes were used to codify themes and motifs within the material (Aita & McIlvain, 1999; Coffey & Atkinson, 1996; Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). As the interpretation and analysis of data are an iterative process (Miller & Crabtree, 1999c), further readings and greater immersion uncovered subsequent themes. Doing what Linda Putnam (1992) refers to as the movement "back and forth between the data and the literature to uncover concepts that fit the research findings and the purpose of the study" (p. 107), different theoretical approaches were applied to provide some structure to the data.

Consistent with principles of Cubism, and the approach of *bricolage,* the data were thus analysed from a number of different approaches and different theoretical perspectives. Although not all of these theoretical approaches are represented in the final copy, for instance, there is little formal mention of the organisational dynamics literature, their trace and contribution to the thesis is nonetheless acknowledged.

Research Ethics

Anonymity of interviewees

Conscious of the need for anonymity of individual participants and interviewees (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992; Miles & Huberman, 1994), I have as much as possible ensured no individual interviewee can be identified. This is perhaps even more important because although I had initially provided fictitious names for the new council and its constituent previous councils, I subsequently decided to opt for the use of the Council's name. Details unique to the Shire of Phillip Island in particular, reported in council documents, in the local press and in interviews were too difficult to camouflage.

Examples of these identifications include the reference to "the penguins" and the "Grand Prix", both of which are well-known tourist features of Phillip Island. Similarly, because Phillip Island is the only island represented by a shire council in Victoria, its identity and by inference the identity of the amalgamated council is immediately obvious to any person who knows the state's geography. Because of this, approval was sought and obtained from the Chief Executive Officer of the Bass Coast Shire Council in 2004 to include the organisations' names. With this identification of the council, even though it may have been at the expense of a "good story", I have subsequently endeavoured to remove all characteristics that could link particular individuals to their statements included in the data analysis.

Quality and Verification

Implicit in the qualitative and constructivist approach of the *bricoleur* is the awareness that knowledge can be uncertain and truth may be problematic. If knowledge and truth are problematised, how then is it possible to make any knowledge claims about the data that has been presented (Silverman, 1993)? For positivist researchers working from a quantitative perspective the language of verification of data is that of reliability and validity. In this form;

> reliability is established by such techniques as test-retest correlations or interrater reliability; whereas validity is often taken to be established by a congruence among different instruments or perhaps by a triangulation from different research methods (Potter, 1996, p. 138).

For those positivist researchers who adopt qualitative methods, there is an emphasis on objectivity, a requirement to eradicate researcher "bias" or "contamination" and the establishment of rigorous systems of data collection and cross-validation of sources (Bentz & Shapiro, 1998; Johnson & Duberley, 2000; Kolakowski, 1993; Patton, 2002). There is also an expectation of the pursuit of value-free rigour in all aspects of the research process (Creswell, 2003). Contrary to the position of the positivist researchers, the question of validity and reliability is considered unimportant for some qualitative researchers (see Silverman, 1994); for others (see Denzin & Lincoln, 2000) the issue of validity cannot be separated from the broader ideology of the authority of the text. The presence of such disparate views has contributed to the portrayal of the issue of verification as a contentious issue within qualitative research (Lincoln & Guba, 2000).

Reflective of the differences apparent between researchers even within the qualitative tradition, different questions are asked of their analyses and presentation of

the data. Because of the consistency **and** variation in the emphases placed on evaluating the presentation of the data, I shall offer just a few of the approaches adopted by qualitative researchers in general and constructivist researchers in particular.

For some (eg. Glesne & Peshkin, 1992; Skrtic, 1985), it is the trustworthiness of the data that is important; for Robert Stake (1995, p. 107) it is the question "do we have it right?" Marshall and Rossman (1995) are concerned with credibility and trustworthiness. Creswell (1998, p. 193) elaborates with "how do we know that the qualitative study is believable, accurate, and 'right'?" Miles and Huberman (1994, p. 277) in asking "if the finally emerging findings are *good* [their emphasis]?", offer the researcher a range of synonyms to clarify "good". Although they suggest others can be added, they include possibly or probably true, reliable, valid, dependable, reasonable, confirmable, credible, useful, compelling and significant. Despite the uncertainty of the knowledge and truth claims when researching from the qualitative paradigm, it is clear there is a necessity to offer some level of verification of the data. And what is also clear, is that the substantiation can only be effected if criteria are clearly specified to evaluate the representation of the data (Patton, 2002).

In establishing criteria relevant to constructivist research, Patton (2002) includes the requirement for acknowledgement of subjectivity, trustworthiness, authenticity, triangulation not necessarily based on different research methods (Silverman, 1993), but on capturing multiple perspectives, reflexivity, praxis, particularity by celebrating the integrity of the unique, enhanced and deepened understanding and finally, by contributions to dialogue.

I am confident that the research methodology adopted in the conduct of this research does meet Patton's evaluative criteria. The representations in Chapters 9 and 11 I have called the "research texts" have been designed to present materials from multiple data sources, thus creating opportunities for different perspectives to be seen and heard. With the provision of textual material transcribed from original sources, the authenticity of what is presented can be readily verified. Where relevant, my authorial voice has been made explicit; as a constructivist researcher I have however allowed the voices of the participants and organisational representatives to be heard as fully as possible.

Following the Cubist temperament, the research texts have been created to display what I, and the data conceive as the reality of the organisational experience. That reality is constructed not from a fixed analysis, but from the positioning of multiple perspectives. Again, consistent with the Cubist attention to representing what is

overlooked and marginalised (see following chapter), the integrity of the unique is also valued and maintained. With the inclusion of explanations and only sparse interpretation, the reader or audience is invited to engage with the data to develop some understanding and meaning of their experience of the representation. With this invitation, a metaphoric dialogue is thus established between the organisational participants, their representative author and the reader.

Limitations

Despite the best efforts at trustworthy representation of data, there are nonetheless possible weaknesses and limitations. Although at the instrumental level of verification, the raw transcripts were returned to research participants for revision, I did not seek validation from the participants for the explanations and representation I made from the data (Silverman, 1993). I did not conduct an audit within the research process to establish its dependability (Skrtic, 1985), nor did I institute a process equivalent to an inter-rater comparison (Silverman, 1993). Additionally, although the transcribed words of the interviews were in effect the mimetic and naturalistic portrayal of those employees I interviewed, there is no way of testing the truth claims of the individuals who gave me their words (see Alvesson, 2003; Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2001; Douglas, 1976 cited in Miles & Huberman, 1994).

I began this section indicating the uncertainty of the truth and knowledge claims made within qualitative research. It should therefore be no surprise this section concludes with uncertainty and imperfection. Lincoln & Denzin (2000, p. 415) refer to this uncertainty about the reasonableness of the truth claims as follows;

> Validity represents the always just out of reach, but answerable, claim a text makes for its own authority. (After all, the research could have always been better grounded, the subjects more representative, the researcher more knowledgeable, the research instruments better formulated, and so on.).

In finishing this section, it is worth noting the view of Stake (1995, p. 107) when he cautions researchers to take care and use "common sense" when asserting the truth claims of qualitative research. For, in the problematisation of qualitative research, is the awareness there will be no agreement, no certainty and no desire for only one answer or truth or reality.

Concluding Comments

This chapter was written to explore the methodology that was used to address the research questions 4, 5 and 6. With the emphasis on the gathering of empirical data to assist the understanding of what was presumed to be a diverse range of organisational and employee responses to organisational change, this chapter detailed the rationale for the use of qualitative and constructivist methodologies. Again, with the necessity to provide a rationale, the use of a single case-study was also discussed. Framed by the research approach of a *bricoleur*, the chapter discussed the eclectic and opportunistic nature of data derived from the range of data sources used in the research. Similarly, mention was made of the different theoretical perspectives that were utilised in the varying phases of data analysis.

Underpinning this chapter was the on-going awareness of the necessity to consider the two fundamental premises upon which the thesis is constructed. Although detailed in Chapter 1, it is worth reiterating because of their significance to this, and the following chapters. The first premise is that organisations are complex. Such a premise demands that the ontological and epistemological dimensions of organisational complexity be considered within the selected research methodology. This chapter on methodology has therefore been developed to demonstrate the appropriateness of researching a single case study using a qualitative and constructivist methodology as just one way organisational complexity can be researched.

The second premise of the thesis is the need to develop a form of representation that can convey the ontological and epistemological richness of organisational complexity. It is in the pursuit of this premise that the following four chapters have been developed. Within these chapters, the specific complexity of the experiences of Bass Coast Shire Council is laid out. Two of the chapters have been developed as "readers' notes" in which extensive background material is provided to assist the reader with meaning, interpretation and understandings of the research texts. The two chapters, referred to as research texts are the attempts, using Cubism as the theoretical guide, to create a form of representation that can capture organisational complexity. Before moving straight to a research text, the first of the readers' notes are provided.

CHAPTER 8

READING NOTES FOR *VANITAS* – THE INEVITABLE IN A COUNCIL AMALGAMATION

Purpose

The purpose of this chapter is to provide reading notes or background theoretical and contextual material to assist the reading of the research text that follows in Chapter 9 and also addresses the research questions that ask:

Research question two: *Can Cubism serve as the theoretical and stylistic frame for the representation of organisational complexity?* and;
Research question three: *Can the subject material of Cubist works act as contextual frames for the development of motifs identified within the organisational data?*

In providing these notes and addressing these questions, this chapter begins with an explanation of the technique of collage derived from one particular style of Cubism, known as synthetic Cubism. Because the subject material of synthetic Cubism was overwhelmingly of still life, this genre is also expanded upon, with particular attention paid to the theme of *vanitas*, considered by some art historians to be a concept synonymous with still life. The implied doom of *vanitas*, the idea that life is brief and death inevitable that serves as the motif of Chapter 9, is also explored. In particular, attention is paid to the inevitability of the death of organisations. Picking up the role of text within still life, this chapter also details reasons for the categorisation of research data as stories in Chapter 9. The chapter then concludes with an explanation of the use of different media to represent each of the three major councils involved in the amalgamation.

Cubist Technique – Collage

Chapter 9 that follows, entitled *Vanitas: The inevitable in an organisational amalgamation,* has been developed in the style of synthetic Cubism. Synthetic Cubism is used to describe the stylistic approach adopted by both Cubist painters and writers from about 1912 until the early years of World War 1. The most notable feature of the synthetic style was the use of collage and *papiers collés,* to describe the technique that

involved the pasting of *objets trouvées* (found objects) and/ or print materials, such as, scraps of newsprint, advertisements and drink coasters upon canvas or paper or board. While many of the collages could be read as literary puns (see Rosenblum, 1973; Roskill, 1985), there were also cuttings from newspapers that contained political statements within them (Antliff & Leighten, 2001). Consistent with the Cubists' subversion of realism and despite the explosion of "reality" on the canvas, the images were still obscure and at times their subject was difficult to identify.

Because of the variation in approaches and materials used by Picasso, Braque and Gris in this synthetic period, it is not possible to identify a quintessential example of synthetic Cubism. It is useful however to refer to just two examples of collage by Picasso to serve as the aesthetic model from which to draw. The first is titled *Glass and Bottle of Bass* (1914) (Figure 8.1) and the second, *Guitar, Sheet Music, and Glass: "La Bataille s'est engagée"* (1912) (Figure 8.2). When looking at these Cubist collages, the reader may note the techniques common to collage - a composition of pastings of paper over other papers, the hint of an object drawn over a pasted paper, a scrap of paper pasted in isolation, different materials that may or may not be the real material itself, the pasting of newsprint of some paragraphs or perhaps only the suggestion of a word.

In the spirit of Cubist humour, *Glass and Bottle of Bass* has been selected as an exemplar, primarily for the inclusion of Bass within its title and its visual prominence within the collage. Because it is the Bass Coast Shire Council that was researched for this thesis, the coincidence of names was too obvious to ignore. There is also another connection. The word collage is derived from the verb *coller*, which translates as "to paste" or "to glue", and is often used by the French as a colloquialism to describe a couple living together without marriage, in an arrangement of "pasting" (Burke, 1987). The amalgamation of the councils, that created the Bass Coast Shire Council, could similarly be described as a pasting (or a merging, or a gluing) of separate bodies. Although in the instance of the shire, the union was formally recognised, there were some in opposition to the merger, who believed it to be an illicit relationship.

The collage of the *Glass and Bottle of Bass* has also been selected because it clearly epitomises the self-referential aspect of synthetic Cubism. The collage is "framed" by a *trompe d'oeil* (fractured) frame; without signature, but with the nameplate of Picasso, as if labelled by a gallery; and in the final touch of whimsical reality, a small blue sticker 354 from one of his earlier sales. The self-conscious work that is a portrayal of a painting may be a parody of the commercialism of the art salon

(Poggi, 1992b). It is also a fine example of Cubist play and humour in which reality is juxtaposed with not reality.

Finally, the collage *Guitar, Sheet Music, and Glass* has been included as an example in which the objects of the collage are immediately recognisable. Aesthetically, as a piece of sheet music pasted on a background of wallpaper, the sheet music is without doubt sheet music; the newsprint is a scrap of a newspaper and the component parts of the musical instrument are also apparent. The certainty of reality is subverted however, by the uncertain quality in which absence designates presence. The title causes us to look for the glass; the *faux bois* of the guitar highlights the illusion of realism and the guitar can only be "seen", if the absence is understood as presence.

Perhaps the most eye-catching feature of this collage though, is the newspaper title of LE JOU (see Chapter 5), underscored by the headline that translates to, "The Battle has Begun". It is unlikely that Picasso was playing with puns in this instance; for the headline, carefully and deliberately cut from *Le Journal* is, according to Antliff and Leighten (2001), a statement by Picasso of his antiwar and prosocialist beliefs (Lake, 1957). This cutting refers to the first Balkans War, during the period that lead up to World War I. Picasso frequently used the device of pasting newspaper clippings of other battles, of workers' demonstrations and other political events and it was this careful selection of text that, for Antliff and Leighten (2001), indicated Picasso's political opposition to bourgeois ideology.

At the same time as Picasso created his first Cubist collage *Still Life with Chair Caning*, (Figure 5.4), Gertrude Stein began writing *Tender Buttons* (Exhibit 5.1), a book composed of three sections titled "Objects," "Food," and "Rooms."[27]&[28]. Understood as written in the style of synthetic Cubism (Bridgman, 1970; Dubnick, 1984), each section of *Tender Buttons* was comprised of a series of discrete and discontinuous pieces separated only by titles of each piece. The pieces included descriptions of objects, lines where sound and rhythm predominated, and lines that teetered between sense and nonsense (Berry, 1992).

Stein's vocabulary in the book was simple, domestic, crowded with nouns and adjectives held together, at times with only a tenuous connection, by a selection of very few verbs such as "to be", "to make", "to use", "to mean" (Walker, 1984). What Stein

[27] "*Tender Buttons* was to Gertrude Stein's development what the *Demoiselles d'Avignon* was to Picasso's; a key work marked with the enormous struggle of creating new value" (Haas, 1976, p. 23) For another critic, *Tender Buttons* was Stein's "most original and cohesive work" (Bridgman, 1970, p. 125).
[28] One critic has suggested the book's structure can be read as 'Objects', what we perceive around us; 'Food', what we absorb or ingest; and 'Rooms', what surround us (Bridgman, 1970).

hoped to achieve with this approach was "the particularity of experience" (Dubnick, 1984, p. 29); in the representation of that particularity, although she used words that were "disjointed and disembodied" (Bridgman, 1970, p. 124), they nonetheless were tied to material objects.

Because of the complexity of Stein's prose, her work is best explained by the provision of an example; the following is from the Objects section of *Tender Buttons*;

> A LITTLE BIT OF A TUMBLER
>
> A shining indication of yellow consists in there having been more of the same colour than could have been expected when all four were bought. This was the hope which made the six and seven have no use for any more places and this necessarily spread into nothing. Spread into nothing.

Although decrying abstraction (Dubnick, 1984), Stein's writing is, just like the visual Cubists, difficult to "read". Like the Cubist painters, Stein also turned to objects within her immediate world; in her case, her female and domestic surroundings (Walker, 1984). And yet despite the banality of the content, evidenced by other titles within *Tender Buttons* such as *A Dog*; *Eggs*; *A Piece Of Coffee; Sugar*; *Muttons*; *A Little Called Pauline; Milk; Veal* the writing style and technique is dense and complex.

From this brief overview of visual and literary synthetic Cubism, the features of modernism, including fractured and fragmented imagery and challenging the realism of reality through the representation of a more real reality, are clearly evident. Whether papers affixed to canvas, or complex word structures, the works of synthetic Cubism demanded attention, not just to what was being represented, but how it was represented. In these self-reflexive acts, synthetic Cubism exemplified the spirit of modernism. That Cubism was an art of modernism is beyond question. What is also clear is that synthetic Cubism was an intrinsically complex style of representation that challenged bourgeois sensibilities, with attempts to politicise art and culture. Synthetic Cubism was a critical aesthetic, with multiple layers of relief that blurred boundaries between real, not real and more real. It was an art form in which the objectivity of an externalised reality was given shape from what was known, understood and believed of that reality.

In concluding this section and in reference to Research Question 2, it is apparent that synthetic Cubism can provide an appropriate framework for the presentation of organisational complexity. For those who identify organisational complexity as a matter of ontology, there is the capacity within the technique of "pastings" to illustrate particular variables of complexity. As with *Guitar, Sheet Music, and Glass*, the author/ painter can then "draw over" a reality to either destabilise or to clarify what is known

and understood of that object. In this way, Cubism can thus represent the epistemological and ontological elements of the phenomena of complexity.

Cubist Subject Material – *Vanitas*

Still Life

The works created by the synthetic Cubists, visual and literary were, with very few exceptions, still lifes (Golding, 1959/1988; Read, 1958) or, as they would have been known when created and shown in Paris, *les natures mortes.*[29] There is a view that "the genre of still life is as obvious a piece of our basic cultural furniture as history painting or landscape." (Bryson, 1990, p. 8). Although the genre is unmistakable, a still life is not without ambiguity. Perhaps the most basic understanding of still life is the portrayal of inanimate objects and the exclusion of the human form (Bryson, 1990) and living creatures (Ebert-Schifferer, 1999). However, dead (usually slaughtered) animals and human skulls are frequently included as either central or peripheral subjects in still life paintings. And although the human form is not welcomed in still life, the human presence cannot be ignored, for the inanimate objects are invariably manufactured objects. If Cubist collage is used as an example of still life, the inanimate objects carefully arranged by Picasso, Braque and Gris, such as, musical instruments, tables, glasses and bottles, were all selected from the human cultural milieu within which they were located.

While the objects themselves may be dead or inanimate, they nonetheless serve to record the life of human culture. To use the Cubist still life as a model of representation thus necessitates the inclusion of objects that have been "touched by" people, which is in contrast to the notion of visual or literary portraits in which the human form is the focus of the portrayal. With this interpretation as a guide, the presentation of materials in Chapter 9 includes the use of inanimate objects, such as, documents and newspapers, which, in defiance of their essentially object nature, are saturated with human experience.

Charles Sterling (1959), considered to be "the father of still life studies" (Ebert-Schifferer, 1999), argued a true still life emerges from the decision made by a painter to

[29] Sterling (1959) argues the word still life emerged from the Dutch term *still-leven* or silent life or life without motion. In the late seventeenth century the French made reference to paintings that were *en vie coye* or had arrested life; which was replaced in the following century to *nature repose* or things at rest. According to Sterling (1959), it was the members of the academic circles who, during the Romantic period opposed the aesthetic excesses of the Baroque and coined the term *natures mortes* to show their contempt for that genre of painting. Although the French "deplore the term *nature morte* as poor or even misleading in its implications" (Sterling, 1959, p. 44), the term has nonetheless remained.

choose a group of objects as subject and then arrange them to make a coherent picture. And perhaps what is even more significant to this chapter, is the point articulated by Sterling (1959, p. 47) that, "Each object stands in isolation so as not to conceal its neighbour". Still life is not an image of spontaneity or randomness but is, instead the depiction of a conscious and deliberate arrangement of objects. And because the view of each object is not obscured, the individual entity of each object can be honoured within the group composition. Within still life, no object takes precedence over any other, and no object is compromised in its portrayal. It is this egalitarian tradition of still life, I maintain, that ensures each differing component (the individual local government councils) can be viewed without obstruction, in portraying their experience of organisational amalgamation.

Further to its egalitarian style, still life is also understood as a democratic art because of its selected subject matter. Still life painting had a history that dated back to the paintings and mosaics of ancient Rome (Ebert-Schifferer, 1999; Sterling, 1959; Weisberg, 1979), reaching its zenith with the Dutch and Flemish masters of still life in the seventeenth-century (Ebert-Schifferer, 1999). Despite this very august history, it has been subject to considerable criticism and scorn by academic art historians (Bryson, 1990; Ebert-Schifferer, 1999), with more than one author referring to the marginality of the genre (Bryson, 1990; Weisberg, 1979).

Surprising because of the glorious sumptuousness of many still life paintings, the reason for its marginal status can be traced to its origins in ancient Greek and Roman times. It is there, that Sterling (1959, p.11) found, that still life was originally known by the Greek term for contempt of *rhopography*. Apparently, it was the depiction of insignificant objects derived from the domain of the domestic, the prosaic and the commonplace such as food, implements, artefacts and objects found in home interiors and on kitchen surfaces, that earned still life this tradition of contempt. In contrast to this art of demeaned objects stood *megalography*, a term again from ancient times, used to describe the art of the sublime, the grand, the significant and the spiritual found in the religious, historical and familial narratives of grand painting.

Still life thus depicts those things that are trivial "that 'importance' constantly overlooks" (Bryson, 1980, p. 61). Despite its continued popularity over the ensuing centuries, the poor reputation and low status of still life did not improve. For instance, in the rules of the French salon during the seventeenth century, historical themes were ranked as the highest artistic achievement and the still life the lowest acceptable level (Weisberg, 1979). Considered the art of the trivial, the objects were, by assumption

humbled; and the genre of still life that depicted humble objects can confidently be understood as an art of democracy (Weisberg, 1979).

This ideological feature of democracy found in still life is readily apparent in the works of synthetic Cubism that depicts the familiar objects of cafés and bars. Look back at *Picasso's Guitar, Sheet Music, and Glass* (Figure 8.2). About this collage, Antliff and Leighten (2001) commented;

> The popular sheet music (1912's version of a new CD), the humble guitar and the cheap wallpaper – printed in only one colour - suggests a working class café, where newspapers are provided free for the customers. In every way this collage evokes the vernacular life of the people (including artists), who came to cafés to meet their friends, listen to music and discuss the issues of the day (p. 173).

Tender Buttons, with Stein's attention to the minutiae of domestic life, can also be understood as another example of synthetic Cubism working with the tradition of still life. Because there has been a tradition of diminishing the art of a Still Life painter to be little more than a craftsperson (Weisberg, 1979), the Cubists' portrayal of the mundane and "overlooked" objects has subsequently been portrayed as a subversive assault on high art (Poggi, 1992b; Vargish & Mook, 1999).

What could be perceived as an assault on the grandiosity of high art, was compounded by the techniques employed by the Cubists in their constructions of collage. Previously a domestic and sentimental craft, that is, a craft of the feminine, collage was elevated into the domain of high art by the Cubists (cf. Markowitz, 1994; Wolfram Cox & Minahan, 2002). Moreover, the use of mass-produced and readily available materials from daily life, the introduction of glue (a tool for house painters and not artistic painters), and the shift of artist from painter to one who cuts, places and glues, has also been interpreted as an ideological assault on the bourgeois élite and its market (Antliff & Leighten, 2001; Cottington, 1992; Crow, 1985; Poggi, 1992b). With Cubism, the popular culture or low art of still life was now incorporated by legitimate artists into high art.

Research question three that asks if the subject material of Cubism could serve as a contextual frame for the representation of organisational material. From the discussion in this chapter, it is clear there is enormous potential for the use of the subject material such as still life, to recast the many ways in which organisations may be considered and represented. What will be argued in the final chapter is that the philosophy of still life, with its attention to the overlooked, the mundane and the essentially "domestic" temperament, provides a wonderful contextual frame from which

one can address attention to the marginalised, unnoticed and devalued aspects of organisational life. This approach has the potential to supplement contemporary approaches to small-scale organisational studies, by slowing them down and allowing time to consider the detail of what, traditionally, has been considered irrelevant to the "grand" narratives of organisational studies.

Vanitas

Although there are many ways that the synthetic Cubists maintained the tradition of still life, there are other features of still life that are not always explicitly expressed within the Cubist images. Perhaps the area of greatest exception is that tradition of still life is referred to as *vanitas*. *Vanitas* is described by writers on still life as the depiction of the "vanity of earthly things in the face of death" (Stirling, 1959, p. 27), when "vanity is the sense, not of vainness or conceit, but of the evanescence or emptiness of earthly possessions (Hall, 1974, p. 291). *Vanitas* is thus the theme of the fragility of life, the passage of time and the inevitability of death.

The *vanitas* style offered reflections on mortality and immortality, and the allegory of the transience of life and the inevitability of death was central to the portrayal of objects in these still lifes. Bryson (1990), Ebert-Schifferer (1999) ano Sterling (1959), refer to *vanitas* as a particular school of still life whose history extends back to antiquity and flourished in the mid-1600s. Hall (1984) on the other hand, lists *vanitas* as a synonym for still life. There is also one significant writer who insists that "any painted still life is ipso facto also a *vanitas*" (Gombrich cited in Stout, 1993).

Researching the Cubist adoption of *vanitas*, Rosenblum (1973) reported that Picasso included a skull in his first conception of *Les Demoiselles*, then referred to another Picasso collage called *Still Life with Skull* (1913) (no figure available). Although skulls were to be a feature of Picasso's still lifes during the war years in the 1940s, they were noticeably absent, apart from those two mentioned, from the Cubist *œuvre*. And yet, death is very present in Picasso's collages (see Figure 8.2). Antliff and Leighten (2001) noted that more than half of Picasso's collages included newsprint with references to war – either of battles or of the victims of war.

As will become apparent in Chapter 9, there are parallels between the Picasso newspaper cuttings and the textual materials that are used to represent the experience of the organisational amalgamation. For each contain images of inevitability, impermanence and death. This theme of *vanitas*, drawn from the tradition of still life, is evident, not only in the pictorial depiction of the selected objects, but also in the textual

inscription embedded in those objects. Using the role of text within still life as the starting point, the next section leads to an explanation of the meaning of stories in the research text of the next chapter.

Text and Stories

Text and associated implements have appeared in still life paintings since the times of antiquity with the inclusion of books, inscriptions on objects, scraps of parchment, open pages and in Cubist collage, newsprint, drink coasters and advertising flyers. These examples of textual content assert, no matter how clumsily, the significance of the narrative in still life. Text in the context of still life can be a process that describes or names the objects, or as suggested by both Schwenger (2002) and Stout (1992), text in still life can contribute to the narrative inspired by those objects.

The relationship between text and the narrative has particular relevance, with recent interest in literary forms such as drama, jokes, song, stories, autobiographies, sagas and so on (see Gabriel, 1998b) in organisational studies. In the chapter that follows, the material that traces the responses of the different organisations to the amalgamation is presented as stories. Although Cohen and Mallon (2001) suggest the concepts of the narrative and story are used interchangeably, I have opted for the use of story. In contrast to narrative, which for me, summons images of a dispassionate and coherent account, story carries a sense of the messiness of being "all over the place" in the effort of trying to make sense of experiences.

The differences between the two are apparent in their respective descriptions. Narrative has been described as, "an analytic construct that is used to unify a group of events into a single story" (Stevenson and Greenberg, 1998, p.742). Story on the other hand, is defined by Boje (1995), as "an oral or written performance involving two or more people interpreting past or anticipated experience...stories do not require beginnings, middles or endings..."(p. 1000). And, most telling, and in contrast to Stevenson and Greenberg's one story, "Organizations cannot be registered as one story, but instead are a multiplicity, a plurality of stories and story interpretations in struggle with one another" (Boje, 1995, p. 1001). What the concept of story captures then, is this multiplicity of views and interpretations of events that become part of the organisational experience. With research questions 4 and 5 as my guide, it is from the different stories told, that understanding can emerge of the organisational responses to, and experiences of, the amalgamation.

I am aware there are many writers for whom narrative offers similar possibilities as stories (eg. Barry & Elmes, 1997; Hatch, 1996); however, adopting the position Hatch (1996) describes as the main-character narrative who "publicly acknowledge their own role in the research act" (p. 369), in this instance, I would prefer that my resonance with the story/ narrative distinction prevail. Having established a preference to use stories, it is now necessary to address Gabriel's (1998b) very scathing criticisms of writers who treat all text as stories, arguing that in doing so, organisational stories may be trivialised. What appear to be Gabriel's concerns is both the privileging of stories (he refers to narrative) over fact, within the postmodern demeanour, and the contrasting position of modernism that places stories in opposition to facts. Having articulated my position throughout the thesis, of an acceptance of a plausibility of fact and the contextual nature of meaning, it is clear that neither fact nor story will be privileged or placed in opposition to the other. The stories are presented as material indicative of the responses by organisational members to the threat of amalgamation.

To conclude this section, reference will again be made to the stylistic techniques of synthetic Cubism. In the works of Picasso and Braque, stories could be told from the factual accounts of war and other contemporary events cut from newspapers (Figure 8.2). The stories in the collages are many, only partially told and not ranked. The stories are fragmented. Pieces are missing. The reader is again invited to search for meaning and create their own story.

As the discussion concludes on the essential elements of the still life of synthetic Cubism, once again it is possible to identify its many features that allow its particular style and technique to serve as a model of presentation and representation (see Research question 2). To summarise, synthetic Cubism is art whose techniques involve the careful and deliberate arrangement of objects that not only include text and narrative, but because of the play with reality, invite the viewer to engage in a narrative exchange. Together with the tradition of *vanitas*, still life provides the thematic sub-text with which to offer analysis of the objects arranged for this presentation. It is the sense of inevitability of death suggested by the theme of *vanitas* and paralleled in analysis of the organisational data that shall now be discussed.

Death and Organisations

The major theme of the research content that fills Chapter 9 is that the organisational amalgamation was inevitable, and that the amalgamation would lead to

the inevitable death of the councils involved in the amalgamation. To provide background context to the inevitability of death, the following sections of this chapter will discuss emotion in organisational literature, death and inevitability and the death of organisations. Before commencing this section however, it should be made quite explicit at this stage, that this motif of inevitability of death was identified as a significant theme from the research data itself. The relationship between *vanitas*, still life and Cubism was an extraordinarily serendipitous and exciting connection; for it was not a case of *vanitas* searching for supporting data, but the research theme chancing upon the aesthetic possibility made apparent by the relationship between *vanitas* and still life.

Death and Inevitability

> Interviewer: When I start talking about amalgamations, what do you think about?
>
> Respondent: Oh (sigh). I probably think first about the inevitability...it's like watching Poland fall to Hitler. You know, the people in Holland look over the dyke, and say "God. We're next!" That was the, they were the perceptions. And all the time we were saying "Why? Why? Why? Are we not efficient enough?

This is the voice of pain, of anguish, and uncertainty of one of the senior managers involved in the amalgamation process at Bass Coast Shire. The emotion is palpable, and with the allusion to the horrors of war he has clearly and immediately made a link between inevitability and death. Whether the connection was conscious or unconscious it is not possible to establish. However, this is not an unusual connection to be made, as evidenced by the conventional view, perhaps best exemplified by the timeworn axiom of "there is nothing as inevitable as death and taxes".

Not only is death inevitable, but it is also unacceptable (Doob, 1988). As humans we may have the cognitive awareness of our mortality, but it is impossible to imagine or know our own death (Bauman, 1992; Kübler-Ross, 1969). Bauman (1992) argues that unable to contemplate our own death, we live as if we are not going to die. But we are faced with a paradox. Were it not for death, our life would have little meaning or purpose and it is because of the undeniable knowledge of death that humans can embrace life (Riley, 1983). It is the acceptance of this paradox that creates

ambivalence about death – we seek to deny the inevitability of our own death at the same as we live within the boundaries provided by death. No matter how successful our ambivalence may be in denying the knowledge of the inevitable death of our own mortal self, the emotions traditionally experienced in response to death are nonetheless the subject of a growing body of research within organisational studies (see Cunningham, 1997; Slocum, Ragan & Casey, 2002).

Emotions and Death

The presence of fear, grief, pain, loss and anger, emotions synonymous with death (Kübler-Ross, 1969), are not unusual in the literature of organisations as the psychological and emotional sides of the workplace face increasing scrutiny. Some organisational writers such as Allcorn and Diamond (1997), Hirschhorn (1990) and Sievers (1994), informed by the psychoanalytic theories of Sigmund Freud, Wilfred Bion (1961), Melanie Klein (1986), John Bowlby (1972, 1975 and 1976), among others examine what Eisold (1995, p.6) refers to as "the domain of the unconscious" within organisations. With its attention focussed on the many ways in which individuals and groups seek to defend against the anxieties and "the normal psychological injuries of work" (Hirschhorn, 1990, p. 30), the workplace in our unconscious is variously presented as an agent of persecution (Jaques, 1959), a place of hopelessness and despair (Sievers, 1994) and a perpetrator of psychological damage (Diamond, 1993).

From such a bleak perspective, it is little wonder the psychoanalytic literature is littered with images of pain, greed, anger, envy, loss, fear, stress and anxiety (Gabriel, 1998a). Writers from the psychoanalytic tradition (such as Denhardt, 1987; Jaques, 1990; Menzies, 1960; Sievers, 1994), who do directly confront the issue of the inevitability of death, do so from the position of understanding how systems are structured and relationships created, to either develop the myth of immortality or to manage the knowledge of the horror of human death. Although these writers do not address the particular issues of organisational death, they do nonetheless firmly locate the anxiety associated with the knowledge of inevitable death within organisational writing.

Yet other authors, such as those within the collections of papers edited by Ashkanasy, Zerbe and Härtel (2002) and Fineman (1993; 2000, 2003) explore what Fineman (1993, p.31) refers to as "the emotional arenas of organizations". Challenging as myth, that workplaces are sites of clinical, cognitive and rational decision-making and behaviours devoid of emotion and feeling, these volumes expose the emotional

enactment of organisational experience (Fineman, 2000). Suggesting this emotionalisation of organisations brings new understandings to organisational features, such as, decision-making, business ethics, redundancies, as well as, dramatic organisational events, such as, take-overs and organisational collapse, Fineman (2000) highlights the research possibilities that this relatively recent approach can bring. With the growing awareness that "organizations, like families, sporting events and religious ceremonies, are emotional arenas in which different emotions are generated, displayed, shed and traded" (Gabriel, 1998a, p. 291) researchers are now investigating the contribution emotions make to organisational life.

In summarising the role of emotions in organisations, Fineman (2000) identifies emotions as both contributing to the construction of social systems and organisational procedures, as well as being the behavioural response to those same procedures and systems. What is of interest to this chapter is the latter perspective in which researchers examine the emotional response of organisational members to particular organisational events and experiences. It is in this spirit that the papers that provide a chronicle of pain and compassion (Frost, Dutton, Worline & Wilson, 2000; Allen, Freeman, Russell, Reizenstein & Rentz, 2001); of fear and anger (Flam, 1993; Kiefer, 2002), of anger, sadness and joy (Hearn, 1993), and anger, anxiety, cynicism, resentment, resignation, retribution and hope (O'Neill & Lenn, 1995) are relevant. This material on emotional responses to organisational change programmes in particular, will be revisited in discussion in Chapter 11.

Change and Resistance

With the growing awareness of the significance of emotions in organisational life, it should come as little surprise that during involvement in organisational change programs, such as that experienced during organisational amalgamation; additional painful emotions can be experienced and expressed by organisational members. Perhaps the most common response that is anticipated (and constructed) with the implementation of any change programme, is the presence of employee resistance (Ford, 1999). For instance, a recent management text opens the section on responses to organisational change with the following comment, "Almost all change management attempts are met with some type of barrier or resistance" (Graetz, Rimmer, Lawrence & Smith, 2002, p. 254). This statement, giving support to Schein's argument that "resistance to change is one of the most ubiquitous organizational phenomena" (1965,

p. 101), adds weight to the huge volume of articles, chapters, papers devoted to "resistance to change" in organisational change literature.

Commencing with one of the earliest papers on the topic by Coch and French (1948), followed by Kurt Lewin's (1951) model of the forces of change, the expectation of resistance of change is now integral to any change program. Irrespective of whether resistance is constructed negatively as an act of political defiance (see Collinson, 1994), or as an instance of employee "misunderstanding" (Reichers, Wanous & Austin, 1997), or "ignorance" and "self interest" (Strebel, 1996), or even as a positive tool for the management of change (see Waddell & Sohal, 1999), the presence of resistance immediately opens the possibility of the intrusion of feeling and emotion within the domain of organisational life.

Despite a prevailing belief in the presence of resistance to change, there is a growing number of researchers such as Dent and Goldberg, (1999), who take a contrary position, arguing that people do not resist change *per se*, but may indeed resist "loss of status, loss of pay, or loss of comfort" (p. 26). When a program of organisational change is introduced, the list of losses can grow. Typical elements of organisational change may include mergers, acquisitions, amalgamations, reengineering, restructuring, sell-offs, out-sourcing or the privatisation of public utilities and result in employee numbers being downsized, RIFed (reduction in force), delayered, laid-off, terminated, forced to take redundancy, retired early or other significant deterioration to the current employment circumstance. To Dent and Goldberg's list can be added loss of the known, loss of job, loss of financial security, loss of identity, loss of social connections, loss of friendships, loss of self-esteem, loss of career prospects, loss of future and so on. The change is often experienced at a visceral level by organisational members and it is in these circumstances that themes of death, of pain, of grief, of "survivor guilt" (see Allen *et al.*, 2001; Brockner, Grover, Reed & Dewitt, 1992; Cartwright & Cooper, 1993; Stein, 1999; Wolfram Cox, 1997) can be identified by those who research organisational change.

Perhaps the most potent sense of loss that can be experienced is that of the loss of a future or the future one had envisaged (Riley, 1983). In the circumstances of an inevitable organisational change, employees must therefore face not only the losses wrought by the change, but also the loss of an anticipated future. Tracing the psychological grief often experienced by the loss of futures, Bollas (1992) turns to classical literature to draw upon the ideas of destiny and fate. For Bollas (1992) and

Doob (1988), destiny has elements of predetermined, that is the privileged presence of the past, which because of its privilege suggests a particular future. So too with fate.

Fate suggests the sense of a preordained journey along a set path, which because of its history presents an immutable future. It is apparent that these different constructs of futures contain similar seeds of inevitability. And yet, despite the apparent similarities, destiny and fate are quite different. For Bollas (1992) destiny is the positive force that allows the potential in one's life to be realised; fate, on the other hand is an often capricious or destructive force that predetermines the outcome of an event prior to its occurrence. An indication of the dire connotations of fate is apparent when one considers the proximity of fate with death through such words as fatal, fatalism, fatality (Doob, 1988).

Within organisational literature, the presence of mortality and inevitability can be found in discussions of the unconscious processes of organisational life, emotions in the workplace and during periods of organisational change. Although death may be present in organisations through varying experiences of loss, there is one organisational phenomenon in which death assumes central significance; the death of an organisation.

Death of Organisations

The Study of Organisational Death

Mortality is a common theme in organisational change literature, often as metaphor and not in response to the occasion of a real death (Dunford & Palmer, 1996); and yet organisational deaths do occur. They may be rapid, such as, the deaths in recent years of the major Australian companies Ansett Airlines, OneTel Telecommunications and HIH Insurance, or they may involve relatively lengthy processes such as those experienced by the organisations in this case study. Surprisingly, considering the ubiquity of the motifs of death in change literature, the study of organisational death is considered not to be a popular research topic (Whetten, 1987). It does however form an intrinsic part of the substantial research conducted on organisational life cycle and organisational ecology (see Amburgey & Rao, 1996; Barnett & Carroll, 1995; Carroll & Delacroix, 1982; Carroll & Hannan, 1989; Hannan & Freeman, 1988; Whetten, 1987). Examples of deaths of organisations also feature in the literature on organisational mergers and acquisitions and amalgamations (eg. Buono & Bowditch, 1986; Buono & Nurick, 1992; Cartwright & Cooper, 1993; Cunningham, 1997; Ginter, Duncan, Swayne

& Shelfer, 1992; Kiefer, 2002; Marks & Mirvis, 1986, 1992; Mirvis & Marks, 1992; Panchal & Cartwright, 2001; Sutton, 1987).

In the main, the focus of study of those researchers who do acknowledge organisational mortality is on the factors either within the organisation (Cunningham, 1997), or the environment (Ginter *et al.,* 1992), or populations of similar organisations (Carroll & Delacrox, 1982; Hannan & Freeman, 1988), that contributed to the decline or death of the organisation. In the case-study that is the basis of this thesis, the reasons for the death are not explored. What is of particular interest is the experience of the participants to the growing inevitability of the death of the organisations that were to be involved in the amalgamation process. Before examining this issue further it is worth briefly examining what is understood by the concept of organisational death. The reason for seeking this clarification is that the concept of organisational death is not necessarily a simple one (Carroll & Delacroix, 1982; Sutton, 1987).

Concept of Death of Organisations

To begin the discussion, this section shall commence with an example from outside this thesis, but from recent Australian organisational history. The death of Ansett Airlines on 12 September, 2001, was clear – the organisation failed and operations ceased. Ansett planes were grounded, the Golden Wing lounges closed, employees lost their jobs, passengers lost their frequent flyer points and the death nearly destroyed its parent company, Air New Zealand. It is now apparent (nearly 2 years later) that there is no possibility that a new airline will rise phoenix-like from the ashes of Ansett. According to the criteria to establish organisational death (Sutton, 1987), Ansett Australia is dead. However, in other circumstances, organisational death is not always so apparent.

One example of the ambiguity of organisational death can be found again outside this thesis, but within my own institution, by examining the amalgamations that occurred during the late 1980s, early 1990s when Monash University merged with three former colleges of advanced education (CAEs)[30]. Described as a rationalisation programme of higher education by the Federal Government in 1988, amalgamations that occurred throughout the university sector in Australia, saw the abolition of CAEs and the end of the binary system (between universities and CAEs) (Bessant, 1996). Sharing ideological features of corporatism and new managerialism detailed in Chapter

[30] The three colleges were Chisholm Institute (now Caulfield campus), Gippsland College of Advanced Education (now Gippsland campus) and Frankston Teachers College (now Peninsula campus).

6, the "rationalisation" of the system was designed to increase efficiency and effectiveness in the provision of higher education (Bessant, 1996). The mergers were thus not the result of identified failure of performance by any of the individual institutions involved with the amalgamations, but were part of a political reform package.

Mergers are rarely combinations between equal partners (Panchal & Cartwright, 2001). As the university and the dominant partner in the mergers, Monash retained its name and identity, and the university was transformed; the colleges, on the other hand, lost their identity and ceased to exist. When identifying organisational death, it is reasonable to suggest that Monash survived, but the three colleges formally died. Although there are colleagues who argue the cultures of the former colleges remain embedded within the people and continuing values, for the purposes of this discussion, the formal end to the legal entity will constitute the legal death. Unlike the experience of the death of Ansett though, the death of the three colleges has contributed to the successful performance of Monash University.

What then about amalgamations, such as that of the case-study of this research? In this instance, as discussed in Chapter 6, every council within the State, except one, was involved in amalgamations; every council experienced its death, and every former council was re-formed and merged with others into a new entity. New organisational identities were created (McEntire & Bentley, 1996), and unlike the higher education experience where it was clear the universities were always the dominant partner (Bessant, 1996), it is not clear if any particular council assumed the role of the dominant partner in the newly formed municipality. Although some councils were singled out for poor performance (see Dunstan, 1998), the reasons for the amalgamations detailed in Chapter 6, tended, like the instance of higher education reforms, to be driven by ideology and politics (Ernst & Webber, 1997). The deaths were again, not for reasons of particularly poor performance, but for reasons of ideology and politics.

Based on these three examples of Ansett, Monash and Bass Coast Shire, there can be no doubt that organisational deaths do occur. But each was different. Ansett's death can be directly attributed to poor performance and failure of management (Way & Thomson, 2003); while the deaths of the organisations within the Monash and Bass Coast Shire examples occurred for reasons of ideology and politics. With the death of Ansett, there has been no resurrection or rebirth. In the Monash experience, three organisations died and the university, the dominant partner, continued, albeit larger, re-formed and re-structured. Finally, the example of the Bass Coast Shire is different

again, because all the amalgamating organisations died to form an entirely new and again larger, entity.

From this discussion it is clear the concept of organisational death is not simple. First of all, the death of an organisation is not necessarily a consequence of failure, and the death of an organisation does not logically imply anything about its previous performance (Carroll & Delacroix, 1982). It is also apparent that despite the death of an organisation, its activities may continue intact within a new organisation. With the suggestion by Sutton (1987), that the deaths of organisations that result from mergers do not constitute "unambiguous deaths", the concept of organisational death is problematised. Sutton (1987) does however add that from a constructivist position, if organisational participants perceive the experience of amalgamation as organisational death, then it can be defined as dead. The issue of the perceptions of organisational participants of the amalgamation is examined in Chapter 9; it is worth noting though at this point, there is no doubt that organisational participants and observers perceived the council amalgamations as organisational death.

To capture some of the perceptions, as well as the differing portrayals of the process of amalgamations that contributed to the sense of the inevitability of organisational death, different media will be used in the following chapter. This will now be briefly discussed in the section that follows.

Use of Different Media

The decision to draw on the particular media to represent each of the former councils was not without thought and consideration (Alderfer, 1988). One of the aims of the research, previously discussed in the Methodology chapter and encapsulated within Research question 5, is the wish to allow the unique experiences of each of the councils involved in the amalgamation to be researched and heard. This dignifying of the unique is expressed by the spirit of still life, as being visible "without concealment by its neighbour" (Sterling, 1959, p. 49). Adopting the spirit of synthetic Cubism, I also wanted to replicate the concept of a variety of media to represent different objects, for the texture and patterns of the different media do provide a different "feel" to each of the organisations.

For instance, the formality of the reporting of the activities of the Shire of Phillip Island, represented in their local newspaper, is an emotionally remote and distanced account of the amalgamation process. This is in contrast to the account of the

amalgamation derived from interviews conducted with former employees of the Shire of Bass, in which an emotional immediacy is apparent. Despite what has been suggested, there is a hierarchy that has privileged the spoken word over the written (Derrida, 1978), and it is my hope that the reader privileges neither council nor medium over an other.

The background wash upon which the images of amalgamation will be drawn is derived from direct transcripts from the daily metropolitan press. The headlines and fragments of news items from *The Age* (one of two major daily newspapers in circulation in the state) provide the political context and public framework of the local government reform being implemented by the State government. Irrespective of whether one believes newspapers produce or construct myths (see Lule, 2002), or perpetuate the dominance of an élite (see Meyers, 1994), key figures in government at that time, as well as the employees of the councils who were to be amalgamated, assumed the newspaper reported news and information that was factual, objective and readily verifiable. As mentioned in the methodology chapter, these documents or "remnants" (see Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2000), are understood to offer a contemporaneous account of events, and thus a surface accuracy is assumed. From the perspective of Ford (1999), these records provide what he calls first-order realties that again, offer some record of events as they occur. It is as credible accounts of events, that the documents such as newspapers and council minutes have been transcribed.

Having acknowledged the additional ontological dilemmas of establishing the reality of the content represented in newsprint (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000), the press cuttings themselves are nonetheless "real". Indeed, if this was to be a visual and not written representation, the publication's font and house style and yellowing of the paper would be a ready testament to the reality of the newspaper itself.

With similar reservations and qualifications, the Shire of Phillip Island is also represented by a newspaper, the local regional newspaper *Phillip Island and San Remo Advertiser*; this newspaper differs however from *The Age*, not in the accuracy of the reportage, but in the more sharply focussed attention on the implications and activities of the smaller geographical area, and in particular the local shire. From these headlines and commentary it is possible to sense the building momentum towards amalgamation and the concerns and the issues that were important to the local ratepayers and residents within local government. The conflicts within the council were also enacted on the pages of the local press. Again, in suggesting the realism of the materials, the content may or may not be "real"; but what has been recorded in the *Vanitas* chapter is a realistic transcription of the newsprint.

The issue of accurate recording of meeting proceedings is less certain in the council minutes (see Hakim, 1993; Hodder, 1994; Simmons, 1988), which serve as the selected medium for the Borough of Wonthaggi. Nonetheless, as records of decision making in local government, the minutes trace the growing awareness of the determined push for local government reform by the State Government, and reveal how these are addressed by the senior managers and elected representatives of this small Borough. The minutes are thus the unique records of a local council at work.

The last council, the Shire of Bass, is represented through the use of interview transcripts. The "truthfulness" of the material is not under question, although Gabriel, (1998) does make distinctions between "facts-as-information" and "facts-as-experience". In this instance, with the focus on emotional response and sense-making (Cohen & Mallon, 2001), the interest of the interviews lies less on the "factual" information within the interviews and more on the experience of the interviewees. While it is acknowledged that transcripts are not merely neutral renditions of interviews (Potter, 1996), they will nonetheless be used to represent the experience of amalgamation for employees of one shire. The interviewees have, in the main, reflected on their own and their former colleagues' particular experience as employees of the Shire of Bass during the period of amalgamation. Their references are to their council, their councillors, their council building. The interview transcripts have been included to offer some flavour of how the amalgamation was experienced by yet another shire.

My hope in the representation of the organisations involved in the amalgamation is to allow the reader to notice the unique qualities of each of the councils. There are common experiences, but each is independent and share degrees of connectedness. The councils are the same, same but different.

The material that is "pasted" in the chapter that follows, paints a picture of a government determined to impose significant change on the third tier of government (Aulich, 1999b). The presentation of the data will also show the many ways in which this inevitable imposition of change was experienced by the three major councils in this particular amalgamation process. Because materials will be pasted from a range of different media there will be overlap, repetition and differences. As the person who has created the piece in the chapter that follows, my role has been to select those texts which best represent the accounts of the creation of the Bass Coast Shire as I have experienced, recorded, remembered and perceived them. Because the decision-making process that supports inclusion and exclusion of material cannot be informed at all times by conscious and rational thought (Berg & Smith, 1988; Devereux, 1967; King, 1996),

it could perhaps be described as an approach that approximates the Cubist sense of conception as well as perception. In addition to applying a metaphorical mirror with which to reflect the multiple perceptions of the organisation, I shall contribute some analysis in which to enact my conception. It is an approach in which it is my intention to display some of the multiple realities of the new organisation known as Bass Coast Shire Council.

Concluding Comments

The purpose of this chapter was twofold. The first was to provide background reading notes to assist with the research text that follows. The second was to explore the suitability of Cubism and, in particular, its style and content, for the representation of organisational experience.

The reading notes were provided to assist the reader with the representation that will follow. The theme of *vanitas*, derived from still life, and paralleled in the research data, is explained as background to the theme of the inevitability of death. The use of stories is explained as a device to record the multiplicity of experiences, that are not necessarily coherent, and struggle with each other for meaning. Psychoanalytic literature, the literature of emotions in organisations, and the responses to organisational change were all mentioned to establish the presence of death and its many associative connections within organisations. Finally, the discussion problematised the concept of organisational death, and concluded with the suggestion that death has occurred when it is so perceived by its constituent members.

In Chapter 9, the features of pasting in synthetic Cubism will be represented by the "laying down" of materials derived from a range of sources. There will be overlap and repetition – none of the data is complete and yet each can be "read" independent of other pastings. There is in the data to be presented, many hints of other images apart from inevitability that could be drawn – the hints are incomplete and the reader may wish to "fill in the gaps". The author has also added her own scribblings to offer further depth to the pastings.

To conclude this chapter, it is necessary once more to refer to research questions 2 and 3 that posited the suitability of (specifically synthetic) Cubist style and content for the representation of organisational complexity. The synthetic Cubist style exemplified by Picasso and to a lesser extent, Stein, has, in this chapter been portrayed as a deeply complex and challenging art form. The imagery is complex and with its many layers of

meaning, a Cubist collage demands attention from its audience. Collage is an artistic technique that incorporates the realism of reality as well as including examples that suggest a parody of reality. Irrespective of the complexity and opaque imagery of the representation, the association with a known external object-world is not severed. This, as is noted below, is also the case, no matter what appears to be the arbitrary placement of pastings and line drawings;

> With Picasso, collage is one of the main means by which traditional presentation is replaced by a set of arbitrarily chosen but consistently and contextually interrelated signs which, when taken together, perform a representational task (Fry, 1992, p. 98).

In returning to the research question two, which questions the applicability of the Cubism for representing organisational data, it is clear the technique of synthetic Cubism is one that is predicated on the representation of reality. The Cubists were said to represent a conceived and not perceived reality; a reality, or some realities nonetheless. The technique of collage, that exemplified the work of synthetic Cubism, is one that encourages the use of different media to represent realities, and in so doing, suggests the potential for the representation of multiple realities.

A Cubist collage is thus, by its essential nature, a stylistic technique that contains complexity, diversity and multilayered imagery. With the tradition of play, of irony and humour, Cubist collage is also a technique that assures attention is paid to the placement of images, no matter how arbitrary their pasting may appear. As a technique that could be used to inform the representation of organisational data, it is clear that synthetic Cubism has much to be recommended for any organisational researcher, who seeks to represent the complexities of organisational experience and embrace the multiple realities within organisations.

Finally, to address research question three, which raises the issue of the content of Cubist works as a suitable framework for organisational representation, it is clear there is much in the choice of still life as the preferred subject matter for synthetic Cubism. Although this question is discussed in subsequent chapters, still life, with its democratic traditions and associations with the transience of life and the inevitability of death, can resonate with motifs found in organisational data. The aspect of still life that dignifies the marginalised and the passed over, offers creative possibilities for those in organisational research who are similarly committed to surfacing what has been traditionally overlooked in organisational research. That aspect of still life that is endowed with the calm that ensures that all within its frame is presented without

interference from an other, also offers potential to people in organisational studies who value the intensity of study possible in a single case-study, or small scale research.

In their challenges to traditional cultural practises, Cubism was an art of defiance. Practised more explicitly by Picasso than either Braque or Stein, the content of Cubist works had the potential for explicit political commentary. Irrespective of this overt politicisation of the cultural practise, the technique of Cubism itself was used to subvert the prevailing bourgeois perception of high art.

This is not the final commentary on the contribution that Cubism can make to organisational representation; the questions shall be returned to in subsequent chapters. In the chapter that follows is the first attempt to use synthetic Cubism as a model for the representation of organisational experience.

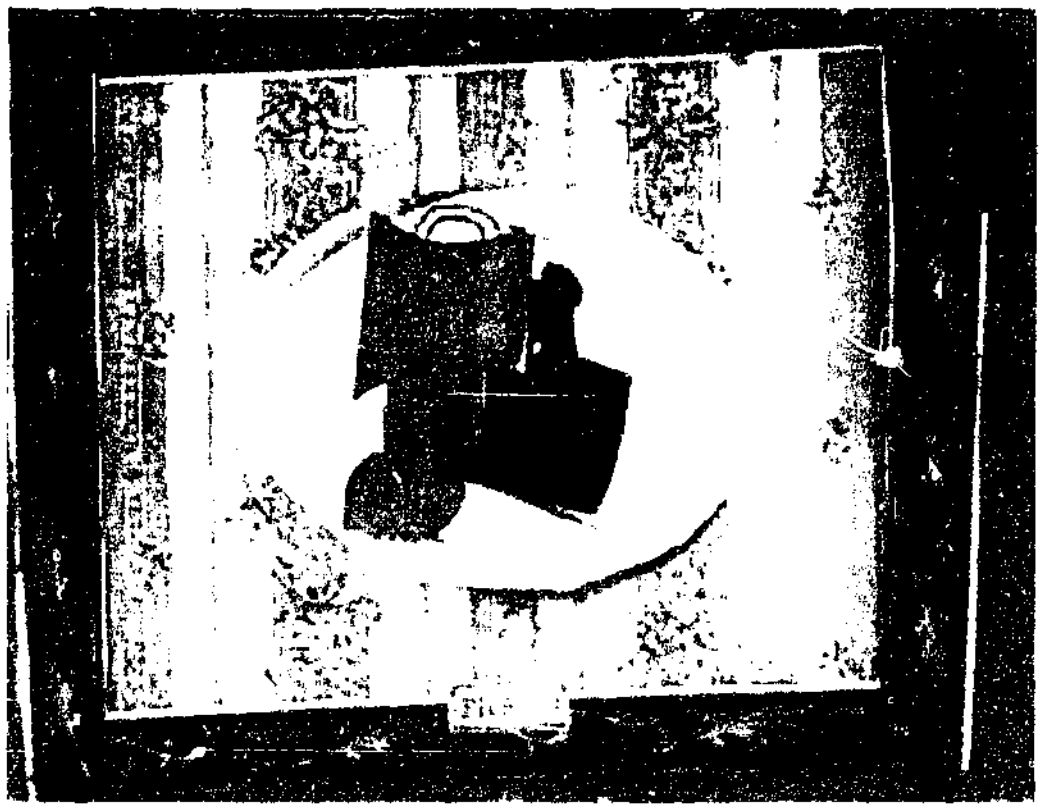

Figure 8.1
Pablo Picasso. *Glass and Bottle of Bass* (1914),
Pasted paper and charcoal on cardboard, 52x 67 cm, Private collection.

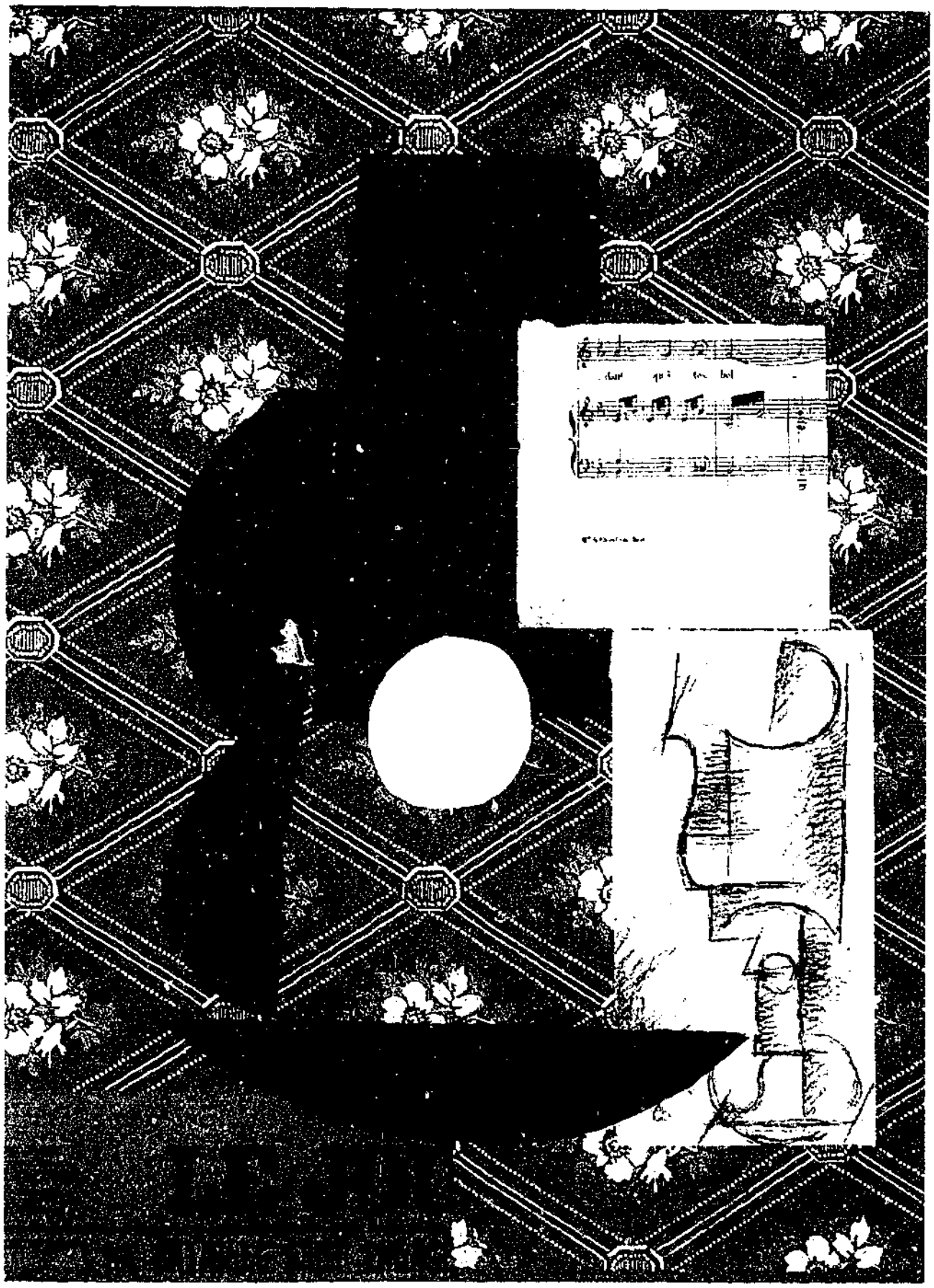

Figure 8.2
Pablo Picasso. *Guitar, Sheet Music, and Glass: "La Bataille s'est engagée"* (1912)
Pasted paper, gouache and charcoal. 47.9 x 36.5 cm.
Marion Koogler McNay Art Museum, San Antonio.

Exhibit 8.1 Gertrude Stein Excerpt from *Tender Buttons* (1914)

OBJECTS

A CARAFE, THAT IS A BLIND GLASS.

A kind in glass and a cousin, a spectacle and nothing strange a single hurt color and an arrangement in a system to pointing. All this and not ordinary, not unordered in not resembling. The difference is spreading.

GLAZED GLITTER.

Nickel, what is nickel, it is originally rid of a cover.

The change in that is that red weakens an hour. The change has come. There is no search. But there is, there is that hope and that interpretation and sometime, surely any is unwelcome, sometime there is breath and there will be a sinecure and charming very charming is that clean and cleansing. Certainly glittering is handsome and convincing.

There is no gratitude in mercy and in medicine. There can be breakages in Japanese. That is no programme. That is no color chosen. It was chosen yesterday, that showed spitting and perhaps washing and polishing. It certainly showed no obligation and perhaps if borrowing is not natural there is some use in giving.

A SUBSTANCE IN A CUSHION.

The change of color is likely and a difference a very little difference is prepared. Sugar is not a vegetable.

Callous is something that hardening leaves behind what will be soft if there is a genuine interest in there being present as many girls as men. Does this change. It shows that dirt is clean when there is a volume.

A cushion has that cover. Supposing you do not like to change, supposing it is very

A BOX.

Out of kindness comes redness and out of rudeness comes rapid same question, out of an eye comes research, out of selection comes painful cattle. So then the order is that a white way of being round is something suggesting a pin and is it disappointing, it is not, it is so rudimentary to be analysed and see a fine substance strangely, it is so earnest to have a green point not to red but to point again.

A PIECE OF COFFEE.

More of double.

A place in no new table.

A single image is not splendor. Dirty is yellow. A sign of more in not mentioned. A piece of coffee is not a detainer. The resemblance to yellow is dirtier and distincter. The clean mixture is whiter and not coal color, never more coal color than altogether.

The sight of a reason, the same sight slighter, the sight of a simpler negative answer, the same sore sounder, the intention to wishing, the same splendor, the same furniture.

The time to show a message is when too late and later there is no hanging in a blight.

A not torn rose-wood color. If it is not dangerous then a pleasure and more than any other if it is cheap is not cheaper. The amusing side is that the sooner there are no fewer the more certain is the necessity dwindled. Supposing that the case contained rose-wood and a color. Supposing that there was no reason for a distress and more likely for a number, supposing that there was no astonishment, is it not necessary to mingle astonishment.

The settling of stationing cleaning is one way not to shatter scatter and scattering. The one way to use custom is to use soap and silk for cleaning. The one way to see cotton is

to have a design concentrating the illusion and the illustration. The perfect way is to accustom the thing to have a lining and the shape of a ribbon and to be solid, quite solid in standing and to use heaviness in morning. It is light enough in that. It has that shape nicely. Very nicely may not be exaggerating. Very strongly may be sincerely fainting. May be strangely flattering. May not be strange in everything. May not be strange to.

DIRT AND NOT COPPER.

Dirt and not copper makes a color darker. It makes the shape so heavy and makes no melody harder.

It makes mercy and relaxation and even a strength to spread a table fuller. There are more places not empty. They see cover.

NOTHING ELEGANT.

A charm a single charm is doubtful. If the red is rose and there is a gate surrounding it, if inside is let in and there places change then certainly something is upright. It is earnest.

MILDRED'S UMBRELLA.

A cause and no curve, a cause and loud enough, a cause and extra a loud clash and an extra wagon, a sign of extra, a sac a small sac and an established color and cunning, a slender grey and no ribbon, this means a loss a great loss a restitution.

A METHOD OF A CLOAK.

A single climb to a line, a straight exchange to a cane, a desperate adventure and courage and a clock, all this which is a system, which has feeling, which has resignation and success, all makes an attractive black silver.

CHAPTER 9

VANITAS – THE INEVITABLE IN AN ORGANISATIONAL AMALGAMATION

Purpose

The purpose of this chapter is to address specifically the following research questions;

Research question four: What was the experience of organisational change for the organisations and employees involved in the amalgamation process that formed Bass Coast Shire Council?

Research question five: What were the responses of the employees and organisation of the different amalgamating councils to the process of amalgamation?

This chapter will paint a picture of the experience of three key organisations during the process of an amalgamation imposed and controlled by the state government. The three organisations will be presented individually and are represented by different media. In maintaining the spirit of visual arts, much of the analytic process has been conducted in the creation of the finished product and will not be made explicit until later in this chapter. The reader is invited to engage with the material as desired.

The chapter will draw on the material of synthetic Cubism presented in the previous chapter, to trace the portrayal of the amalgamation process as a "still life" in which the juggernaut of political forces renders the amalgamation inevitable. The concept of *vanitas* or the inevitability of death is said to be the essence of the genre of still life – the theme and its many associations with death will resonate throughout this representation of the case study of amalgamation.

Introducing Bass Coast Shire Council

Welcome to the Bass Coast Shire Council (B.C.S.C.) which was constituted on 2 December, 1994 comprising the former Shires of Bass and Phillip Island, the former Borough of Wonthaggi, the Inverloch area of the former Shire of Woorayl, and the Wattle Bank and Lance Creek areas of the former Shire of

> Korumburra. As per the brief news releases decorating every staff notice board, the new municipality has a population of approximately 20,900 and covers an area of approximately 780 square kilometres (*Shire Crier*[31]– the staff newsletter. Issue 1, 8 December 1994).

Amongst the major constituents of the new Bass Coast Shire Council, the former Borough of Wonthaggi had employed 33 staff to serve the regional township of Wonthaggi, with a population of 6990 residents and a budget of close to $4,000,000. The former Shire of Phillip Island, with a permanent population of 5490 residents, employed 87 staff and had a budget of close to $6,500,000 to cater to the service needs of residents and visitors of the coastal resort and tourist island. The former Shire of Bass, with a population of 5170, was located inland with a rural farming base and employed 42 staff and had a budget of $4,250,000. Inverloch had a population of 2800 and Wattle Bank district 500.[32]

> Wonthaggi wins municipal centre. Phillip Island has lost its bid...for the moment...to have the administrative centre of the newly created Bass Coast Council located at Cowes [the main town on Phillip Island]. The Minister of Local Government, Roger Hallam, named Wonthaggi as his choice last Thursday (*Phillip Island & San Remo Advertiser*, 7 December, 1994).

This decision was announced just one day before the birth of the new organisation and located the offices of the new council in the previous offices of the Borough of Wonthaggi in Wonthaggi. Wonthaggi is approximately 160 kilometres from Melbourne, the state's capital city; forty-three kilometres from the former shire offices of Phillip Island; seven kilometres from Archie's Creek, the town in which the Bass Shire had its offices; and twelve kilometres from Inverloch (Appendix A).

The Story of Amalgamation

Amalgamation – The Story from One Metropolitan Daily

The amalgamation reform to local government, introduced by the newly elected state government was, as mentioned in Chapter 6, considered to be "a revolution", involving "massive re-engineering" (Galligan, 1998; Gerritsen, 1998). Yet, despite the

[31] *The Shire Crier* had been the name of the staff newsletter at the Shire of Phillip Island and the name continued into the new organization. The first issue was published less than one week after the proclamation of the new Shire Council.

[32] Figures taken from ABS Estimated Residential Population 1993 cited in Interim Report, Local Government Board, 1994; *Phillip Island and San Remo Advertiser*, 10 August, 1994, pp 6-7 and Council minutes at Borough of Wonthaggi, 14 November, 1994.

intense activity involved in the structural reform of local government, not one employee interviewed for this project, had any recollection of memoranda or information sheets or any other material from the government or the Local Government Board, detailing any rationale for the introduction of the reforms, beyond the need for improved efficiency and effectiveness. The Office of Local Government, the relevant government department had very little direct contact with the local government councils. Instead, it used the Local Government Board, established as an independent advisory board (Burke & Walsh, 1998), as the vehicle for communication with the community.

Perhaps the predominant means for disseminating information on the amalgamation process was through the print media. This was evident in the comments by the Chairman of the Local Government Board, Mrs Burke (1998) in her reference to the extensive use and reliance on the metropolitan and regional print media "to encourage community awareness of the reform process" (p. 75). Not surprisingly then, interviewees confirmed they relied upon the local press for their information on the progress of amalgamations throughout the state. Although the Minister for Local Government, (Hallam, 1998), believed *The Age* to be a critic of the state government, he also noticed a shift in opinion expressed in the newspaper over the issue of amalgamations. Because of the reliance on the media by the government to report on, and inform the many stakeholders of local government of the changes to be implemented, the pastings from *The Age* newspaper,[33] one of the state's two daily metropolitan newspapers has been selected to serve as a reliable, contextual "narrative undercoat" that chronicles the progress of the reform process. I would also like to remind the reader that Appendix D details the timetable of the amalgamation process.

1993: Reforms key to city's future

> A thorough overhaul of local government that could...force amalgamations and reshape regional cities and shires is being planned by the State Government. The Minister for Local Government, Mr Hallam, is set to introduce legislation that will create a local government board to oversee the reforms and take away the ability of opponents to block amalgamations and municipal boundary changes (Elias, 13 March, p. 1).

Local councils' boundaries to be redrawn

[33] Because all of the following section has been pasted from *The Age* newspaper, the name of the daily will not be included in each reference.

The Minister for Local Government, Mr Hallam, wants to move quickly and is preparing two bills that will facilitate an overhaul of local government throughout the state. ... will set up a Local Government Board to replace the Local Government Commission... (Elias, 13 March, p. 2).

Geelong heads for 'super city' facelift

Instead of 99 councillors in 9 municipalities, the new city will have 15 councillors representing 15 electoral divisions, who will have to decide which services will continue.

Efficiency gains will add another $12 million to $18 million to savings. (Elias, 17 March, p. 1).

More council mergers on way, says Kennett

The Premier, Mr Kennett, yesterday warned there would be more council mergers around the state..."Most, or an increasing number of councils, recognise there are better ways to lead to greater efficiencies, to keep costs down for the ratepayers, so there will be amalgamations", he said (Taylor, 3 April, p. 5).

Councils at war over mergers.

Local councils are fighting for economic survival, but they are also fighting to retain their identities, David Elias reports.

In each case, the arguments remain the same. The city councils at the hub of the regions see advantages of forming a bigger unit of government, the smaller spokes fear a loss of autonomy and identity. ...

The flags above the Geelong West Town Hall were flown upside down, the time honoured international maritime distress signal. It told the people that Geelong West had been scuppered. It signified the smaller council's final defeat after a hard-fought battle for survival. There would be no local referendum, no avenue of appeal.

Mr Hallam continues to insist that Geelong is neither a blueprint nor a precedent for any other local government amalgamation in Victoria. Mr Hallam said he was less concerned with boundaries than the efficient delivery of service. How

local government could get better value from resource-sharing, how to lift standards, and the effects of compulsory tendering were issues equally important as borders. (Elias. 17 April, p. 19).

No super councils for bush

Basically, we believe that where possible, local government ought to remain local. That is why we are opposed to the "super councils" that are being created outside Melbourne. This movement threatens to dilute the direct representation at a local level that Victorians deserve...

But local spirit, to use Mr Hallam's term, drives the heart of rural Victoria. Perhaps even more than in the city, small government is what people want. The local community is what matters. Savings in the country, as in the city, can be made in many ways other than through council mergers...Local communities in our country areas are diverse and distinct in character. Local government should in large part be about preserving that diversity (Editorial opinion, 20 April, p.15).

Local councils and basic democracy

... there needs to be a lot more debate about just what area of Melbourne should be covered by the Melbourne City Council, just as more debate is needed about amalgamations in the suburbs and in provincial Victoria.

In general, given our three tiers of government, local government ought to remain as local as possible. If there is a cost in terms of higher rates, local residents should be able to choose whether or not they want to bear those costs as the price for true grass-roots democracy (Editorial opinion. 28 April, p. 19)

There is building up, over the period of just three months, a growing public momentum and awareness of the changes to local government the state government appears determined to implement. *The Age* newspaper chronicles this momentum, initially from a position of opposition (see Blacher, 1999 for his comment on this). Thus, *The Age* highlights the imposition of the reforms, referring to the "forced amalgamations", the Premier's "warning" of more council mergers and the removal of the right of opponents to block these changes[34]. There is also within these news reports,

[34] "The Kennett Government considered that the courts were not an appropriate forum for settling differences that arose about proposals for boundary reform" (Burke & Walsh, 1998, p., p.75).

the sense of threat surrounding the enforced changes in Geelong, the first of the government-imposed amalgamations. The speed of the decisions and their implementation are palpable in these news accounts.

Reporting the government's rationale of the need for greater efficiencies, the newspaper also argues for the need for community representation and what it refers to as "local democracy". The tensions that reflect the ideological struggles between efficiencies, the local community and democracy in the public sector in 1980s and 1990s. previously identified in Chapter 6, are now being played out in the daily press.

Early in the process of state-wide reform, death is articulated in the context of council amalgamations, and the language of war[35] is linked to local government in the headlines. The government's position is reported as aggressive and threatening. Note the report on 17 April, 1993, accompanied by a photograph of the Australian flag flying upside down, that refers to the councils being "scuppered" (deliberately sunk) and the "final defeat after a hard-worn battle for survival". It is not known if the distress symbolised by the flag, is for the death of democracy or the death of the council. Irrespective of what is understood to have died, there is an unambiguous perception of death, and the loss is being mourned.

By June, 1993, the extent of the local government reform was made explicit. Specific regions to be reviewed prior to amalgamation were identified in *The Age* and the Premier indicated that the number of councils would be cut by at least one half. There is a sense of a developing inevitability of the involvement of all councils in this amalgamation process.

> Melbourne and country boundaries for review
>
> The State Government will review the boundaries of inner-Melbourne and three key regional centres – Ballarat, Bendigo and the LaTrobe Valley. The reviews could lead to further amalgamations and a change in the Melbourne city council. The Government has identified those regions – and other provincial centres – as areas with the most potential for efficiencies, and the Local Government Board will begin the reviews early next month.
>
> The reviews will consider council mergers, but, in a wider effort, will also examine other efficiencies such as compulsory competitive tendering.

[35] This was 1993, before the hyperbole of war was mainstreamed in the 'serious' Australian press to describe government initiatives such as "War on Drugs" and the famous/ infamous "War on Terror".

"Despite fertile rumours to the contrary ... the key aim of the government's local government policy is not wholesale municipal amalgamations," Mr Hallam said.

The Premier, Mr Kennett...believes Victoria's 200 councils will eventually be cut to about 100.

Mr Hallam said the board would not be able "to ride rough-shod over councils."

Mr Kennett has also said that Hawthorn, Kew and Camberwell would eventually be amalgamated. (Taylor, 10 June, p. 5).

The council revolution by Roger Hallam [the Minister for Local Government].

My personal vision of successful local government encompasses three elements: One, providing the services demanded by the community as efficiently as possible. Two, effectively assisting the economic and social developments of the community. And three, being fully accountable to its constituents.

Four major pieces of legislation relating to local government have been passed in recent weeks...These Acts will all further the Government's objectives of achieving greater efficiency, effectiveness and accountability in local government.

Boundary changes may be one way of achieving those goals.

The board's charter will be to advise on improvements to the efficiency and effectiveness of local government in Victoria. As part of that, it will look specifically at:

- Compulsory competitive tendering.
- Financial issues.
- Boundary changes.

The review process will take place - as it should do - against criteria of improving efficiency and effectiveness. The Government has indicated that Compulsory Competitive Tendering (CCT) will be introduced to local government in Victoria. This is intended to promote cost efficiency and accountability in local government, require councils to define service requirements more carefully than they may have done in the past, and ensure that councils implement best practice in service delivery (Hallam, 10 June, p. 16).

Local councils face reviews by the board

The Local Government Board, to be chaired by Councillor Leonie Bourke of Prahran, will advise the Minister for Local Government, Mr Hallam, on council reforms.

It will begin by reviewing the efficiency of Ballarat, Bendigo and the LaTrobe Valley (Taylor, 10 August, p. 9).

Kennett keen to disband city council

The Premier, Mr Jeff Kennett, wants to sack Melbourne City Council (MCC) and replace it with a board of commissioners before forming a new, business-oriented CBD council.

Although Mr Kennett refused to comment, Government sources confirmed his desire to reform the council. They also confirmed a rift with the Minister for Local Government, Mr Roger Hallam, who favours retaining a larger council. (Forbes, 29 August, p. 5).

Councils to face merger pressure. MCC sacked in big revamp.

The push for council mergers is likely after the Government yesterday moved to sack the bickering Melbourne City Council and install independent commissioners to run the city ...

"We haven't sacked them," said Mr Kennett... Mr Hallam said it would be unfair and impractical to expect the present councillors to manage the changes given the dramatic transformation envisaged for the city's operations.

Yesterday's announcement was yet another ominous sign for councils throughout Victoria. (Gettler, 29 September, p. 1).

Councils at coalface of change

Like the Premier, the chairman of the Local Government Board believes in small government. "I think they interfere enough in your life," Ms (sic) Burke said. "The fact they take your money is bad enough."

She said councils have to move with the times and compared their structure to an old steamship. "It looks great and is very strong but as a form of travel today, it really is outdated. You'll get to London a lot faster on a jet".

But while most councils accept the need for change, they do not like the trip being forced on them. She denied suggestions that the Government was not consulting enough about the changes, which were only explained to the councils

themselves – on an embargoed basis – about an hour before they were announced publicly. The issue of amalgamation has been canvassed for many years, she said (Gettler, 4 October, p. 7).

Big isn't beautiful

Given that states are not going to fade away, there is no point in forced council amalgamations. Governments at all levels must be as efficient as possible, but efficiency is not the only criterion by which they should be judged.

Local government serves communities and it does this best when the communities are relatively small. The only amalgamations that ought to happen are those agreed to by local councils and their residents (Editorial opinion, 1 December, p. 15.

Kennett's changed tune on councils (Letter to the Editor, 2 December, p. 12. Half metropolitan councils may face amalgamation (Gettler, 8 December, p. 5). Why we need to resist council amalgamations (Letter to the Editor, 8 December, p. 14). Some councils face extinction (Gettler, 9 December, p. 1). Rights doubt on council mergers (Conroy, 9 December, p. 10). Let ratepayers decide (Editorial opinion, 10 December, p. 13). $400m cost of councils hard to justify (Gettler, 15 December, 1993, p. 4).

By the end of 1993, the local government "revolution" had been won. Protest about the lack of consultation is given some voice in *The Age* but it is clear the state government is determined to continue with amalgamations across the state. Explaining the lack of consultation by the government on this issue, the Chairman of the Local Government Board argued by implication that because the idea of amalgamations had been canvassed for years, councils should have been known this was to occur. When faced with significant opposition by the powerful Melbourne City Council, the state government sacked the elected representatives of council and installed appointed Commissioners. For the councils not yet amalgamated, a clear message of the pointlessness of opposition had been provided. It had become obvious that all councils were to be reviewed and involved in an amalgamation process. Amalgamation was inevitable.

1994:

Merger mania grips city councils before overhaul (13 January, p.1); No hope in going it alone, councils under threat of amalgamation warned (29 January, p. 5); MPs warned of voter backlash on mergers (1 February, 1994, p. 6); Councils promise savings in last stand for survival (15 February, p. 5); Council mergers – the social and democratic costs (6 April, p. 20); Municipal shake-up (9 April, p. 23); Why a freeze on local democracy can't be justified (2 May, p. 14); Local government shake-up – for better or worse (9 May, p. 1); 10,000 jobs in councils may go, says Proust (16 May, p.3); Council body says big job cuts possible (17 May, p. 2); 23 councils become 8 in Board's proposal (17 June, p. 7); Swift death, then a community malaise (22 July, p. 15); Shake-up cuts 40 councils to 24 (22 October, p. 1); Report outlines new council boundaries (19 November, p 10); North-east Victoria councils cut from 37 to 12 (19 November, p. 10); Board favours even more mergers (1 December, p. 5); Gippsland councils slashed from 24 to six (3 December, p. 8).

In the minister's review of local government in 1994, titled *It's coming together*, it was reported a total of 10 regions had been restructured either by legislation (City of Greater Geelong and the City of Melbourne) or following a review by the Local Government Board. One hundred and twenty seven councils had been reduced to 41. Either interim or final reports of the three remaining regions, yet to be approved by cabinet, recommended a further 83 councils to be reduced to 37. Once the restructure process was completed in early 1995, all councils except one, the Borough of Queenscliffe, had been involved in a process of boundary review and eventual amalgamation with neighbouring councils. The amalgamation process was complete.

What has been presented to date, is the metaphoric canvas of newspaper reports of the state-wide reforms to local government. The mantra chanted from the state government to support these reforms is efficiencies, efficiencies and effectiveness and efficiencies, effectiveness and accountability. The costs of local government are too high to justify and councils are warned about the threat of amalgamation. The paper carries reports of the mania, the slashing, the shake-up, the swift death, the sacking, the cuts to, and the extinction of, local government councils. There is mention of resistance, backlash and councils fighting for survival and there is comment on community malaise. Concerns are expressed for democracy. The story of the amalgamation

programme, as captured in the daily press, is filled with violence, death, resignation and defeat. The government, some six months after an overwhelming victory, pushes through the programme of reform to local government in a period of less than two years. The inevitability of their success is evident in each newspaper report and the readers of *The Age* are left in no doubt.

With this as the background, each of the councils involved in the Bass Coast Shire will now be represented. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the Shire of Phillip Island will be represented by their local press; the Borough of Wonthaggi by the council minutes and the Shire of Bass by interview. The voice may differ for each, but the story is, however, no less potent.

Amalgamation – A Story by The Phillip Island and San Remo Advertiser

Phillip Island is located approximately 130 kilometres from Melbourne, Victoria's state capital. The island is about 26 kilometres long and nine kilometres wide and encompasses an area of approximately 100 square kilometres (Interim report, Local Government Board, 1994). Its permanent population is about 5500 that swells to approximately 40000 people during the summer season. Because of its many tourist attractions such as its surf beaches, the Fairy Penguin colony and the Motor Cycle Grand Prix, the island attracts close to 3.5 million visitors annually. These visitation figures make Phillip Island the most popular single tourist destination in Australia (http://www.walkabout.com.au/fairfax/fairfax/locations/VICPhillipIsland.shtml).

The Island is served by a weekly newspaper, *The Phillip Island and San Remo Advertiser*. With a circulation of 3000, it is published each Wednesday and is distributed without cost. Reading the local newspaper of Phillip Island during the years 1993 to 1995, reveals extensive coverage and substantial column inches devoted to a range of different activities of first the Shire of Phillip Island and then by the Bass Coast Shire, such as, the Meals on Wheels support service, the local Leisure Centre, the new council structure, Council's response to tourist development, the work of home help. The pieces about the council are overwhelmingly supportive of council activities and because of their currency of information, provide a sense of the embeddedness of shire activities within local community life. From the reports of their activities in the local press, the council appears an integral and important provider of social, recreation, health, welfare, and community-based services as well as responsibility for public works and maintenance of local infrastructure. Because all articles within the local newspaper are without by-lines, it is not possible to establish the authorship of the

stories, and there is little value in speculating whether it was the editor or an employee of the council, who wrote the copy on council matters.

The first mention in the *Phillip Island and San Remo Advocate* of boundary restructure, merger or amalgamation was noted on 29 April, 1993.

1993

> A Phillip Island Councillor criticised comments made publicly last week by two of his colleagues, on the issue of the possibility of local councils merging. The comments were made in *The Sentinel* [the newspaper based in the neighbouring council, Wonthaggi]. Both councillors were reported as saying that they believed that the Shire of Phillip Island should amalgamate with other councils and become part of the greater south-west Gippsland council. The councillor criticised his colleagues because they had made public comment on an issue that had not been formally discussed at council level.
>
> Cr Williams said he was angry because the matter had only been discussed once, *in camera*, in an informal manner at council level...and no resolution or further formal discussion on the subject had emanated from that. He said that as yet, the issue was not on the council agenda and until it was public comments which created uncertainty and angering neighbouring shires should be avoided.
>
> The CEO, Barry Hayes said this week that the Shire of Phillip Island had not made any merger approaches to Bass, nor had Bass approached Phillip Island on the issue. However, he said, staff from both shires were becoming concerned at speculative press reports on the possibility of mergers between municipalities in the district. (29 April, p. 3.)

This first news of an impending amalgamation was reported in the local press in April, 1993. By December, 1994 the councils had been amalgamated. Within the intervening twenty months, the local paper was to chronicle the arguments, the disappointments, the resistance and distress of the local council and their representatives generated by this issue. This early report also immediately placed the human dimension of amalgamation into the public arena with its coverage of the conflict on the issue amongst councillors, and the concern expressed by the Phillip Island Shire Chief Executive Officer for the staff of his council and neighbouring councils. What will

emerge in the story that follows is one organisations' response to the inevitability of the amalgamation.

> Talks wanted on council mergers
>
> Philip Island councillors have moved to request the shire president of Bass, Cr Heather Vicars to convene a joint meeting of councillors from Korumburra, Bass, Wonthaggi and Phillip Island to discuss the issue of council amalgamation. The move was carried by the casting vote of the shire president ...speculation in recent weeks over the possibility of local municipality amalgamations have been rife in some sections of the press (13 May, p. 1).
>
> Report from Shire President
>
> Last week, Roger Hallam, Minister for Local Government visited Woorayl Shire [a neighbouring council]. The Minister commented on boundary restructure...or in the past, what we have known as amalgamations. Whereas in the past, it has been considered that any mergers would be forced upon us by state government, Mr Hallam said the government had no agenda to do any such thing. He did make the point however his ministry was about improved efficiency and improved accountability in the area of local government. He also said that big was not necessarily more efficient. He suggested it was the responsibility of the administrators of local government to examine the benefits and disadvantages of merging with surrounding municipalities. The examinations should look at areas of economic and social benefits, and if this is considered the way to go, the case for and against should be put to the communities concerned to ensure full agreement (17 June, p. 9)

It is clear the local newspaper served to not only report the unfolding progress of council amalgamations, but also to provide the forum in which the government could publicise its rationale for the reform program. At that time within the community, especially within regional and rural Victoria, was a great deal of concern about the financial and social costs of the rationalisation program of the state government. It was a divisive period in the history of the State (Alford & O'Neill, 1996; Ernst & Webber, 1996), and many argued the government "dealt brutally" with established local democracy in the short term (Galligan, 1998, p. 205). As Galligan (1998) noted, the government touted the needs for efficiencies and played down the values of local democracy.

During the first six months of 1993, the *Phillip Island Advertiser* reported other merger discussions and cuts to services mooted in its immediate environment and neighbouring areas. The merger of the two local secondary schools, a high school and a technical school in Wonthaggi (these were the two state secondary schools for the region; students from Phillip Island were bussed into Wonthaggi), was reported as "Local schools under threat". (July, 1993). The speculation and discussions that preceded the closure of a State Electricity Commission (SEC) office in a neighbouring town was reported. Articles detailed the rationalisation of local regional Water Boards, the closure of two large public hospitals in the neighbouring LaTrobe Valley and changes to the provision of health care and hospitals within the immediate geographic area. The permanence of state-provided services and departments was under challenge during these months of rapid change, and the merger, rationalisation and amalgamation of state instrumentalities featured prominently in this weekly regional newspaper.

The story continues;

> State ministers now give only one month for consultation on legislation. This short time frame will put great pressure on councils...The Premier's stated aim to reduce the number of municipal governments from over two hundred to one hundred is also causing alarm, as here again; amalgamations seem to be being rushed through, with little notice being taken of the wishes of the people.
> (16 September, p. 9)

Restructure talks instigated

> Representatives from Phillip Island will attend a meeting with Korumburra, Woorayl, Wonthaggi and Bass regarding municipal restructure. The Shire of Bass requested the meeting, as it feels that now is an appropriate time for discussions to take place considering the Local Government Board's recent references to the Ballarat and Bendigo regions. (14 October, p. 9).

Council news

A councillor gave a report from his attendance at the annual Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) conference. The report included problems being faced by municipalities involved in the Geelong amalgamations that, he continued;

> are not being given publicity as the State Government sweeps toward Ballarat and the LaTrobe Valley.

Another councillor noted;

> that amalgamations in NZ (New Zealand) had been less than successful and that some were now being dismantled, with the move being back to smaller areas of local government. The MAV is less than happy with the government's thrust toward amalgamation, Cr Gates said, adding that it was the government's intention to reduce the number of municipalities in the state of Victoria to 100 (28 October, p. 7).

> Shire mergers in State plan
>
> A reduction in the number of municipalities in the state is planned by the Victorian government...On Monday, the Premier, Mr Kennett announced the government's intention to eventually see the number of municipalities in the state reduced from 210 to 88. He said, with the current three tiers of government, that Australia was 'over-governed'. It is expected that creating larger regional councils would provide advantages of scale, more co-ordinated council management structures and a greater diversity of tourist attractions for marketing within each enlarged area. The restructure of municipalities by re-drawing the boundaries and amalgamating some councils was under intense discussion some years ago but was eventually scrapped. The new move has far wider implications. It would bring a more regional approach to local government. (9 December, p. 3).

Unusual for media within rural and regional Australia, the final months of 1993 provided coverage of council amalgamations in other areas of Victoria as well reporting in some detail the discussions being held by the Shire of Phillip Island and neighbouring councils. An indication of the significance accorded the issue of council amalgamations, is the reporting of a statement by the Premier at an unidentified (and presumed not be a local) location. Concern was expressed about both the speed of the process that limited consultation and the lack of information about the problems faced by municipalities already amalgamated within Victoria and overseas.

Despite providing editorial space for government stories, a reading of the local press reveals opposition to the amalgamations in general. The reports on the unacknowledged problems in Geelong and New Zealand contribute to a sense that the government is keeping information from its community. It may also express a growing awareness of the government's intent to implement their reforms, irrespective of the success or otherwise of the amalgamations. Interestingly, despite the extensive coverage

of the amalgamations taking place throughout the state, there was little reporting of activity by the Shire of Phillip Island on this issue. Although there was a general atmosphere of closures, amalgamations and changes to service provision, at this stage there was minimal information recorded in the press about the council response to possible amalgamation.

With the new year however, this was to change. Mention was made each week of council activity and discussions on the impending amalgamation, starting with the announcement of the establishment of a "mergers task force".

1994 Mergers taskforce formed

The terms of reference for the Shire's local government task team have been established. (13 January, p. 3)

Amalgamate, says Monash manager

Gippsland should seize the opportunity of local government amalgamation to reposition itself for the next century", said Murray Homes, of Monash University ..."the cost and inefficiencies of the present network of local government cannot be maintained."

Although there is no indication of where Homes was delivering this statement, the article continued to report Homes saying that leadership was required, that local government boundaries were based on old transport and communication systems and that many areas such as health, education, commerce and community services were already organised on a sub-regional basis and it's time that local government reflected this reality (27 January, p.5).

Later on page 15 of the same edition of the newspaper was a headline and the following report;

Island to fight amalgamations

The Shire of Phillip Island has appointed a task team to assess council ability to comply with expectations of the State Government in respect to service delivery....According to the Shire President, the task team review will demonstrate that the island will not benefit from amalgamation with other municipalities. He said he was concerned at moves towards amalgamations by the government...because of the fear that the Island could be 'roped into a large rural council' when it was a uniquely coastal and tourist area...He said the council supported the need to ensure Local Government is effective, efficient

and truly accountable to the community it serves..."Council recognises the need for it to have the capacity to best serve our local community. This means working smarter and improving our operations, which is consistent with State Government policy to reduce the cost of government to the community." "[these] responsibilities need to be considered carefully so that decisions taken in 1994 are of long-term benefit to Victoria and the Phillip Island community and provide for efficiency and value for the dollar." (27 January, p.15)

This report at the end of January, 1994 provides the first clear indication of the shire's intention to resist and fight the amalgamation process. Again, it is interesting to speculate why the local press chose to run a piece on page five that details the need for leadership to "seize the opportunity" of amalgamation, followed some ten pages later by the report the council was to fight amalgamations.

Councils to meet on Restructure

A meeting to discuss self-managed change to local government and the possible restructure of local councils of South Gippsland will take place in March. Eight councils have been invited to attend - Woorayl, Phillip Island, Bass, South Gippsland, Mirboo, Korumburra, Wonthaggi and Alberton. Woorayl, Phillip Island and Bass have agreed to send representatives to meetings on the subject. South Gippsland will attend the first meeting and then decide whether to continue...Wonthaggi has a policy of not entering into restructure discussions with its neighbours. The MAV will organise the first meeting...Restructuring decisions by councils in the Melbourne metropolitan area and provincial centres are well-advanced, with many councils preferring to arrange amalgamations with neighbouring councils, rather than have changes imposed on them by the State Government. The South Gippsland meetings will allow councils to have some influence on their futures (23 February, p. 2).

Council Corner [the first mention of amalgamations in this monthly column and no indication of authorship]

The amalgamation of various councils around Victoria is now a regular item in metropolitan newspapers...There is also uncertainty in what the government is seeking to achieve in the restructure program. In the Bendigo and Ballarat regions, economic development was the major focus addressed by the Board.

> Efficiency and effectiveness of existing councils was not on the agenda...The only consistent common thread is that of economy of scale...The MAV has issued guidelines for self-managed change, aimed at councils getting together in an attempt to influence their own fate before someone else does it for them. Phillip Island will be exploring that option at a joint-councils meeting next month. In the meantime council is investigating its level of efficiency by comparing its service costs with those of other councils, and reviewing its municipal plan to ensure its focus on the future is commensurate with the real needs of the community. When the draft revised municipal plan is opened for public comment, the council is hoping for active public input. Remember that a one-page hand written sincere letter is as valuable as the 10-page word processed submission from someone else (2 March, p. 13).

From this report, the council maintained its opposition to amalgamation at the same time as continuing involvement with discussions with neighbouring councils. In the report of 23 February, Wonthaggi is mentioned as a council that is resisting the process but there is no mention of the opposition by the Shire of Phillip Island.

Shire mergers are 'inevitable'

A very lengthy report of a public meeting on council amalgamations on the front page of the newspaper held in neighbouring town included the following;

> Cr Matthews [from Shire of Phillip Island] said many issues raised by local people on the question of amalgamation concerned identity, and a fear that smaller community concerns would be swallowed up in regional councils. He said a local government task team had been formed some time ago by the Phillip Island council, with help from experts, to be ready for change, and to gain a clearer picture of what would be required in the future. He said rumours were rife that shire boundaries could be redrawn, with shires claiming pieces of other shires, but the real picture was larger than that...He said it was too early to discuss specific changes until after the inter-council discussions had been held, but promised that the public would be kept informed on the progress of the meetings. He added that people would also be given opportunities to express their opinions...A person from Bass spoke and said "the business put through local government in the state amounted to about $3.4 billion a very large amount which needed to be administered with professional expertise, but that many local government employees and councillors wanted to retain their 'local empires'" He

said that "although amalgamations could cause the loss of some jobs, there would still be a need for a solid core of good outdoor staff. I expect there will be rationalisation of staff at the upper level," he said. Anne Davie [local community activist and later independent Member of the House of Representatives for the West Gippsland electorate] gave a history of Phillip Island council and added "there was no question that amalgamations would take place", but she added that there was a need to maintain our social values and the protection of our environment. The general public must be included in the decision-making and council representatives must decide on a preferred option before they attend inter-council meetings. She agreed there was an affinity between Phillip Island, Bass and Wonthaggi. Speaking from the floor, a Phillip Island councillor said "she did not see an amalgamation as necessary or inevitable". She said Phillip Island fought hard for its severance in 1927 and that the present council served the community with excellent services. "We should stand alone," she said. "We must relate to people at grass roots level. I do not accept that amalgamations are a *fait accompli*." (9 March, p. 1)

The headline asserts the inevitability of amalgamation and the article concludes with a statement from a Phillip Island councillor that amalgamations are not a *fait accompli*. This juxtaposition of the inevitability of amalgamation and a belief that Phillip Island could stand alone were representative of the two polarised views contained within the council. Notwithstanding the tensions within council, the community responses voiced and reported cannot be construed to be in opposition to the amalgamation outcome. There does not appear to be overwhelming support for the current councils. There is awareness that jobs will be lost, but the suggestion that outdoor staff (employees at the bottom of the organisational hierarchy) will retain their positions, while senior staff (empire builders) are "rationalised", indicates the losses will not be mourned; at least by some members of the community. The "community" interests and values are seen to be important as the council spokesperson invoked the authority of "experts" to assuage the concerns of the community, and gave reassurances about keeping them informed of the developments.

Restructure certain this year

A restructure of municipalities in South Gippsland area is certain to be initiated before the year is out. So said the State Minister for Transport, Alan Brown on Phillip Island at the annual meeting of the Phillip Island Liberal Party. Mr

Brown was responding to questions asked at the meeting by members who queried the possibility of local government amalgamations locally. "The Local Government Board will declare this area for municipal restructure this year...for certain, there will be major changes in this area." "Yes, there will be change, and it will be this year...And the boundaries will most certainly change." In response to further questioning, Mr Brown emphasised that:

• no decisions had been made as yet on boundary restructures in South Gippsland

• the Local Government Board would consult with municipalities before making reconstruction recommendations, and that the board would look at community of interests between municipalities as part of its brief

• the government would take no part in that process

Mr Brown preferred not to use the term 'take over' during the discussion on the issue. "Whether a municipality takes over or is overtaken, the outcome is the same," he said. Bigger is more viable, in that duplication can be greatly reduced. Restructure will provide for a less cost option for the entire South Gippsland community. Mr Brown also guaranteed that once the restructures had taken place, rates in the new municipalities will be frozen for four years. "It is already clear that substantial savings can be made for rate-payers through amalgamations." In response to further questioning, Mr Brown said that there was no expectation to bring in salaries for councillors...and that in the event of say, three municipalities merging, then three councillors from each area would be elected to form a new local government body. "Rationalisation will save a lot of money." "The board set up by the government will make the decisions on restructure and local residents will have the opportunity to make representation. There are no foregone conclusions in relation to boundary changes." (23 March, p. 1).

The local member for the Liberal Party [the senior party in the state coalition government], Alan Brown, is reported for his statement, not on transport which is the stuff of his portfolio, but on council amalgamations. Responding to a question, Brown provided significant detail on the process and used the opportunity to present the government's rationale for council amalgamations. Again, the overwhelming reasons are financial, with promises of savings for rate-payers. This report makes it clear the government would continue with its program of council restructures during 1994 and that Phillip Island and the region will not be exempt.

Council mergers on the boil (30 March, p. 3)

The pros and cons of amalgamations (13 April, p. 2)

Positive approach to restructure

The Phillip Island shire president believes the amalgamations are inevitable and has called on residents and ratepayers to take a positive attitude, for the benefit of the island's future (20 April, p. 2).

Local government amalgamations - the second in a contributed series [but no indication of who is doing the contributing]

If change in local government is inevitable (and the people of Geelong, Ballarat and Bendigo can vouch for that) then what are the future options for Phillip Island?...

Under such an arrangement, the seat of power may be moved from Cowes [the largest town on the Island and the site where the former Shire of Phillip Island had its council offices] and therefore the opportunity to influence the community's future could be reduced. The special interest of this community, particularly the need to balance environmental opinion with reasonable and sustained development may not be shared by *mainland* [my emphasis] representatives...That Phillip Island will come under scrutiny of the Local Government Board is inevitable (28 April, p. 4).

What is significant in this report, is the articulation of the sense of estrangement and separation from "the mainland", and by implication the uniqueness and isolation of Phillip Island. In the interviews conducted for this research, an interviewee from another former shire recalled a conversation she had had with a councillor from Phillip Island who had said, "You don't realise that people from Phillip Island are different...once you get over the bridge it is like stepping into another state" (BW3). What is remarkable about these expressed attitudes is that the island is reached by a bridge that is just 640 metres long – that is, the Island is less than one kilometre from the "mainland". The distance between the shire offices of Phillip Island and Wonthaggi is just over forty kilometres.

The inevitability of the amalgamations is growing apace. Public concerns about governance after the amalgamation is reported. The timetable of the review of the councils by the Local Government Board is announced in the same edition.

Review timetable announced

Phillip Island will be reviewed by the Local Government Board between July and October. The announcement by the Minister for Local Government, Mr Roger Hallam outlined the Government's timetable to speed up the reform of Victoria's councils yesterday. The announcement ends months of uncertainty for council staff and officers, and means there is now a definite time-frame in which submission from the Shire of Phillip Island can be formulated to the board on the question of amalgamations. Phillip Island CEO, Barry Hayes welcomed the announcement and said it would give councillors and the community time to properly discuss and address the issues involved. He said that the shire was in fact well underway with such discussions and that it had initiated talks with neighbouring municipalities on the issue...as a result of the announcement council elections scheduled for August will NOT [the newspaper's emphasis] be held on Phillip Island or other Gippsland municipalities (28 April, p. 6).

With the announcement of the review by the Local Government Board came some certainty of at least a time-frame for the decision-making process. The outcome was not certain, but with the announcement, the review process was no longer the source of speculation. The announced time-table also provided some focus for Council and community activity.

Restructure issue is a big concern

A report on appointment of a shire councillor and the CEO to represent Phillip Island at Gippsland/ LaTrobe Valley councils self-managed restructure meeting in mid-June. One councillor asked "how the Shire of Phillip Island could attend a meeting and negotiate with other municipalities when it does not yet have a position on amalgamation....Cr Burgan also expressed concern – "For Phillip Island this issue (whether to amalgamate or stand alone) is not going to be an easy one." He expressed the view that "Phillip Island was quite different from the rest of Gippsland and that the Island had a number of considerations that ought to be taken into account." "Our rural nature is comparable. But our role in tourism is at stake. We must ensure that the right management is put in place in Gippsland to preserve this role. We cannot make a decision based on just economic figures. We must consider management structure. We should go to that meeting and state that Phillip Island is not prepared to negotiate. There is

still a lot more work to be done."...Councillors nominated Cr Burgan as the shire's official spokesperson at the meeting "conditional upon the shire not being in a position to negotiate a preferred option at this stage." (22 June, p. 3).

The amalgamation is inevitable. The council has not yet developed an agreed position on amalgamation. Phillip Island is unique. Phillip Island is not prepared to negotiate. A councillor, nominated as Phillip Island's representative at a meeting of local councils (future partners in an amalgamated council) to discuss amalgamation, is instructed not to negotiate.

Phillip Island Council. Amalgamation: the issue of 1994

A report to Phillip Island councillors recently examined the issue of amalgamation, and the changes the island will face over the next few months in relation to local government. The report states that:

In five months, the fate of the island council will be known; a commissioner will be appointed to replace the council, and the restructure will be underway. In which direction, no-one will know until the end of October..." (29 June, p. 4)

Public input on council changes (6 July, p. 1)

Island Shire's future at stake

Restructure time-table.

Restructure begins soon (27 July, p. 1).

Amalgamation public meeting

Approximately 200 residents packed the senior citizens' club rooms on a cold and wet night last week...to hear examined the issues confronting the shire in the face of restructure of Gippsland municipalities.

At the end of the evening...a clear majority of those present made their views known. They want the shire to adopt a stand alone position. Approximately 20% supported amalgamations; And a further 30% were undecided, and felt they had not as yet received sufficient information to allow them to make an informed decision. Before reaching this conclusion ratepayers heard from guest speakers:

- That the present State Government is dedicated to changing the structure of local government in Victoria.
- That the aim of the government is to produce on-going savings to rate-payers.

- And that greater efficiencies and thus cost savings come from larger municipalities, towards which the restructure is aimed (3 August, p. 3).

Municipal Restructure – To merge or not to merge?

The case for Yes. Streamlining of salaries; Rationalisation of plant and equipment; Economies of scale; Better regional focus; Renewed interest, Cleanout of the organization; Better (regional) voice in council; Reduction in rates.

The case for No. Economic losses; Commissioners...loss of democracy; Reduction in services; Reduced representation; Community of interest; Rates...the delusion; Staff; Other economic factors. (10 August, a two-page spread pp. 6 and 7).

The arguments that were detailed in favour and in opposition to the merger were provided by the council representatives involved in the "self-managed change" process in Gippsland. The case for the merger covered the general rationale for amalgamations; again which were predominantly financial. Although the Minister for Local Government and the Premier had been reported in the daily metropolitan press arguing for the need for improvements in efficiency, effectiveness and accountability (see items earlier drawn from *The Age*), the full extent of the government rationale was not explored in this local newspaper. The case against the merger provided specific detail of the anticipated impact on the community of Phillip Island, such as, "island people will have reduced access to services" and "Phillip Island has a substantially different focus than its neighbours" (p. 6).

Council options in restructure (17 August, p. 2).

Bass [neighbouring council] resigned to takeover (24 August, p.6).

Island swings towards Bass-Wonthaggi merger (31 August, p.1).

Twenty-four councils made into six (12 October, p.1).

Bass relief on merger decision (12 October, p. 3).

Restructure devastating. Bitterly disappointed

Monday's announcement was a bitter disappointment to Cr Phil Dixon, who from the outset has campaigned hard for Phillip Island to adopt a stand alone stance in the municipal restructure discussions. .. "I still believe if people fight, we can have this overturned. But we have to fight," she said."(12 October, p. 6).

The decision has been made and the Local Government Board released their interim report recommending the amalgamation of the Shires of Phillip Island and Bass and the Borough of Wonthaggi. A neighbouring council is reported as relieved at the decision; for Phillip Island the report is of disappointment, devastation and a continued call to fight to overthrow the decision. There are still some within the community and the council who have not accepted the inevitable.

Local Government Board review (19 October, p. 3)

Council restructure – What happens now? (26 October, p. 3)

Bass Coast Council now final (16 November, p. 3)

Half mast [plus photograph].

The Shire of Phillip Island flag flew at half-mast last Friday. The symbolic gesture marked the end of an era, as the shire, after a proud 60 year history, fell victim to the amalgamation of Gippsland councils (8 December, p. 2)

Unsettling time for shire staff

The promised savings as the result of local government restructure will come, in part, through the loss of some members of council staff...Loss to community. The decision to centre local government in the Bass Coast at Wonthaggi could have a serious effect on the Phillip Island community and its economy. It is certain that some staff numbers will become redundant, and others will have to accept lower positions. And it is highly likely that those who will retain their employment will decide to move closer to work. The loss of staff members would mean a loss of their families to the area, with a resultant drop in the week-to-week income for businesses. In an area in which business incomes fluctuate widely because of the seasonal nature of tourism, the permanent residents who shop locally are of particular importance. The loss of council staff would also be felt in sporting clubs, special interest groups and schools (8 December, p.2).

Change is a positive step

Phillip Island's corporate services manager, Keith Brydon, sees the formation of the new Bass Coast Shire Council as a positive step, and a window of opportunity for staff. "Like other organisations", he said "municipalities must be customer driven." "We all agree we are paying too much in rates and taxes...." (8 December, p. 2).

The inevitable has happened. The decision is final and the amalgamation has occurred. The experience of amalgamation for the Shire of Phillip Island is overwhelmingly of loss – loss of the fight for its own uniqueness, loss of its identity, loss of the municipal centre, loss of staff, loss of families, and loss to the community. The flag is flown at half-mast to mourn the death of the council, "victim" to amalgamation. And the tension within council is once more given voice at this closing book-end of the Phillip Island story. The voice argues the new Bass Coast Shire Council is a positive step that provides a window of opportunity for staff.

The detailed discussion to address research questions four and five on the experience of, and response to the amalgamations by the Shire of Phillip Island will follow the reports of each of the councils. The reason for this decision, is to allow the unique experiences of the councils to emerge from the data, without closing off analytic possibilities to the reader. My interpretation and analysis of what I have understood by these experiences will be provided at the conclusion of all the reports; in the meantime, the reader is invited to view the picture at leisure.

Amalgamation – A Story from the Borough of Wonthaggi

The regional township of Wonthaggi, the site of the Borough of Wonthaggi, in the rural hinterland was just twelve kilometres from the coast. Despite its rural location, its origins were as a coal-mining town. Unlike the near-by open-cut brown coal mines of the LaTrobe Valley, the mines at Wonthaggi were underground and held high grade black coal. The first Wonthaggi mine opened in 1910 and the last operating mine closed in 1968 (Wonthaggi Genealogy Inc., nd). As noted, at the time of amalgamation, the town had a population of less than 7000 residents, and the council had 33 full-time employees.

The response of the Borough of Wonthaggi will be represented by their council minutes. Council meetings were usually held each month and were attended by the elected council representatives and the senior professional employees of the council, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) (formerly known as the Shire Secretary) and the Borough Engineer. Because background material has already been provided on the development of the amalgamations process by the Melbourne *Age* and the *Phillip Island Advertiser* during 1993, a decision has been made to exclude the Wonthaggi council minutes for the same period. The reasons for doing so are compelling. The first, is because of the unnecessary repetition of the build-up of the process, that was not to directly effect the major activity for the Bass Coast Shire amalgamation until 1994. The

second, is that the response of the borough to the issue of boundary restructure (amalgamation) is immediately evident during the first council meeting minuted in this pasting.

Borough of Wonthaggi Council Minutes (24 January, 1994)

At this meeting, a letter and an attached report from the neighbouring Shire of Woorayl was discussed. The report was from the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) and entitled *Proposal for Self-Managed Change*. In an effort to ensure the recommended restructure process outlined by Minister Hallam in late December 1993 was "not driven by population size or economic efficiency alone as a criterion for boundary change" (MAV, 1994, p.1), and to "maximise the involvement of democratically elected representatives in the design and implementation of change and the future management of councils" (MAV, 1994, p. 2), the MAV sought to encourage all local government agencies to embark on a programme of self-managed change. Although the report was included in the Council minutes, it is not possible to establish from the minutes if it was as an attachment to the letter from the Shire of Woorayl, or had been tabled independently as correspondence from the MAV.

In response to the approach from the Shire of Woorayl to embark on a regional programme of "self-managed change", the CEO argued strenuously not to enter into discussions on boundary restructure. Amongst his many arguments, included a reminder that a motion not to become involved in any discussions on boundary restructure was still on Council books and that little would be achieved at these discussions "as all involved would be reluctant to lay all their cards on the table" (BoW[36], 24 January, 1994). Revealing his reluctance to co-operate with neighbouring municipalities on this issue, the CEO proposed any restructure documents developed by Wonthaggi to remain in-house and be only submitted to the Local Government when it received a referral from the Minister to examine municipal boundaries in the South Gippsland region.

Further motions carried:

- That CEO to investigate update of insurance of goods shed and recover premium from Art Group.
- That Bylaws Officer report on parking restrictions in front of the One Stop Shop.

[36] Direct quotes from the Borough of Wonthaggi Council Minutes in the discussion will be presented as BoW with the date of the meeting.

- That bike rack from outside 14 McBride Avenue [Wonthaggi] be removed and resited outsides Ritchies [a local supermarket] in Graham Street.
- That cricket clubs be asked to remove cricket pitch from Oval No. 1 as soon as possible.

These motions have been included in the collage to provide some flavour of the minutiae of issues covered by local government. Although not all may have been discussed or debated, they were nonetheless brought to the attention of, and voted upon by the elected representatives of the local community. Similar motions were a feature of each council meeting.

Borough of Wonthaggi Council Minutes (15 March, 1994)

In the CEO's report, mention is made of another paper circulated by the MAV entitled *Restructuring Victorian Local Government*. This paper was noted in the minutes. The CEO's report continued:

> The MAV has written to Council advising that it will assist in a meeting of South Gippsland Councils called to discuss the matter of boundary restructure. The MAV has invited Council to be part of the meeting even as observers...The Council's stance in the past has been to not discuss the matter of municipal restructure with neighbouring municipalities. I believe that this stance may need to be reviewed since giving consideration to the strategy that Council should adopt in handling the matter of municipal boundary restructure.

He, together with the Borough Engineer proposed that:

> the senior officers develop a number of options for municipal restructure which considered a number of key elements such as financial matters, demographic models, community of interest, use of resources, government criteria and future development council inform individually the neighbouring councils of the Borough's intentions. Once these options are prepared they should be discussed by Council to ensure that all relevant issues are included.

He also recommended individually informing the neighbouring councils of Wonthaggi's options, which involve their municipal districts as well as the calling of a meeting of ratepayers and residents to present the various options being developed. Following the inclusion of further details, the proposed process of consultation and information, and discussion, the CEO continued:

> The main reason that Council adopted its "no discussion" stance in the past is that Council thought that the process of municipal restructure would either be a

long way off or would pass us by. Neither of these two scenarios now seem likely. It is important we do not become outsiders in the process of municipal boundary restructure in South Gippsland.

The CEO's recommendations were adopted by the council and a motion to rescind the previous motion, not to discuss Council restructures, was also carried. The CEO has succumbed to the inevitable. So too, did the council.

During this same Council meeting under a separate item, *Review of Municipal Boundaries – South Gippsland* the following was minuted:

The Shire of Bass has written to Council extending an invitation to meet and discuss the review of municipal boundaries in South Gippsland. The Shire [of Bass] feels that a review in this area is inevitable and that discussions prior to any formal request from the Shire of Bass may prove an advantage to both municipalities.

Borough of Wonthaggi Council Minutes (11 April, 1994)

A meeting was held of the seven South Gippsland Councils on 29 March, 1994. The discussions at the meeting were generally frank with each Council indicating either their preferred option or range of options: Shire of Woorayl 1st Option – Stay as is… Shire of South Gippsland 1st Option – Stay as is… Shire of Mirboo 1st Option – Stay as is… Borough of Wonthaggi 1st Option – Stay as is…Shire of Bass 1st Option – Stay as is… Shire of Phillip Island 1st Option – Stay as is... Shire of Korumburra 1st Option – Merge the Shire with the rural parts of the Shire of Bass and the Shire of Cranbourne.
The meeting agreed to meet again on 14 April, 1994 at 7.30pm.

Six of the seven councils stated their first preference was for the status quo. In acknowledgement of the inevitability of the amalgamation process and despite their preferences, they nonetheless took steps to prepare for the inevitable. Representatives of the Borough of Wonthaggi subsequently met with representatives from the Shire of Bass on 6 April, 1994, with the Shire of Woorayl on 7 April, 1994 and with the Shire of Korumburra on 14 April at 10.00am.

At this same council meeting of 11 April the option identified by the Borough of Wonthaggi as "Option E" was put to the council by the CEO and the Shire Engineer. In this proposal, the newly constituted council would include the Shires of Phillip Island and Bass, the Borough of Wonthaggi, the Wattle Bank/ Kongwak areas of the Shire of Korumburra and the southern part of Woorayl Shire to Walkerville. Arguments

included the benefits of a "true coastal municipality with a coastal focus... a critical mass in terms of population and resources to be an effective organization", considerable cost savings, the elevation of Wonthaggi to be the service and geographic centre of the new Shire. The proposal was put and carried.

By early April 1994, it is apparent the council has shifted substantially from their public position expressed just three months earlier, in which they maintained their position of "no discussion". Although their public position was still one of support for the status quo, their acknowledgement of the inevitability of the government's imposition of an amalgamation programme had galvanised the CEO, the Borough Engineer and the Council into developing and selecting a very detailed set of options to strengthen the Borough's position. The one aspect that proved to be controversial with its neighbours was the Borough's desire to include a substantial coastal portion of the Shire of Woorayl from Inverloch to Walkerville in the new shire of which Wonthaggi would be a part. Option E developed by the Borough of Wonthaggi was to prove to be the option recommended in most of its entirety by the Local Government Board.

Borough of Wonthaggi Council Minutes (26 April, 1994)

The CEO reported in this meeting that;

> The Shire of Woorayl see the Borough of Wonthaggi's proposal as a "land grab" and a ploy to ensure that Inverloch becomes part of the coastal shire. They could not accept the Borough of Wonthaggi's arguments that coastal areas are best managed by coastal municipalities and that rural areas are best managed by rural councils...
>
> In any case, the proposal to go beyond Inverloch has become a sticking point in the self-managed change process...

Borough of Wonthaggi Minutes of Special Council called to discuss municipal restructure (2 May, 1994)

The CEO reported that;

> Discussions have been held with the Shire of Gippsland and the Shires of Korumburra and Bass as well. The Shire of Bass wishes to have a meeting between their Council and the Borough of Wonthaggi Council to discuss in detail the matter of municipal restructure. In any case, Bass feels that they want to be part of a coastal council with Wonthaggi, and Phillip Island if necessary. Bass also supports the inclusion of the WattleBank area of Korumburra and the

> inclusion of Inverloch up to Pound Creek. Bass does not favour going beyond Pound Creek [the point of contention with Woorayl]... After the meeting with the Local Government Board last Tuesday [26 April, 1994], one thing is very apparent – that if the general consensus is reached among existing Councils for future restructure, such proposals would have the support of the Board.

He continued;

> On the 27th April, 1994, the Minister for Local Government issued a press release which included a timetable for municipal reform. As can be seen, Wonthaggi forms part of the review area of Gippsland/ LaTrobe valley which is due for the Review process between July-October, 1994. It is expected...that the final outcome will be known well before the end of the year.

It is apparent from these minutes that the representatives from the Borough of Wonthaggi had already had preliminary discussions with the Local Government Board prior to the release of the timetable for municipal reform. This is a far cry from their earlier position and indicative of their acceptance of the inevitability of the amalgamation process. They are engaging in "detailed" discussions with the neighbouring Shire of Bass, and it appears, have given grudging recognition of the need to include Phillip Island, "if necessary".

Borough of Wonthaggi Council Minutes (23 May, 1994)

At this meeting, the awareness of the implications of the many changes the amalgamation and boundary restructure would have, has begun to be felt. Two minuted items reveal the breadth of the impact of the amalgamation on council business.

> Official notification has been received from the Office of Local Government that this year's municipal elections will be deferred until 25 March, 1995 [they were subsequently deferred until March 1996 or 1997].

And

> The Mayoral Dinner would normally be held in July. However, under the circumstances, Council may wish to have the dinner later in the year or change the format to a more public affair involving the general public.
>
> A Draft Press Release on Municipal Restructure Reform Agenda is attached [see below] for Council's consideration and possible release. The statement represents a starting point for public consultation and will be followed by an

information sheet to all residents and ratepayers. This information sheet should represent the general thrust of Council's submission to the Local Government Board; therefore it is not proposed to release the information sheet until the draft submission has been to council. I expect this to happen within the next month.

The item was then dealt with In Committee. The *Draft Press Release on Municipal Restructure Reform Agenda* was minuted as follows:

> The restructure of local government is driven by the State Government's desire to create municipal structures that are less reliant on government grants, able to provide services to communities more effectively and efficiently and able to manage and promote their respective areas in terms of economic, planning and environmental matters.
>
> The Borough of Wonthaggi Council accepts that change will happen and is committed to achieving the best municipal structure for this area.
>
> The Council has participated in the self-managed process with other South Gippsland Councils in order to arrive at general consensus with its neighbours about the best structures for the sub-region.

The Draft Press Release then detailed the preferred option that now formally included the boundary at Pound Creek.

Additional motions moved and carried at this meeting included:

- CEO report on operation of Information Centre by Council.
- That Borough Engineer investigates illegal parking on nature strip in White Road.
- That a new honour board be installed in Council Chamber. Board to be walnut colour with gold lettering.
- That Bass Coast Council be preferred name for proposed municipality.
- That CEO investigate complaint that grave was left open for two days before backfilling.
- That Cr. Biggs and Borough Engineer investigate how croquet courts can be installed on No. 3 oval.

Borough of Wonthaggi Council Minutes (29 August, 1994)

The CEO reported that;

Council representatives met with the Shires of Bass and Phillip Island at their requests to discuss the matter of proposed Bass Coast municipality in detail. The Shire of Phillip Island Council has resolved to be part of the Bass Coast municipality together with the Shire of Bass, Borough of Wonthaggi and to include Wattle Bank and Inverloch areas.

The Shire of Phillip Island has concerns that restructure will result in loss of a large number of jobs and families to Phillip Island. These fears are based on reports that the total administration of the new municipality will be based in Wonthaggi.

CEO's recommendation:
That Council recognise the concerns raised by the Shire of Phillip Island regarding the possible loss of jobs and families resulting from restructure.

Borough of Wonthaggi Council Minutes (12 September, 1994)

In the CEO's report to Council it was noted;

Council's submission to the Local Government Board was lodged on 2 September, 1994. A brief joint submission was also lodged by the Shire of Bass, Shire of Phillip Island and Borough of Wonthaggi. This submission outlined the Council's desire to form the Bass Coast municipality.

In the minutes of this council meeting were two items that made reference to the future amalgamation with an assumption the amalgamation would occur. The first was an item in the Borough Engineer's report to Council about the construction of a permanent cricket pitch on No. 1 Oval. The item is included in full because it does provide a flavour of the concerns of the community that needed to be addressed by local government.

Further to my previous report on this matter, comments from the major users of No. 1 and No. 2 Ovals has been sought. Essentially cricket would like to see a permanent pitch on No. 1 Oval and football would like to see a permanent pitch on No. 2 Oval.

I believe there are two main issues that Council need to address:

The responsibility of Council to ensure that there is fair and equitable access to the public facilities on the Recreation reserve

> The desire of Council to provide high standard, cost effective facilities to users of the Recreation Reserve.
>
> It has been of concern to me that Wonthaggi has been providing facilities for the Wonthaggi and District Cricket Association (W and D.C.A.) when it does not have a Wonthaggi-based team in the competition. This concern has been largely mitigated by the fact that very soon all the teams in the W and D.C.A. will most likely come from the same municipality.

The other item of interest was included in Urgent Business and involved the employment of a youth worker. The Shire of Phillip Island had informed the Shire of Bass and the Borough of Wonthaggi that their youth worker had recently resigned and the Shire intended to replace this person. Wonthaggi did not have a youth worker within their staffing profile, but understood the necessity to maintain the position after the restructure. In view of the proposed restructure, the Shire of Phillip Island invited a representative from Bass and Wonthaggi to sit on the interview panel. The Shire of Phillip Island further advised Wonthaggi that Council passed a resolution to employ a youth worker subject to agreement with Bass and Wonthaggi to share costs on a three-way basis.

The Borough of Wonthaggi passed a motion that the Shire of Phillip Island be advised that this Council is not prepared to financially support this appointment. No reasons were given.

Silence on restructure in minutes of 28 September, 1994 and 10 October, 1994.

Borough of Wonthaggi Council Minutes (31 October, 1994)

The CEO reported that;

> Following the release of the Gippsland Interim Review Report, the Local Government Board set up meetings with representatives from all the Gippsland Councils to discuss the recommendations from the Report.
>
> The Board invited Wonthaggi on 10 October, 1994 with municipal representatives from Bass, Inverloch, Phillip Island and Wonthaggi being present.
>
> The final report is due for release in early November.

At this council meeting, details of the plans for the post-amalgamation organisation were tabled with mention of the Memorandum of Understanding

> Council is aware that it agreed to work with the Shire of Bass and the Shire of Phillip Island to develop a memorandum of understanding on a number of key issues which would serve as a guide to the incoming commissioners.
>
> To this end a working party has been set up to undertake this function.
>
> A meeting of the working party was held on 25 October, 1994 to discuss a broad agenda for consideration by each Council before the next meeting. The main issues raised were:
>
> - Electoral representation
> - Service delivery
> - Debt apportionment
> - Transitional arrangements
> - Organisational structure
> - Economic and social impact on communities resulting from restructure
>
> To date, most meetings associated with the restructure have been attended by the Mayor, the CEO and the Borough Engineer. However, Council may require different representation in this matter.

The most senior elected and professional staff was involved with the details of the amalgamation which is now an assumed *fait accompli*. The following motions make this very clear;

- That a display case be made to house Borough of Wonthaggi memorabilia
- That a photograph be arranged of the last Council meeting on 28 November, 1994.
- That Council Honour Boards from Wonthaggi, Bass and Phillip Island be displayed in an appropriate place.

Borough of Wonthaggi Council Minutes (14 November, 1994)

Although the final decision has yet to be made official by the Local Government Board, it is clear the decision will be a mere formality. The preparations for the inevitable decision are wide-ranging. In the CEO's report was included the following item.

Farewell Borough Function

Approximately 200 invitations have been sent to present and past Councillors and staff to attend the farewell function for the Borough on Sunday, 27 November, 1994. If all these people and their partners attend there will be approximately 400 people attending.

A quote of $8.00-$10.00 per head has been obtained from the Wonthaggi Tennis Club to cater for the function. Depending on numbers replying we may need to cut back on this cost as drinks etc will be extra and only $2000 has been included in the Budget.

Even though this function is an informal get-together I believe that some structured format needs to be adopted in order for the evening to proceed smoothly. As well as an introduction and speech by the mayor, it may be appropriate to ask some of the past Mayors to speak for five minutes on the issues and events of their time.

As well as the current Mayor there are thirteen past mayors of the Borough who are still with us. It may be appropriate to select a Mayor from each decade to speak for 5-10 minutes...A list of all mayors is attached; the ones marked with a tick are still living.

Borough of Wonthaggi Council Minutes (14 November, 1994)

The following excerpts are taken from reports tabled in what was to be the final council meeting of the Borough of Wonthaggi.

CEO's report

It is expected that the order to establish the Bass Coast Council will be gazetted in early December. It is very likely therefore that this will be the last ordinary meeting of the Borough of Wonthaggi Council.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Mayor and Council for the assistance they have given me during my time as Town Clerk and Chief Executive Officer of the Borough of Wonthaggi. I have found Council to be responsive to my advice and suggestions and I have in turn appreciated the advice and feedback provided by Council.

Wonthaggi Council is unique I believe in that it allows senior officers to freely engage in debate in the Council Chamber, often in the atmosphere of good humour. Invariably, any differences of opinion are left behind once meetings are concluded.

Borough Engineer's report

As brief as it is, this will probably be my final report to the Council of the Borough of Wonthaggi. On behalf of all the staff in the Engineering Department, I would like to thank Council for being a fair and considerate employer.

On a personal basis, I would like to thank this Council and previous Councils for the support given me over the last thirteen years. This was my first Municipal Engineer's position and at the age of twenty seven it was both exhilarating and frightening (not unlike the upcoming months). Things were certainly different...Meetings would continue into the early hours of the morning with debates on important issues (like a new typewriter) raging for hours...Life was not easy, but it wasn't complicated either.

In my view, Council has come a long way in thirteen years and has had many achievements along the way. I am confident that the new Bass Coast Council will build on these achievements and that history will be kind to the Borough of Wonthaggi Council.

The council was to be no more, but the business of local government continued. The following motions were carried in the last council meeting of the Borough of Wonthaggi.

- That Heywood Street be graded.
- That mirror at corner of Seaward Drive and Tarooh Street be repaired.
- That vandalised playground equipment in Rodney Court Reserve be repaired.
- That mulch be provided to North Wonthaggi school
- That mulch be provided to Baptist Church.

Again, analysis that addresses the research questions will be deferred. At this stage, and perhaps the comment may be redundant, what can be noted are the emerging differences in the responses of the councils to the inevitability of the amalgamation. The

experiences from the Shire of Bass are different again. The Shire of Phillip Island was represented by the local press; the Borough of Wonthaggi by their council minutes. The Shire of Bass will be represented by interview transcripts.

What will become apparent in the presentation of the Shire of Bass material is the greater presence of my role as interpreter, rather than mere clarifier, of the stories and, recognising this as a possible limitation (see Hatch, 1996), discussion shall nonetheless again be deferred to the conclusion of the data presentation. What newspaper reports and council minutes have, that interviews do not, is a structure to the events, provided when presented in chronological order (see Cohen & Mallon, 2001). Implicit in a chronology is an unfolding development of the story, which builds on what precedes it, and anticipates what will follow. Irrespective of the accuracy of the developing tale, it has its own momentum that can have a start and end date imposed upon it to contain the material (Pentland, 1999). In presenting the material from interviews, because interviewees were not expected to chronicle the steps of amalgamation, there is no structure, except from the themes already extracted from the data of the three councils. When deemed to be a valuable contribution to the stories told in interview, data from other sources has also been included.

Amalgamation – Some Stories from the Shire of Bass

Described as a "small and friendly shire" by a number of former employees, the Shire of Bass was a rural shire that included various undeveloped coastal townships with an encroaching urban fringe (Shire of Bass Annual Report, 1993). It included productive agricultural land with dairying, beef and sheep representing the major agricultural industries. The offices of the Shire of Bass were located in a small village called Archies Creek located approximately five kilometres off the Bass Highway, the main highway connecting Melbourne and Wonthaggi (Appendix A). Archies Creek was approximately twelve kilometres from Wonthaggi, the closest regional centre.

Among the former staff of the Shire of Bass interviewed, were the two managers known as the Shire Engineer and the Town Clerk (aka Shire Secretary or CEO in other councils). An additional four of the indoor and outdoor staff were interviewed. Because it is possible to identify the interviewees by their positions, only their coded numbers will be included and where possible identifying details will be deleted. One of the interviewees did not want the interview taped and but was happy for notes to be taken.

On the 15 June, 1994, some six months prior to amalgamation, an article in the Wonthaggi *Sentinel* headed "Bass Shire rejects merger system" reported that "The Bass

Shire has slammed the state's municipal merger system as undemocratic and fraught with danger. It seeks a united front of local councils to promote that stand...". Although the merger was opposed publicly, the minutes from Council meetings in the preceding months were devoted to the development of a council position on municipal restructure. With the perspective that "existing municipal boundaries reflect the structure of a bygone era (Shire of Bass Council Minutes, December, 1993)", amalgamation was presented as providing the opportunity to develop a municipal structure that was "capable of undertaking cohesive planning, management and governance, and... providing a comprehensive range of quality services and facilities for residents on an efficient, effective and equitable basis."

A point also worth noting is that despite the take-up by the council, of the mantra of efficiency, effectiveness [with their addition of equity], the government apparently provided very little material that outlined the supporting rationale for the major reforms being implemented in local government.

In response to a question about how the councils were informed by government of the philosophy and reasons for the reform program, one of the managers replied;

> No, no, no. The government was fairly quiet about it really until they actually tackled us. I can't remember exactly how it came about but I think Geelong was sort of railroaded from there they went to, they broke it up into different areas and formed a Local Government Board and things like that. But no, there was not a lot of information about how the process was going to be taken and their philosophy. I didn't see anything on that (SB 4).

Perhaps reflecting the vulnerability that their size placed them in, one of the managers of the Council recalls the previous attempts by a previous state government to reduce the size of local government,

> They [the Councillors] probably knew it [amalgamation] was inevitable... In fact at that time [1986], [the Shire] actually did not oppose it... We took the view that we were prepared to sit down and look at it and talk about it...the Councillors took a statesman-like view that maybe there is a better way of doing things (SB3).

He continued,

> I was heavily involved in discussions with the neighbouring municipalities and our own council about what we wanted out of amalgamation and we, at the Shire of Bass took the stance we should amalgamate, that we should pursue it and try and talk to neighbouring councils and get it (SB 3).

The other manager took a similar position noting,

> I was committed to the process. I thought that at the Shire of Bass we were too small to really do anything, so I saw amalgamation as a benefit.

So supportive of the amalgamation was this manager he believed the amalgamation to be a victory.

> ...we achieved what we set out to do and in the end the government accepted our proposal to the point where we almost drew the line for them where the boundaries went...when we were present at the announcement [of the amalgamation] we felt that we had had a win (SB 4).

These managers appeared very conscious of the inevitability of the local government reform. Because the Gippsland region was one of the last areas to be reviewed by the Local Government Board, they observed the process experienced by other councils and were very aware their future would be changed.

> ...we were towards the end of the process. We were one of the last areas to be looked at from memory. And of course it started to go by regional areas and then Geelong predated that...so we were towards the end of the process which I guess drew out the uncertainty in our area a bit more perhaps than others...The uncertainty tended to prey on the workers' minds because they weren't in close contact in a political sense with what was going on so they had even less idea what was really going on than we did. It really became a battle to try to convince them that it is change that it is inevitable – but those who were good at what they do were well placed to be winners out of the process. I think some of them got that and I think that has turned out to be great actually (SB 3).

The staff appeared to be very aware of the inevitability of the amalgamation process as indicated by the following commentary. They were clearly informed, not just by the press, but by their management. Together with awareness of the inevitability, was an indication of the considerable stress experienced by some staff during the period of waiting, which stretched from twelve months to at least two years. For one of the interviewees (SB 1), the build-up to amalgamation was "a frightening time" as staff speculated "who was going to get the axe?" or "who was going to get the chop?". For this person, it was a period of uncertainty and a time where many staff felt insecure. However, another employee (SB 5), who said she had difficulty recalling much of the lead-up to amalgamation, had a different position commenting, "I can't put it down as being a traumatic time". She went on,

> I mean sure there would be people who would be worried, but I think most of the people that were actually at Bass still kept a job out of it in the long run (SB 5).

This staff member then went on to explain she felt she would be "looked after" by the managers. Traces of this sense of trust in the managers and the Council are apparent in the memories of others. What the following quotes also reveal is that despite the recollections of uncertainty, the amalgamation itself is recalled as inevitable.

> It went on for about twelve months. I mean we were advised that we were to amalgamate. We were seeing that happen around other councils and eventually it had to hit us so we were expecting it and then it happened and then we had to go through the change all of a sudden. You are one little organisation that ran like clockwork to being three pushed together (SB 5).

> So it went on for a year. It was around about a year. It seemed forever, but it just went on and on so that the uncertainty I think tended to eat away...I think it was because it went on, it was very stressful. I mean I would say that probably the majority of staff would have been very close to a nervous breakdown. That is how severe it was, that the strain and then to have to continue doing your job and trying to do it well so that it meant that if there was a choice between this one and that one, you would get it [the job] (SB 6).

> The Councils had preliminary talks for about two years where they just worked out who was going to where and all that jazz...you had a fair indication that if it went the way the Councils agreed, through their meetings, that was the most likely scenario...I could say that the proposal they put together here, through these Councils...their options were probably very well thought out. Their papers were very well presented. It is pretty hard to knock back well presented papers as you know. (SB 2).

> Even before we heard we amalgamated with we knew something was going on. We heard more or less through the newspapers and the news and then through management. They came in and explained all what was going to happen (SB 6).

I(nterviewer). So management kept you informed or let you know?

R(espondent). Our management at Bass Shire did, as much as they could. Whatever they knew they kept us informed about ...

A respondent from another council indicated they had known for 12 months.

R. Yeah, oh well. We heard about it even before that. It wasn't long after the State elections that we knew something was going on (SB 6).

According to these recollections of the employees from Shire of Bass, the management knew the amalgamation was inevitable. The staff was kept informed of developments and they too, knew of the inevitable. What of the councillors?

There were lots of uncertainties, for the councillors did not know whether, to use a phrase, they were shot or poisoned. I think that a lot of them took it as a personal affront that the whole thing was being done because they were poor managers. They had deep suspicion of the motives of it, and there was resentment that another level of government thinks that something can be done better than they already do things

I. And these were the councillors themselves?

R. Yes. They had deep suspicions of the motives of it and resentment that the government would think that something could be done better than they already do things. Natural personal feelings I guess ...

I. What about the staff?

R. I guess there was an element of that in it but strangely not as much as for the elected officials who took for of a personal concern because I think the staff was used to the politics more than the local politicians. They probably knew it was inevitable (SB 3).

Wha. is interesting about the manager's recollection is the very powerful imagery of death in his account, a point that shall be discussed later in the chapter. The councillors are portrayed as responding to the amalgamations as a slight on their competence. If there was any suggestion the manager's view of the councillors' responses may represent his own projections, the following quote from the Shire President of the Shire of Bass was reported;

> The government should have made up its mind on what's planned for councils, including this one. A date for changes should have been long settled. It's like telling us that we will be executed, but withholding the date (*Wonthaggi Sentinel,* June, 1994, p. 5).

What is also clear in the discussion about the councillors' response to the inevitable amalgamation is some of the disquiet that was also present in the managers. It is difficult to ascertain if this response to the inevitable was one of acceptance or resignation as indicated as follows,

> [there was] more a sense of inevitability than a sense of urgency. It came pretty clear that the government was certainly committed to it and it was just a matter of sitting down and seeing what came of it. I think everyone through the process realised that there was very little that we could do to influence it greatly. There were larger forces at play ... (SB 3).

He went on;

> ...it was very clear, or unclear in direction from the government as to what it was really about. They sort of suggested otherwise, but it was real political speak for other things. I mean nobody had any idea as to how big or little things were going to be until the very end of the Local Government Board process (SB 3).

Not dissimilar in response to that reported of the councillors, this manager also made reference to "lots of rumours floating around", to a "secret map deep in the minister's office" and people being "deeply suspicious" as they waited to be informed of the completion and outcome of the process. For the other manager, despite his support for the amalgamation the actual point of amalgamation brought some sadness.

> So I guess my whole idea towards amalgamation was pro-active and positive. It then got to, the decision was made, the last council meeting happened, and then there was a feeling of, I guess, sadness in that what I had been working with for [number removed] years was going to change and we were going into a new phase of local government that we didn't know too much about. We had heard about...amalgamation but it hadn't happened yet (SB 4).

In summarising the collective position of those people interviewed from the former Shire of Bass there is a clear sense of awareness of the inevitability of change. The council is recalled as having managed to use the situation to their advantage, and implicit within many of the comments is the idea they had achieved their desired outcome. But with this hint of omnipotence, in which the local government

amalgamation is portrayed as a council victory, is also the sense the amalgamation was, indeed, an imposed and not always known program from the state government. Within the organisational context, the view has been reinforced by the elevation of the Councillors to holding "statesman-like" status as they use their omniscient vision to position themselves at the same time as they; the councillors were affronted by the possible diminution of their competence and capacity to run an organisation. The council memory has been constructed to portray the organisation as winners, while acknowledging they felt as if they were being played with by larger forces.

Discussion

This section of the chapter will be devoted to two aspects of the presentation of the data on the three organisations. The first, will be to offer part of the answer to research question four, about the organisational experience of amalgamation (Chapter 11 also addresses this question). To do this, the theme of the inevitability of the organisational amalgamation has been highlighted as representative of the responses. The second, this section will address research question five that asks if there were different responses from the three main councils involved in the amalgamation.

Analysis of Themes

In assigning the title of *Vanitas: The Inevitable in an Organisational Amalgamation* to this chapter, my intention was clearly to portray the sense in which the organisational change was inevitable. With the device of *vanitas* to assist, the inevitability of the death of the organisations was also implied. When examined in the context of organisational change, any analysis of inevitability and death needs to include an examination of the symbolic presence of death and the attendant issues of emotional responses to both the inevitability and death. In addition, because of the ubiquity of resistance in organisational change literature, some discussion is required on the presence or otherwise of resistance to the planned change. For reasons of flow, that discussion is dealt with in the broader and more generalised discussion on the organisational responses covered in Chapter 11. In examining these issues, reference will also be made to the research questions that informed this chapter – what was the experience of organisational change. As much as possible, and consistent with constructivist research (eg. Schwandt, 1998), the analysis endeavours to understand the amalgamation process from the perspective of the participants.

My Self, Inevitability of Death and the Research

Consistent with the awareness of the parallel processes (Alderfer, 1988; Devereux, 1967; Berg & Smith, 1988) that are generated in the dynamic between the researcher and researched, it is necessary to place myself within this research and the themes of *vanitas* and inevitability of death. I do this, not because of my desire to make this my story (see Hatch, 1997), but in my role as an additional data source.

As indicated in the methodology chapter, this research was conducted over a period of two years, with on-going analysis of the data while still in the data collection phase. During this same period, my husband had been diagnosed with non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, had an uncertain prognosis and was receiving treatment. From the interviews I had already conducted, I had been made aware that a manager in one of the amalgamated councils had been diagnosed with, and died within six months from this same cancer (the employees' response to the death of this manager is discussed in Chapter 11). Faced with the possible death of my husband, I not surprisingly, found it difficult to attend to the demands of work and research and let my data collection lapse for some months. However, with data already collected I attempted some analysis. The imagery of death was pervasive in the data. It was during this time in the research process that I identified the inevitability of death as a potent motif of the amalgamation.

My husband responded positively to the treatment, and after six months it was clear there were no more traces of cancer. I returned to my research. Struck by the possible projection of my concern with the possible death of my husband onto the data, I re-analysed the materials. Understanding that no research can be value free or emotionally neutral (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2000; Johnson & Duberley, 2000), and that studying potentially emotional "hot topics", such as, organisational death (Sutton & Schurman, 1988), has its own dilemmas, I nonetheless needed to ensure the motif of death was as present in the data as my early analysis had identified. I think it is clear, considering my circumstances, that I had a valency or susceptibility (Obholzer & Vagier Roberts, 1994), to identify images of death. Hard-wired as I may have been to any nuance of death at that time, I am also confident that with the passage of years (and the continued good health of my, now-former, husband), and on-going analysis of the data this particular valency was a research tool and not a distraction.

Responses to Inevitability

With this as the background to the initial identification of the theme of the inevitability of death, I shall now ask a question to challenge my initial interpretation of the amalgamation – did the organisations and members respond to the amalgamation process as a death? In the previous chapter, mention was made of the uncertainty of what constituted organisational death; with the rider by Sutton (1987) that, if organisational participants perceive the amalgamation as death, then the organisation can be defined as dead.

Consider this quote from an interviewee from the Shire of Bass,

> Oh, we had a memorial Christmas party[37]. We had a ceremonial burning, the ashes. We scattered ashes of the Shire of Bass over the dam (SB5).

This ritual ceremony (Harris & Sutton, 1986) to recognise the death of the organisation was repeated in all three councils; a person from Wonthaggi (BW2) referred to their party as "a wake", while an interviewee from Phillip Island (PI3) commented on how their "break-up" party was like a funeral, when you catch up with friends and family that have not been seen for some time. The consistency of references to a wake, to funerals and to the "ceremonial burning" and "scattering of ashes", provides a strong indication that for these the employees, their organisations had died. As a symbolic gesture, the ceremonial flag flying at half-mast outside the offices of the Shire of Phillip Island, is yet another indicator the participants perceived the amalgamation as the death of the individual organisations.

In a survey conducted across twenty-six councils in Victoria in 1997, Martin (1999) found, "the restructuring[38] was seen by managers as inevitable...and the managerial response was to get through it as quickly as possible" (p. 28). The headlines and copy in the metropolitan and local press, as well as the recollections of the people interviewed and detailed in this chapter, also made reference to the inevitability of the amalgamation process. If we accept the employees understood the amalgamation as an experience of death, then what were their responses to the inevitability of that death? Before offering any analysis of the employee responses, it needs to be reiterated that interviews were conducted only with those who remained in the organisation; the responses of those who resigned or took voluntary redundancy packages during and immediately after this process, are not known.

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[37] The amalgamation had been announced early 1994. The actual process of amalgamating the councils' operations took some months to implement. At the time of the Christmas party, the office of the Shire of Bass was still open.

[38] Martin (1999) suggested the restructuring was "a euphemism for amalgamation" (p. 27).

Another issue that requires clarification, is to make clear that what is understood as employee/ organisational responses have been gleaned from the research; the newspapers, the council minutes and from interviews. Thus, to be more specific, the question to be asked is, from the material accessed during the research process (Guba & Lincoln, 1998), what has been reported to be the responses of employees to the inevitability of death? With the focus on inevitability, what is being examined is that aspect of the change event identified by Fineman (2003) as "the anticipation"; in Chapter 11, a more generalised analysis is conducted on the employees' response to the "experience" and "aftermath" (Fineman, 2003, p. 120) of the changes.

Reference was made in the reading notes attached to this chapter that particular emotions such as fear, anxiety, uncertainty and loss (see Cartwright & Cooper, 1993; Cunningham, 1997; Kiefer, 2002; Marks & Mirvis, 1992; Wolfram Cox, 2002) were often associated with organisational change programs in general and mergers/ amalgamations in particular. In reading the newspaper reports and council minutes, as formal and factual statements or remnants, there are surprisingly few examples of any emotional responses to the inevitability of the amalgamations. This is in contrast to the heading that made mention of devastation and bitter disappointment at the news of the amalgamation. Of the few comments reported on the anticipated amalgamation, the Shire Engineer from the Borough of Wonthaggi included in his last council report a personal reflection; calling on his memory of his first appointment as Shire Engineer at twenty-seven. He referred to the sense of feeling exhilarated and frightened by "the upcoming months". Within the local newspaper reports, the expressions of fear and anxiety were less personal emotional responses, and more indicative of the community's concern about the loss of identity and the loss of services and so on. Not surprisingly, as the "narrating source" (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2000), emotional responses were more readily identified from the interview transcripts.

Drawn from only one council, the interviews reveal that the two senior managers understood the amalgamation to be inevitable; because the anticipated outcome was seen to benefit the council, its occurrence was welcomed. There was some acknowledgement by the managers that staff did feel some uncertainty about their prospective futures, and this was borne out in the recollections of the interviewees of the period leading up to the announcement of the amalgamation. For one person, the inevitability held no fear, although again, she reported others who were worried. Despite the assurances reportedly given the staff by the managers, that "they could be winners out of the process", one interviewee did suggest "the majority of staff would

have been very close to a nervous breakdown". The other group from within the council, who was reported to have experienced anxiety and uncertainty, were the elected representatives, the councillors.

What is interesting to note in these accounts is that only one of those interviewed intimated any concern about the amalgamation; for the other people interviewed it was others, such as other staff or the councillors, who were reported as feeling distress or concern or anxiety about the inevitability of the amalgamation. Because the intent of this account is to represent the perception of the amalgamation from the perspective of the participants, it would be inappropriate for instance, to develop any hypotheses from a psychodynamic perspective about the unconscious processes of those interviewed.

To summarise, the response to the inevitability of the death of the organisation from the press, the council minutes and the interviews, consistent with the literature that deals with organisational death and/ or organisational mergers (eg. Buono & Nurick, 1992; Cunningham, 1997; Marks & Mirvis, 1992; Panchal & Cartwright, 2001), were indications of anxiety, uncertainty, fear, loss and so on amongst the organisational members. And yet, there is something notably remote in whatever has been expressed about the amalgamation.

It is when attention is moved from the literal, within the written and spoken accounts to the metaphors, that a different image of the response to the change emerges. How can the relationship between metaphor and literal language be understood? Srivastva and Barrett, 1988 (cited in Palmer & Dunford, 1996, p. 694) have argued that the language of metaphor is superior to literal language, because it captures experience and emotions better and allows the communication of meaning where literal language is inadequate (or perhaps inappropriate). Taking a contrary view, Marshak (1993) argued that both literal and metaphoric language needs to be congruent for the management of change. Notwithstanding these different positions, reading the metaphors within the data does offer different insight into the organisations' perceptions of the change.

From the position that attention to the metaphorical imagery can provide a useful way to think and interpret data (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996; Johnson & Duberley, 2000), the metaphors of death, itself a metaphor in the context of organisations (Ginter, *et al.,* 1992), within the presented material, are worthy of some consideration. For, it does appear that for the people who worked in the councils, there were quite strong feelings of death invoked by the inevitability of the change.

It is agreed (Akin & Palmer, 2000; Cazal & Inns, 1998; Morgan, 1997) that metaphors can reveal thoughts and perceptions that are difficult to articulate. These thoughts may not always be conscious, but attention to metaphors can be useful because they act as powerful mechanisms to convey nuance and ideas to the reader (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Metaphors can also be understood as tools, not to "describe" reality but as methods that contribute to the constitution of the reality of the participants (Johnson & Duberley, 2000). Should a researcher attempt to interpret each metaphor as a constituted reality, Alvesson and Sköldberg (2000, p. 93) caution against reading metaphors outside "the textual context". Although what follows is not an interpretation of constituted reality, the imagery of death is so powerful and consistent, that it may be reasonable to suggest this was the perception of how the process was experienced by organisational members.

As has been mentioned earlier in this chapter, the metaphors used in the press to describe the state-wide amalgamation process, were of the language of war, of violence, of aggression, of death, resignation and defeat. Councils were "at war", were "slashed", "shaken-up" or "fighting for their survival", and had endured "a hard fought battle". Mention was made of a flag flying upside down as a symbol of distress. Within the local press, the reports were less dramatic but no less evocative. The "inevitable" legislation of amalgamation that "caused alarm" because of the fear of being "swallowed up" was "rushed through". The Island's response was "to fight". A photograph was included in the paper that pictured the Australian flag flying at half-mast, on the day of the announcement of the amalgamation.

Although the imagery of death is very present in these metaphors, no where is that more apparent than in the interviews. Notice the metaphors from the interviews; "...the councillors did not know if they were shot or poisoned"; "getting the axe", "getting the chop" and the Shire President comparing the inevitable death to an execution, but withholding the date. If, as suggested (see earlier), metaphors are used to convey thoughts and emotions that cannot be readily articulated, then it is clear that for organisational members, their organisation was not going to die from natural causes but by murder.

For the participants in, and observers of, this organisational change programme, that the amalgamation was inevitable is in no doubt. That the process leading up to, and then the actual point of announcement were experienced by organisational participants as death of their organisation is again in no doubt. And for the members it seems the impending death was to be a violent and murderous act.

Response by Different Councils

In the previous section, addressing in part research question four on the experience of organisational change, the materials were categorised and analysed by data source – metropolitan press, local press, council minutes, by interview and myself, as the researcher. To address research question five requires analysis from the same materials, but this time, looking to find any traces of difference in the responses from the different councils. The analysis, although different, will build on the previously discussed material. For instance, the analysis will be conducted on the basis there is a link between death and inevitability, and that the participants perceived the amalgamation as both inevitable and involving the death of their organisation.

With this as the context, the subsequent analysis will use the framework of responses to the inevitability of death developed by Kübler-Ross (1969) to guide the following discussion. Because of the link between death and organisations, other organisational researchers have also referred to Kübler-Ross' description of the stages of dying to analyse individual or organisational responses to organisational death (Cunningham, 1997; Grinter *et al.*, 1992).

No matter how successful we may be in denying the knowledge of our own inevitable death, there are some who must face their own certain death within a known time (Glaser and Strauss, 1968). Counter-intuitively, it is clear that for some, despite the fears and anxiety associated with death, it can also contribute to personal growth (Cunningham, 1997; Riley, 1983). Although there are many possible responses to the knowledge of death, Kübler-Ross (1969), in her work with dying adults and children, has identified a series of stages people go through when given the news, or when they realise their death is a known inevitability. According to Kübler-Ross (1969), the first stage is denial and isolation, the second, anger, the third, bargaining, the fourth stage is depression to be followed by the final stage of acceptance. Not all of those who are dying necessarily go through all stages, for they may get stuck on a stage, or actually go through more than one stage simultaneously. Not all reach a position of acceptance. Nonetheless, these stages Kübler-Ross identified as defensive mechanisms which are coping strategies to allow the dying person deal with the inevitability of their own death.

In the analysis that follows, the three councils are discussed in the same order in which they were presented in this chapter. What is fascinating, and coincidental (I

think), is that what emerges is a relationship between the order the councils are presented and the stages of the dying process.

The picture of the response of the Shire of Phillip Island to the amalgamation process that can be derived from the local press (and supported by the council minutes and interviews), is of a council deeply riven by conflict. The relaxed, surfing culture of the past was being challenged by the commercial demands of developers and tourist operators. This meant that on the one hand, some in the council appeared to accept the inevitability of the amalgamation; others, in the meantime, battled to fight that inevitability. What was apparent in the local press was that even after the Local Government Board had made their recommendations for amalgamation, there were some in the council who vowed to continue fighting. One person noted in an interview, "And that is what the Shire of Phillip Island pinned its hopes on...particularly at the end when there was a feeling "Us. We are going to stand alone." (PI2).

When using the Kübler-Ross framework of stages as a guide, the response of Phillip Island is perhaps best understood then as not moving beyond the stages of denial, isolation, and anger when faced with their own inevitable death. Not only at times was this council almost paralysed by the conflict, it also appeared not able to accept the amalgamation may actually occur. The reports from the council in the build up to the decision were predominantly about fighting the amalgamation. Their anger was also turned inwards however, and the conflict, although not overtly apparent in the newspaper cuttings, was palpable in the council minutes and the interviews.

The combination of internal conflict, and faith in their uniqueness, rendered the council unprepared for the amalgamation. Their self-perception, quoted in an interview, as "the jewel in the crown" of the potential amalgamation partners perhaps blinded them to the inevitability of the amalgamation and their place within it. A councillor was reported in the local press that Phillip Island was different and special; this is no more apparent than in their belief the government would allow them to "stand alone". This sense of omnipotence and misguided belief they could remain isolated from a state-wide program was fuelled by the experience of one other council, like them a thriving tourist coastal town that had managed to escape amalgamation with any other council.[39] Interestingly, despite their comparative size and wealth, the Shire of Phillip Island was subsequently portrayed as "victim" by the local press. This was a view shared by employees from the former Shire of Phillip Island in interview and conversation.

[39] The Borough of Queenscliffe on the Bellarine Peninsula was the only council not involved in any amalgamation. The reasons for this are not clear.

To commence discussion of the response of the Borough of Wonthaggi to the proposed changes, I will start with an extract from an interview with a senior manager;

> Initially, when the whole thing started I think I was excited about the whole process. I was, I know I was. We thought there was some really good [potential] for positive change and some positive improvements...we really saw a lot of potential for creating a great Shire. We put a lot of work into our submission to the Local Government Board. We felt it was a good submission and they actually adopted it as we presented it. No changes. Even their report was basically word for word our submission (BW2).

In the first council meeting that acknowledged the prospect of amalgamations, discussion was gagged by a motion already on their books, not to discuss what they referred to as "boundary restructures". In the following council meeting, this earlier motion was rescinded and the borough immediately began active negotiations to manage the process. The early hesitancy in the speaker's words was paralleled by the council's initial response. However, as the council saw the possibilities, they not only embraced the change, but as is apparent, almost suggested they were in control of the change.

For the Borough of Wonthaggi, the inevitability of the amalgamation was an occasion of hope, of potential and positive outcomes. With the knowledge of the state government's commitment to amalgamation, the borough's minutes offer a record of initiative in the establishment of partnerships with neighbouring councils. The borough worked hard to ensure a satisfactory outcome for Wonthaggi. And, according to the criteria established by employees in the newly amalgamated organisation, this council was perceived to be the winner out of the amalgamation process.

Tracing the stages of dying (Kübler-Ross, 1969) undertaken by this council to deal with the inevitability of its own death, it can be suggested the Borough of Wonthaggi moved quickly from denial and isolation into bargaining and acceptance. Having accepted the inevitable, the borough actively engaged as much as possible, in forging a positive future from the inevitable death of their organisation. In the view of those who were interviewed, Wonthaggi the township and the employees of the former Borough of Wonthaggi had received considerable benefits from the amalgamation.

The response from the last council, the Shire of Bass, was also different. Again, I shall start with a quote mentioned earlier, but a good introduction to understanding this

shire's response to amalgamation;

> No, it was more a sense of inevitability than urgency. It became pretty clear that the government was certainly committed to it and it was just a matter of sitting down and waiting to see what came out of it. I think everyone through the process realised there was really very little we could do to influence it greatly and that larger forces were at play.

The Shire of Bass, as discussed in Chapter 11, had the reputation as the least efficient of the three former councils. Indeed, it was referred to as a "basket case". This was a rural council, with a tradition of councillors, "their fathers and their fathers before them" representing the local district. Not always interested in the big picture, these councillors "were more interested in making sure the roads are graded and the dead animals removed" (SB4), than in confronting the inevitable changes of amalgamation. Although involved in the discussions with neighbouring councils, when interviewed, the employees' memories were less of the negotiations in the external environment and more of the impact on themselves and their colleagues and of the uncertainty of their future that would follow the inevitable death.

With this focus on employee welfare, the managers prepared their staff and themselves for their future roles within the amalgamated council – and with the exception of one of the managers, all who remained with the new council were successful in gaining positions at least equal to, and in some cases, more responsible than their previous positions.

It is apparent that the response of the Shire of Bass, when assessed against Kübler-Ross' (1969) stages of dying, was one of immediate acceptance. There appeared to be no denial, anger or so on; on the contrary, with this acceptance came preparedness to prepare for the death and attempt to shape the future employment prospects of individual employees. Their response could be typified as one in which accepting the inevitability allowed opportunities for personal growth (Cunningham, 1997).

There is however some incongruence. For, when this acceptance is read together with the earlier analysis of participants' use of metaphor in their response to the change, the perceptions were quite different. The presence of such contradictory and ambivalent responses has contributed to the development of the analysis in Chapter 11.

In summary, in addressing the research question five that sought to clarify the different responses to the amalgamation, the three councils' responses were quite different to the knowledge of the certain amalgamation and to the subsequent certain organisational death. Using the stages of dying developed by Kübler-Ross as a guide,

we can understand those different responses from the Shire of Phillip Island as denial, isolation and anger; from the Borough of Wonthaggi as denial moving to acceptance and finally, from the Shire of Bass, as immediate acceptance. To evaluate the success, or otherwise of each of these councils' responses to the inevitability is unfortunately, again outside the brief of this thesis.

Concluding Comments

This then is a collage called *Vanitas – The inevitable in an organisational amalgamation.* The images of three councils have been pasted together with repetitions, omissions and overlaps, overlaid on to the explanatory backdrop of the account of the amalgamation process across the state reported in Melbourne's daily newspaper, *The Age*. A picture has emerged that may be difficult to "read", and yet the reader must try to fill in the blanks and make sense of the offered material. Different perspectives have been provided and the realities have been presented. Yet there is no suggestion there is a truth and indeed, it would be difficult to assert there is a truth that could be told of the process of amalgamation.

The different data sources were explored to address the research questions four and five. The theme of the inevitability of death was explained and analysed. The same material was also analysed to establish if there was any notable difference in the councils' responses to the amalgamation. Using the Kübler-Ross description of the stages of dying as a guide, the responses of the three councils were quite stark in their difference.

Having focussed on the individual councils in this chapter and provided data from different sources, the following chapters will address the responses from individual employees, almost exclusively from interviews. Chapter 11 is drawn as a portrait of an employee; Chapter 10 that follows provides readers' notes to assist with "reading" the portrait.

CHAPTER 10

READING NOTES FOR AMBIVALENCE – THE PORTRAIT OF A COUNCIL EMPLOYEE

Purpose

The purpose of this chapter is to provide reading notes or background theoretical and contextual material to assist the reading of the research text that follows. The purpose of this chapter is also to address research questions discussed in the earlier Chapter 8, that asked:

Research question 2: *Can Cubism serve as the theoretical and stylistic frame for the representation of organisational complexity?* And;

Research question 3: *Can the subject material of Cubist works act as contextual frames for the development of motifs identified within the organisational data?*

In addressing these questions, this chapter is structured around the style, form and content of the portrait that follows. It begins with an explanation of another style of Cubism, known as analytic Cubism that is used to present the research data in Chapter 11. Because of the proximate nature of the technique of montage to Cubism, a section of this chapter shall also clarify some of the similarities and differences between the two forms of visual representation. The subject matter of analytic Cubism was diverse in its representation of forms such as landscapes, still lifes and portraiture. It is the latter that is of interest to this chapter, and material will be presented that offers some analysis of portraiture in general as well as particular mention of visual and literary cubist portraiture. Background materials are then provided on the concept of ambivalence, an emotion that serves as the title of the portrait that follows.

Style: Analytic Cubism

The terms of analytic and synthetic Cubism are convenient period definitions that correspond to stylistic changes in Cubism (Cox, 2000). Essentially the distinctions between the analytic and synthetic Cubism can be understood by the different emphases on the relationship between the representation of the object and the object itself. Usually called *analytic* because of the insistent dissection of the object, this phase of Cubism witnessed an uneasy relationship between the surface and depth of the image in the

representation of the object (Kozloff, 1975). Analytic Cubism, which roughly covers the period 1908-1912 usually refers to the process where three-dimensional objects are broken down into fragments – each representing the surface from different viewpoints – which are then recombined in a two-dimensional representation (Cox, 2000). Golding (1968, p. 80) provides a description that captures some of the textural "feel" of analytic Cubism;

> The whole picture surface is brought to life by the interaction of the shaded, angular planes. Some of these planes seem to recede away from the eye into shallow depth, but this sensation is always counteracted by a succeeding passage which will lead the eye forward again up on to the picture plane. The optical sensation produced is comparable to that of running one's hand over an immensely elaborate, subtly carved sculpture in low relief.

The distinguishing features of analytic Cubism included not just the repetitive, overlapping planes but the use of monochromatic grey/ brown tones (Dubnick, 1984) (see Figures 5.6, 5.7, 10.3, 10.4). The use of atonal colour and flat surface privileged no aspect of the presented image and rendered the object a paradox, for its completeness appeared possible, only by complex fragmentation. Without colour to distinguish individual features of the object of the painting, analytic Cubist paintings introduced visual complexity and uncertainty. Kozloff (1975, p. 51) notes the difficulty we, as viewers have locating ourselves within canvases painted during the analytic phase. He adds "One has no choice but to 'jump' in, each passage being arbitrarily valid a starting point as the next". Daix (1982, p. 60) added that with his portrait of Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler in 1910 (Figure 10.1), Picasso "leaves us to discover, make out, recognize Kahnweiler and not only him but also the setting, as best we can". The features of the man emerge; with careful attention we can detect the hands, the eyes, the mouth. With Daix (1982, p. 60) as an informed guide, it is then possible to "see" a bottle on a table to the left of the figure and even the shape of a New Caledonia carving.

It has been suggested the lack of colour was a rejection of the emotional and subjective engagement with the object (Poggi, 1992b). And indeed, the canvases painted during the years of 1910 and 1911 encouraged no emotional engagement between the viewer and the image. For Rosenblum (2001), the monochrome palette of analytic Cubism exemplified the spirit of the stylistic period as it "substitutes for the mood of despair and spirituality [previously expressed in Picasso's Blue and Rose periods of 1901 – 1906] the recondite atmosphere of cerebration and analysis" (p. 32). Drained of colour (and emotion), the artists isolated form and structure from their

subject rendering portraits and figure paintings abstracted and remote (Barr, 1980). Rosenblum (1976) refers to this as the Cubists' "increasingly enigmatic image of reality" (p. 47). And yet, despite this disassociated and analytic fragmentation from the real, there continued the thread of connection to reality (Chapter 5).

In summary, analytic Cubism because of its abstracted imagery, demands from its audience an intellectual engagement and a commitment to pursue understanding. The surfaces painted during this period were fragmented and dissected, then reconstructed to provide different viewpoints of the subject. The resulting image is dense and complex, because as audience we are aware that despite the apparent abstraction, there is still a concern to represent an entity outside the work. "Each faceted plane of the multiple cubist surfaces, each moment of perception, emphasized a distinct fragment, or part, of the whole" (Heldrich, 1997, p. 429). With study, recognisable features emerge from the shapes, angles and shifting planes. What we find are features of a specific referent, and despite the obscurity of their representation, realise the features are to be understood as representing the real and not as a possible symbol (Fitz, 1973).

Analytic Cubism and Montage

There is much of analytic Cubism that resonates with the style of representation of qualitative research Denzin and Lincoln (2000) refers to as *montage*. Drawing on the earliest and perhaps most famous scene of montage in film from the Soviet film director, Sergei Eisenstein's *The Battleship Potemkin (1925)*, they describe in some detail the characteristics of montage[40].

> Montage ... create [s] the sense that images, sounds, and understandings are blending together, overlapping, forming a composite new creation...Montage uses brief images to create a clearly defined sense of urgency and complexity. Montage invites viewers to **construct interpretations** [my emphasis] that build on one another as the scene unfolds. These interpretations are built on associations based on the contrasting images that blend into one another...(p. 5).

Taussig (cited in Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2001, p. 173) refers to the ability of montage "to provoke the sudden and infinite connections made between dissimilars in an endless or almost endless process of connection-making and connection-breaking". The connecting breaking and making process of montage is taken up by Denzin and Lincoln (2000) who continue with the idea the viewer seeks to view the montage not

[40] It has been suggested that the source of Eisenstein's development of montage was from Cubism (see Carroll, 1997).

sequentially but simultaneously, "The viewer puts the sequences together into a meaningful emotional whole, as if in a glance, all at once" (p. 5). This creative potential of montage that transcends time and space challenges the unifying and unitary nature of perspective and as Roberts (1988) notes with approval, undermines "the hierarchizing vision of a single culture" (p. 552).

The resonance between this concept of montage and analytic Cubism is immediately apparent. Visual images are fragmented, fractured, repeated and blended to create a new entity. There is a sense of timelessness in the simultaneous capture of a single moment. The audience is an active participant in the understanding and interpretation of the presented imagery.

Perhaps, the major point of departure between Denzin and Lincoln's (2000) description of montage and analytic Cubism is the presence of the element of emotion. As noted earlier, analytic Cubism is devoid of emotional intention and is an art of analysis rather than engagement. In maintaining consistency with the Cubist technique, the portrait presented in this chapter is not fashioned to engender emotion. As portraitist, my intent is to "paint" a portrait that encourages reflection and interpretation and not necessarily an emotional connectedness with the sitter/s. Notwithstanding my intent, because the portrait is comprised of real people and their words, the portraits are at times, saturated with emotion.

In concluding this section, one film critic (Grauer, 1998) has identified particular visual and verbal[41] transition points in the film *Battleship Potemkin*, which served to provide structure to the fractured footage. In the portrait presented in this chapter, each of the titles is designed to provide similar points of transition to guide the reader as the portrait is rotated through different directions. Although this form of representation offers many detailed perspectives, the analysis will nonetheless be limited and incomplete. Indeed, the role of the reader in this construction of the portrait is explicit and essential for analysis, interpretation and understanding. The portrait will be presented with the understanding that any that read them will "see" different aspects to the being of a council employee.

Form: Portraiture

During the analytic period, both Picasso and Braque painted still lifes and landscapes as well as figures and portraits. Of the many subjects expressed in this style,

[41] Because *Battleship Potemkin* was a silent film, any dialogue is visually displayed on the screen.

it is the portraits that shall serve as the model for this chapter. Referred to as "a curious bastard of art" (Vernon Lee, 1884 cited in Steiner, 1978, p. 1), because its function was the antithesis of artistic creativity, portraiture usually refers to "a physiognomic likeness which is seen to refer to the identity of the living or once-living person depicted" (Woodall, 1997, p. 1). And it is these conflicting demands of aesthetics and creativity, simultaneously with the expectation of referential representation that is a characteristic of portraiture, whether painted or literary. The portrait must serve as a representation of a real person and at the same time is a work of art (Steiner, 1978). That is, there will always be a tension between the creativity of the artist and the portrayal of a physical resemblance – or in the lexicon of Cubism – between conception and perception. Steiner (1978) offers some suggestion of the extent of conceptual input into the portrait when she notes;

> The portraitist is not one giving a direct report of his [sic] perceptions, but one representing the conclusions of much thought and careful judgement, so that the portrait represents a mental fabrication and not an existent being as immediately perceived (p. 11).

Working with this tension, portraitists must also address the issue of how to represent the essence of the individual that conveys the individuality of the person being represented. Although there is the fundamental requirement of a portrait to capture some semblance of physical likeness, it is also clear the artist seeks to portray the inner self – the personality, the psychology, the character, "the essence" of the sitter. That portraiture demands more than a representation of the surface appearance suggests "the artist is engaged with the personality of his [sic] sitter and is preoccupied with his or her characterization as an individual" (Campbell, n.d.). The dilemma for portraitists and their sitters is that the only elements of the sitter that are visible, is the physical and external appearance.

For portraitists, what can be in doubt is the extent to which the portrait is a "true" representation of the subject. In her *Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*, Gertrude Stein (1933/ 1980) mentions the eighty sittings she had for Picasso to paint her portrait (Figure 5.1). Despite this apparent willingness of Stein to make her physical and psychological presence available as his subject, Picasso was subsequently admonished for his painting of her because she did not 'look like' his representation. His retort? "It does not make any difference – she will." Sixteen years after the portrait was completed, Man Ray photographed Gertrude Stein in front of the Picasso portrait, and indeed it was

a very good likeness (Brilliant, 1991). The notion of the "truth" of a portrait is clearly a contested domain for sitter, portraitist and audience.

For the eponymous Brilliant (1991),[42] portraitists do not so much represent the human identity as construct it. And in the act of creation, the artist becomes firmly embedded in the representation of the subject. This is no where more apparent than in one of the most established conventions of portraiture, the pose. Because of the desire for a representation that resembles the sitter as well as provides clues to her/his personality and character, the pose that is adopted is paramount to the portrayal of the identity. But, as Berger (1994, p. 98) notes "the intention to be represented representing oneself breaks or at least loosens the linkage that makes the face the index of the mind". This act of the self-conscious pose represented in the portraiture of paintings and formal photographs clearly establishes the genre as one in which character and personality can be created by either the sitter or the artist. Both are engaged in the manufacture of the physical appearance to represent the desired character, temperament and personality. Thus, a characteristic of the art of portraiture is the active contribution of both subject and artist to the represented interpretation of the subject.

What has been discussed to date is the dynamic relationship between the subject and the portraitist in the conceptualisation and construction of the portrait. It is clear the artist makes a significant contribution to the representation, because it is the artist who in the interpretation of the subject shapes the identity and its portrayal. In accepting this artistic circumstance, it is difficult to differentiate between the artist and the subject and between reference and self-reference (Steiner, 1978). From this discussion the parallels between the artist-subject relationship and the relationship between researcher and researched are striking. And there is certainly a danger that the portrait, whether painted by an artist or a researcher, may be a reflection not of the sitter but the artist herself. It was with the awareness of the potential to present essentially a self-portrait that this issue has been discussed in greater detail in the Methodology chapter.

Cubist visual portraits

Both Picasso and Braque painted not only portraits of friends and colleagues such as Picasso's previously mentioned *Portrait of Ambroise Vollard* (1910) (Figure 5.8), his *Portrait of D-H Kahnweiler* (1910) (Figure 10.1) and the *Portrait of Wilhelm Uhde* (1910) (Figure10.2). They also painted portraits of persons identified not by name

[42] "... this text gives us Richard Brilliant as the sophisticated, often bedazzling theorist of portraiture" (Gilman, 1994, p. 456).

but by identity categorisation such as Braque's *The Portuguese* (1911) (Figure 5.7), and Picasso's *The Poet* (1911) (Figure 10.3). Similarly both artists completed canvases that portrayed people with such titles as Braque's *Man with Guitar* (1911) (Figure 10.4) and Picasso's *Young Girl with a Mandolin* (also known as *Portrait of Fanny Tellier)* (1910) (Figure 10.5). In each of these instances, models were used and with the exception of Fanny Tellier were not always privileged with a name. Relying on friends and acquaintances that may have been available to pose, Roskill (1985) suggests the figures and portraits painted by Braque and Picasso were essentially impersonal studies of observation. Maintaining emotional disengagement, each was less concerned with capturing the essence or likeness of the sitter, in favour of using the sitter to serve as an object to be studied and visually dissected.

The following review of one of Picasso's portraits painted during this period highlights some of the features of analytic portraiture.

Portrait of Ambroise Vollard (1910)

> There is not one single aspect of his face that is "there" in any conventional pictorial sense. The more you look for a picture, the more insidiously Picasso demonstrates that life is not made of pictures but of unstable relationships between artist and model, viewer and painting, self and world. And yet, this is a painting of an individual whose presence fills the painting. Vollard is more real than his surroundings, which have disintegrated into a black and grey crystalline shroud (Jones, 2002, n.p.).

This portrait in which Jones comments is so difficult to find the subject required ninety sittings (Daix, 1982). With what sounds to be a very generous giving of his time by Vollard to Picasso, it is unlikely that Vollard is difficult to find because he has not been known by his portraitist. On the contrary, perhaps it can be suggested that the unstable pictorial representation emerged from awareness of, and a desire to represent the complexity embodied in the being of human.

Cubist Literary Portraits

At the same time as Picasso and Braque were painting their portraits, Gertrude Stein was writing her portraits of Picasso and Matisse as well as word portraits of "anonymous" women and men (See Exhibit 10.1[43]) Dubnick (1984) in drawing connection between the writing of Gertrude Stein and Cubist painting notes;

[43] *Ada* is a portrait of Alice B. Toklas, Stein's companion and lover.

> Even though words and pictures are quite different entities, the operations of selection and combination are used similarly in the parallel styles of Stein's writing and Cubist painting...based on common emphases on certain operations of signification over others (1984, p.vi).

In drawing those parallels, Dubnick (1984, p. 4) provides the examples of the portraits of Vollard and Uhde, noting the portraits painted during analytic Cubism were "marked by monochromatic gray paintings that broke the subject matter down into repetitive, overlapping planes" while Stein wrote portraits "characterized by repeated clauses, extended syntax, and a vague, constricted vocabulary". Repetition is often used to describe Stein's writing during this period (Ashton, 1997; Steiner, 1978; Sutherland, 1951) although Stein preferred to refer to her style as insistence (Dubnick, 1984).

In her reflections on the issues she faced when writing her portraits, Stein was to comment;

> When I was up against the difficulty of putting down the complete conception that I had of an individual, the complete rhythm of a personality that I had gradually acquired by listening seeing feeling and experience, I was faced by the trouble that I had acquired all this knowledge gradually but when I had it I had it completely at one time. Now that may never have been a trouble to you but it was a terrible trouble to me. And a great deal of *The Making of Americans*[44] was a struggle to do this thing, to make a whole present of something that I had taken a great deal of time to find out (Stein, 1935 *Lectures in America* cited in Steiner, 1978, p. 49).

In Steiner's detailed examination of Stein's complete *œuvres* of portraiture, this quotation was used to illustrate Stein's concern with the inconsistency in treatment of time and her later resolution to work in the continuous present. What is of interest to this chapter is less the representation of the continuing present, which is one of her "most famous and most notorious concepts" (Riddell, 1996, p. 104), but the awareness of the requirement to represent the knowledge of an individual acquired over time into a present and yet frozen moment.

The dilemma expressed by Stein is central to any portraiture, whether visual or written. Portraiture is the realisation that the moment in which the image is frozen in eternal stillness is to represent not only the essence of that person's character, but her

[44] Stein wrote *The Making of Americans* from 1906-1911, a period that corresponded with analytic Cubism. This book "progresses through a vast number of psychological portraits of individuals" (Haas, 1971, p. 43).

past and her future. And more importantly, only those aspects of her past and future that are relevant to the particular representation must be featured (Steiner, 1978). This bundle of fluid chronology and its contents is similar to Berger's (1994) description of archive – "an epitome of the being, the substance, the inferred from what has been recorded about his or her activity, status, behaviour" (p. 89). Brilliant (1991, p. 10) refers to this visual moment as "summing up a life". In the freezing of the moment the portrait does not indeed respond to any actual moment and is thus a created and not "true" representation.

Her commitment to the present is no where more apparent than in her word portraits crafted during this Cubist period in which Stein painted in the present and each sentence is as important as any other sentence (Steiner, 1978). The portrait Picasso painted of Stein in 1906 predated *Les Demoiselles* and his other Cubist works and although it contained some of the mask-like influences more notable in later Cubist paintings, this is not a Cubist painting. Stein did however "paint" a Cubist portrait of Picasso and it is worth briefly quoting from Stein's portrait to illustrate the ways in which Stein constructed her portraits. An example from the first paragraph of her portrait of Picasso (1909) (see Exhibit 10.1);

> One whom some were certainly following was one who was completely charming. One whom some were certainly following was one who was charming. One whom some were following was one who was completely charming. One whom some were following was one who was completely charming (p. 293).

The syntax of the sentence is simple and repetitive. But there is movement. The simplicity and the repetition forces the reader to note the shifts in the relationships between the simple words. In one sentence "completely" is absent; in another, it is "certainly" that has been removed. The words appear the same; the movement is imperceptible; the sentence unfolds and the meaning builds and emerges. Certainly and completely – "Ironically Stein uses the adverbial forms of completeness and certainty to suggest partiality and uncertainty" (Antliff & Leighten, 2001, p. 106). There is neither certainty nor completeness. The image of Picasso is immediately clear but is also opaque. The reader puzzles. Picasso is charming. That is clear. It is apparent Picasso is charismatic. But we must study the language, because of the repetition we are forced to slow down. Note the sentence construction. Be aware of the words. Her use of the present. He is now and he is present. Her language is alive and gives life to her portraits.

This written portraiture is very similar to the painted portraits created by Braque and Picasso during their Cubist period which do not resemble their subjects in their characteristic appearance. The form produced by both literary and visual Cubists was there to live its own life, a life communicated by the subject but re-created in the object (Read, 1986, p. 78). In countering the argument that Stein's writing is abstract and non-representational, Dubnick (1984) and Steiner (1978) maintain that Stein never abandoned the subject matter. And yet Gertrude Stein acknowledged that many of her portraits had little relation to their subjects (Steiner, 1978).

Just as the Cubist painters introduced concrete materials into their visual images, Stein introduced concrete nouns, sensual adjectives and action verbs (Dubnick, 1984). Perhaps more importantly, her unconventional word portraiture in which each sentence is important unveiled those aspects of Picasso not previously considered or understood. It is clear Stein shared with the Cubists her efforts to represent pure reality without resorting to the banality of mimicry or the earnestness of a "realistic" narrative. There was in their work a tension between representational art, typified as perception and the known, relational images described as conception. For Stein, her portrayal of the material-reality was precise, detailed and exact. Like the visual artists, Stein was in search of a method to convey her sense of pure reality.

Content: Ambivalence

It has been suggested (Cooper, 1989; Harvey, 1990), that human experience is pervaded by an existential ambivalence; which Cooper (1989) argues is "hardly news, since common experience tells us that every 'interaction' and 'relation' is double-valued, implies an alternative and hence requires a decision to be acted on, often in situations where the choices are equivalent or indeed incompatible". (p. 481). Although the focus of Cooper's essay is on the contribution of Jacques Derrida to organisational analysis, he does begin his essay with a discussion on ambivalence. For Cooper (1989), it is the sociologist Robert Merton who made ambivalence a social theory, when he argued that social actors are embedded in networks of social incompatibilities. Merton, according to Cooper did not argue ambivalence was an individual's psychological construct; although his focus was on individual actors.

In contrast, Derrida provided neither a very different way of reading ambivalence that involved neither the sociology nor psychology of actors. For Derrida, ambivalence was tied to the idea of 'the text' which referred to any discourse, whether

political, social or philosophical. It was through the process of what Derrida called 'deconstruction' of the text that he sought to reveal the ambivalences or "the self-contradictions and double binds" (Cooper, 1989, p. 481) that lie latent in any text. Unlike this very particular meaning of ambivalence understood by Derrida and subsequent deconstruction of text, the concept of ambivalence in the portrait that follows is one more closely aligned to the modernist position that focuses on individual employees within the social context and social relations within their changing working environments.

It is apparent from this opening that the concept of ambivalence is not an uncontested concept. And indeed there are quite a number of different ways that ambivalence has been understood and portrayed. Unlike compromise that seeks to find a middle ground between the conflicted ideas, Meyerson and Scully (1995) make the point that ambivalence involves "pure expression of both sides of a dualism" (p. 588). The significance of ambivalence is thus one's capacity to not split the dualisms into binary polarities (such as good-bad; success-failure) but to hold each position simultaneously. It is from this position of ambivalence in which both/and can reconcile the conflicted either/or that Melanie Klein has argued (see Segal, 1988) humans achieve psychological and emotional maturity.

Exploring this dualism in organisational relationships, Pratt and Doucet (2000, p. 223), following Bleuler[45], differentiate between three types of ambivalence. The first, identified as *behavioural* ambivalence, describes the conflict about different courses of action required to fulfil one's wishes. The second, *cognitive* ambivalence describes the circumstance in which contradictory ideas are held and *emotional* ambivalence is used to describe the holding of contradictory emotions, such as love and hate towards someone or something.

Because the research did not pursue lines of discussion to establish the presence or otherwise of behavioural ambivalence, it is the latter two types of ambivalence, the cognitive and emotional that will be apparent in the portrait that follows as employees verbalise the ambivalence apparent within the organisation. The portrait of *Ambivalence* differs to the work of Pratt and Doucet (2000), which tended to focus on the internalised ambivalence expressed by individuals. Despite the use of the stylistic device that implies a singular portrait, the portrait presented in the following chapter seeks to

[45] No references for Bleuler are provided by Pratt & Doucet (2000).

capture the generalised ambivalence expressed publicly in interview about the organisational changes.

In adopting this title of ambivalence, I am continuing the work of others who have researched similar instances of change, either within the public sector or as a result of organisational mergers (Buono & Nurick, 1992 refer not to ambivalence but to ambiguity). For instance, Vince and Broussine (1996) working from a psychoanalytic perspective identified in their study of the responses by public sector managers to change, the holding of at times, incongruent positions simultaneously. Similarly Gould, Ebers and McVicker Clinchy, (1999), again from a psychoanalytic perspective referred to the "seemingly contradictory attitudes and behaviours" (p. 712) of employees, while working with the process of change associated with a joint venture.

Identifying the presence of ambivalence in employees requires from a researcher the ability to present what may appear to be contradictory and incongruent positions. It is because positions are held simultaneously, that Piderit (2000), in her challenge to resistance to change, argues for the need to consider multidimensional attitudes which can be embraced within the idea of ambivalence. To conceptualise employee responses as ambivalence, acknowledges the presence of multidimensional attitudes which thus "permits a richer view of the ways in which employees may respond to change" (Piderit, 2000, p. 789). Unlike Piderit (2000), who classified employee responses to change according to the cognitive, emotional and connotative dimensions, this portrait is structured around themes suggested by the research data (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996; Miles & Huberman, 1994), and constructed as poses struck by council employees.

Adopting an approach derived from analytic Cubism, the concerns raised by Potter and Wetherell (1987) about the failure of scholars, in their quest for consistency, to heed the variations in people's accounts will be addressed. As will be apparent in the portrait that follows, the attitudes expressed towards the role of council employee, the organisation, the organisational change are contradictory, incongruent and at times, ambiguous – not just between the employees in total, but also within each individual herself (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). The assignation of the title *Ambivalence* thus clearly signals there will be no suggestion of single truth and reality of the organisational experience of change (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2001).

Concluding Comments

The purpose of this chapter was to present material to address research question 2 and 3 about the applicability of Cubism to represent organisational experience. In the discussion, both the style and the form of Cubism were explored; the style of analytic Cubism exemplified by multiple perspectives, fragmented imagery that coalesce into a complete picture. The form of portraiture was also discussed to establish the dynamic relationship that exists between the portraitist and the sitter. In the context of organisational research, that relationship can be extrapolated to that between the researcher and the researched. What was made quite clear was that in addition to the very active engagement by both participants in the "painting" of the portrait, was a third participant – the audience or the reader. A portrait in the style of analytic Cubism is opaque and complex. The meaning is not fixed, nor is it certain. Despite the "frozen moment" of the portrait, there is movement within its frame.

Using this sense of movement, what was then discussed was the concept of ambivalence that will serve as the working title of the portrait that is painted in Chapter 11. The feature of ambivalence that contained comradictory positions simultaneously, again implied movement; additionally, within a position of ambivalence is no capacity for certainty. To use analytic Cubism as a representational template thus allows the potential to present material that is uncertain and complex, from different perspectives, simultaneously.

In Chapter 11 that follows, the reader will notice that some text is highlighted in upper case with subsequent repetition in traditional sentence case. The intent in this instance is three-fold; the repetition is to be understood as Stein's insistence; the elevation of some text to upper case is designed to manifest Golding's (1968, p. 80) sense of the texture of Cubism as "subtly carved sculpture in low relief", and it is hoped the visual appearance of the varying cases approximates the sense of textual fragmentation.

Figure 10.1
Pablo Picasso, *Portrait of Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler*, 1910,
Oil on Canvas, 100 x 73cm, The Art Institute of Chicago

Figure 10.2
Pablo Picasso, *Portrait of Wilhelm Uhde*, 1910,
Oil on Canvas, 81 x 60cm, Joseph Pulitzer Jr Collection, St Louis

Figure10.3
Pablo Picasso, *The Poet*, 1911,
Oil on canvas, 131x 89cm, Guggenheim Collection, Venice

Figure10.4
Georges Braque, *Man with Guitar*, 1912,
Oil on Canvas, 116.2 x 80.9 cm, Museum of Modern Art, New York

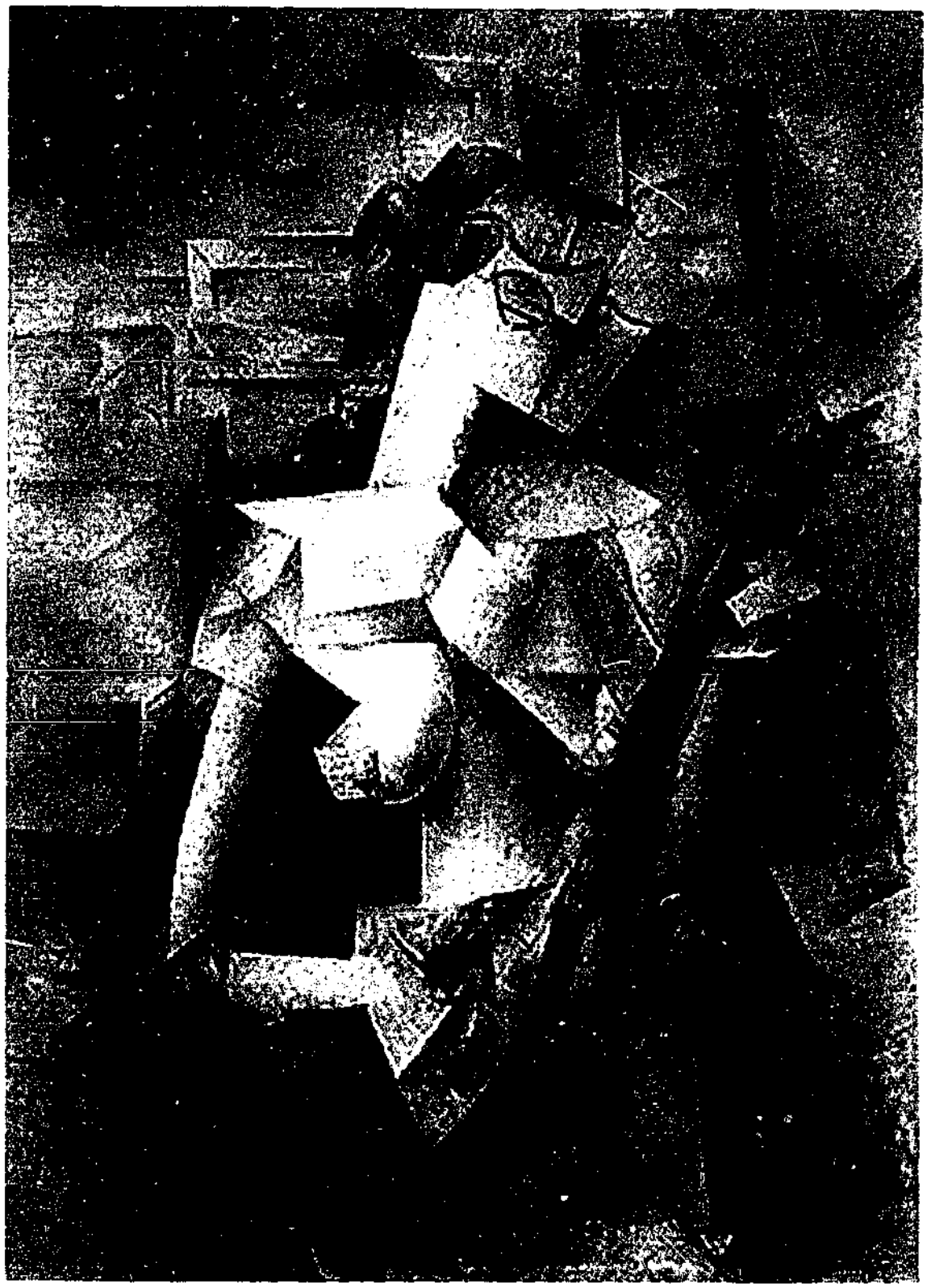

Figure10.5
Pablo Picasso, *Jeune Fille à la Mandoline* (Portrait of Fanny Tellier), 1910, Oil on Canvas, 100 x 74cm, Museum of Modern Art, New York

Exhibit 10.1 Gertrude Stein, *Ada* (1910). Reprinted in Haas (1971, pp. 51-53).

ADA

Barnes Colhard did not say he would not do it but he did not do it. He did it and then he did not do it, he did not ever think about it. He just thought some time he might do something.

His father Mr. Abram Colhard spoke about it to every one and very many of them spoke to Barnes Colhard about it and he always listened to them.

Then Barnes fell in love with a very nice girl and she would not marry him. He cried then, his father Mr. Abram Colhard comforted him and they took a trip and Barnes promised he would do what his father wanted him to be doing. He did not do the thing, he thought he would do another thing, he did not do the other thing, his father Mr Colhard did not want him to do the other thing. He really did not do anything then. When he was a good deal older he married a very rich girl. He had thought perhaps he would not propose to her but his sister wrote to him that it would be a good thing. He married the rich girl and she thought he was the most wonderful man and one who knew everything. Barnes never spent more than the income of the fortune he and his wife had then, that is to say they did not spend more than the income and this was a surprise to the very many who knew about him and about his marrying the girl who had such a large fortune. He had a happy life while he was living and after he was dead his wife and children remembered him.

He had a sister who also was successful enough in being one being living. His sister was one who came to be happier than most people come to be in living. She came to be a completely happy one. She was twice as old as her brother. She had been a very good daughter to her mother. She and her mother had always told very pretty stories to each other. Many old men loved to hear her tell these stories to her mother. Every one who ever knew her mother liked her mother. Many were sorry later than not every one liked the daughter. Many did like the daughter but not every one as every one had liked the mother. The daughter was charming inside in her, it did not show outside in her to everyone, it certainly did to some. She did sometimes think her mother would be pleased with a story that did not please her mother, when her mother later was sicker the daughter knew that there were some stories she could tell her that would not please her mother. Her mother died and really mostly altogether the mother and the daughter had told each other stories very happily together.

The daughter then kept house for her father and took care of her brother. There were many relations who lived with them. The daughter did not like them to live with them and she did not like to die with them. The daughter, Ada they called her after her grandmother who had delightful ways of smelling flowers and eating dates and sugar, did not like it at all then as she did not like so much dying and she did not like any of the living she was doing then. Every now and then some old gentleman told delightful stories to her. Mostly then there were not nice stories told by any one then in her living. She told her father Mr. Abram Colhard that she did not like it at all being one being living there. He never said anything. She was afraid then, she was one needing charming stories and happy telling of them and not having that thing she was always trembling. Then every one could live with them were dead and there were then the father and the son a young man then and the daughter coming to be that one then. Her grandfather had left some money to them each one of them. Ada said she was going to use it to go away from them. The father was quite tender then, she was his daughter then. He wrote her tender letters then, she wrote him tender letters then, she never went back to live with him. He wanted her to come and she him tender letters then He liked the tender letters she wrote to him. He wanted her to live with him. She answered him by writing tender letters to him and telling very nice stories indeed in them. He wrote nothing and then he wrote again and there was some waiting and then he wrote tender letters again and again.

She came to be happier than anybody else who was living then. It is easy to believe this thing. She was telling some one, who was loving every story that was charming. Some one who was living was almost always listening. Some one who was loving was almost always listening. That one who was loving was almost always listening. That one who was loving was telling about being one then listening. That one being loving was then telling stories having a beginning and a middle and an ending. That one was then always completely listening. Ada was then one and all her living then one completely telling stories that were charming, completely listening to stories having a beginning and a middle and an ending. Trembling was all living, living was all loving, some one was then the other one. Certainly this one was loving this Ada all her living then was happier in living than any one else who ever could, who was, who ever will be living.

CHAPTER 11

AMBIVALENCE – THE PORTRAIT OF A COUNCIL EMPLOYEE

Purpose

The purpose of this chapter is to address research question four that explores the experience of organisational change for the employee involved in the amalgamation process. To do this, a portrait has been created, albeit on a very large literary canvas, of a council employee at Bass Coast Shire Council post-amalgamation. Although a single portrait, it is to be comprised of series of poses, each pose complete in themselves and at the same time, a fragment of a composite whole. Adapting the features of analytic Cubism with its emphasis on observation and dispassionate description and interpretation, and a final canvas that is fragmented, fractured and complex, this chapter will apply the genre of portraiture to represent some of the interview material that chronicled employees' response to the changes they experienced. The series of poses move in and out of sequence, designed to capture the movement that can exist within a frozen moment. This portrait titled *"Ambivalence"* has been painted to capture some of the complexity of the contradictions, ambiguities and experiences of the people that were interviewed.

Finally, the purpose of this chapter is also, once again, to address research questions one and two that explore the potential of Cubist technique and content to act as suitable frames for the representation of organisational complexity.

The Portrait

Background

With the declaration of Bass Coast Shire Council in December, 1994, services, employees, systems of the three[46] councils had to be amalgamated, rationalised and integrated into the new organisation. The former Borough of Wonthaggi's offices became the headquarters of the Bass Coast Shire, where the Chief Executive Officer, the government-appointed commissioners and central administration were located. A leased shopfront some 100 metres from the new Bass Coast Shire Offices, and in one of

[46] Although parts of two previous councils, as well as three complete councils were involved in the amalgamation process, the major upheaval for the Bass Coast staff was the amalgamation of the three full councils. It is the experience of this change that receives greater commentary.

the main streets of the township of Wonthaggi, was established both as a customer service centre as well as additional office space. These offices were only temporary, pending the refurbishment and extension of the shire offices to accommodate all administrative (indoor) staff. The offices of the other former shires in Phillip Island and Archies Creek (Bass) were closed down and small customer service offices (serviced by one staff person) were established in Phillip Island, Inverloch and the small township of Grantville. The staff that remained[47] from the closed offices in Phillip Island and Bass was transferred to Wonthaggi. The shire depots of the former councils had also been centralised into one depot, again located in Wonthaggi.

The interviews were conducted over a period of eight months and were held eighteen months to two years after the councils were amalgamated. During the period in which the interviews were conducted all council administration was centralised in the former Borough of Wonthaggi offices.

Portrait of a Council Employee (1) "Working for Local Government"

The first pose of the portrait of an employee of Bass Coast Shire Council is a glance at working for local government in general, and the council (including the former councils) in particular. In order to have some understanding of the experience of the amalgamation, it is useful to hear from the employee's perspective, what it means to work for local government. In attending to, and offering some analysis of the participants' comments, attempts will be made to understand the employees' perceptions based on the language, both literal and metaphoric, of the interviewees.

Interviewer: So, have you only worked in local government?[48]

Respondent: Unfortunately, yes (laughter) (SB5).

For the majority of employees interviewed, Bass Coast Shire Council was the municipality where they not only worked, but lived, shopped, played sport, socialised, raised families, attended school and for some, grew up. For many, the connection to the council stretched across decades. The employees of Bass Coast Shire Council were also rate-payers, customers, clients and the community of the council. How this was understood by the staff is expressed by one of the interviewees as, "I was in the

[47] Substantial numbers of staff from all councils took redundancy packages; although detail of the exact numbers of redundancies was not sought, the perception amongst those who remained (and I interviewed) was that the former Shire of Phillip Island "lost" more staff than the other councils.

[48] This question was asked early in the interview and was in response to the respondent chronicling her recent employment history that included employment at two other councils and an extensive voluntary (travelling overseas) and involuntary (unemployed) period out of work. The question was thus a point of clarification.

community and involved in the community as well as working here [one of the council offices]" (PI4).

This circumstance meant as council employees, they informally retained membership of the community when dealing with council matters, and when in the community, they carried their connection with the council. Working for local government therefore had particular meaning because employees were simultaneously community **and** council. The possible issue of confusion or congruence/ dissonance (Festinger, 1957; Stokes, 1993; Willmott, 1993) of identities this circumstance has occasioned, although very interesting and worth exploring, is beyond the scope of this particular portrait. This is a portrait of ambivalence. Although role dissonance may well be an aspect of ambivalence, the complexity of the relationship between individual, group, organisational and community identity is so great, it justifies its own portrait. A decision has therefore been made to "crop" the portrait of the employee. This will be discussed in the final chapter. What can be detected in this portrait however, are traces of this uncertainty about what constitutes the "us" and "them" of the council and community.

As will be noticed in the picture that unfolds, those who were interviewed expressed general criticism of local government and specific comment about their own work practises. They were critical of other councils and defended local government. As employees, they simultaneously criticised and defended local government and their council; simultaneously, as members of the community, they criticised the council.

It has been suggested that criticising local government is like "taking an adverse position on something sacred, like religion or parenthood" (Dunstan, 1998, p. 3). This position is surprising, because what one commentator referred to as the "rot in the perception of local government" (Haratsis, 1992, p. 2), is borne out time and again in the interviews conducted with employees of local government. Working for local government or "the council" as it is colloquially known in Australia, has often had a stigma associated with its poor reputation (see Chapter 6). Traditionally the major task of local government was considered to be little more than mending the roads, exemplified by the term "pot hole fillers", a descriptive and pejorative term used often in these interviews. Council employees also suffered the reputation of being inefficient, slow and work-shy. This pose has been painted to portray how the employees themselves, felt about "working for the council".

On the one hand, the employees were fully aware of the poor community perceptions of local government. On the other, they continued to work for their council

because they believed they could "make a difference" to their community's well-being. This holding of two contradictory positions simultaneously, which I have identified as ambivalence, is well encapsulated in the following extract;

> PACK OF BLUDGERS
>
> People used to say that if you worked at the council, that you were a pack of bludgers. People in the community still do not regard local government very high. But then, you knew you could do some good things (W2-4).

These sentiments were echoed by another person who acknowledged, "The public thought we were a bunch of bludgers" (SB2). Another person agreed, "there is always the stigma of working for the council" (PI3).

The comments on the stigma of working for the council and the persistent epithet of "bludger", make explicit one aspect of the ambivalence. But this is not a simple matter. For instance, there were two interviewees, when reflecting on their perception of the differences between the "old" and "new" councils, who complexified this matter of the poor reputation of the councils. Although different, each told a story that while not denying the poor work practises, provided insight into how this reputation might have been acquired. In both examples, it appears the council was enacting a particular social role within the community.

One employee (PI3) told a story of a former colleague with an intellectual disability, who, now in his forties, had been employed by one of the former councils for over twenty years. The new council, enacting the changing ideologies in new managerialism that favoured efficiency and effectiveness over social justice (Evatt Research Centre, 1990), had recently made him redundant. It was assumed by the person who was interviewed that with his disability, the gentleman was unlikely to find any other employment and his family now faced an uncertain future, because he was now fully dependant on his parents. For the person telling the story, this redundancy exemplified the "new" local government, and she was not sure she wanted to continue to work in the sector.

The next story makes a similar point about the role of local government, which previously offered employment to those who may, under different circumstances, be unemployable. Again, the interviewee is making comparisons between the old and new councils;

> ...whereas in the past someone said "But this poor bugger can't get a job anywhere else". So we will give him a job and he will stand outside there and he can hold a flag and be a flag man or he can hold a shovel and work when he

needs to. Now you have got the all-round skilled person who jumps out of his truck and uses the shovel in five minutes on that little job so you don't have any person sitting around waiting for anyone else. That is the difference (BW5).

This statement from one of the team leaders of the outdoor staff, provides some hints about the social role of local government in the communities and how that has been manifest in work practises of council employees (see Gunness, 1994; Martin, 1999; Williamson, 2000). For instance, as the tier of government closest to the people, local government had traditionally been perceived as gaining its legitimacy from its capacity to establish a sense of community and to subsequently represent the interests of those local communities (Williamson, 2000). Local government was also understood to carry responsibility for the social welfare of the community (Ernst & Webber, 1997; (Evatt Research Centre, 1990). This shift in emphasis from welfare and community provision of local government to that of efficient service providers (Van Gramberg & Teicher, 2000), was for these interviewees, of sufficient concern for them to re-consider their continued employment within the sector (see Dunbar, Dutton & Torbert, 1982; Schwepker, 1999)

In highlighting how this shift in values is now manifest in their work practises, the tellers of the stories have not attempted to address the critics of local government, but instead provided contextual information on the perceived poor work practises of councils. Although there is agreement that some council workers only worked "when he needed to", the comment that "the poor bugger" is virtually unemployable, offers considerable sympathy for those for whom the council was the final resort.

The advent of the all-round skilled person who no longer needs to wait for anyone else, appears however to flag the demise of more than just the need for team-work. The demand for the council to be efficient established clear boundaries between community and the organisation. With an emphasis on the employment of skilled individuals in preference to "poor [unemployable] buggers", the professional needs of the organisation now take precedence over meeting the social/ welfare needs of the community (see Everett Research Centre, 1990; Rabin, 1985).

As noted earlier, employees did not just defend local government; they too were among its critics. This view of local government employees, including management, as poor employees is surprisingly evident in the following extract from a "factional" profile of an engineer.

I ALWAYS WANTED TO BE A SHIRE ENGINEER

> I always wanted to be Shire Engineer, even from school days. I didn't know what an Engineer was, except it had something to do with engines and that sounded great. Later in high school I discovered to my delight that the Shire Engineer was the man appearing to tell everyone what to do on the roads, without actually doing anything himself. I was sold (Hayes, n.d., unpublished).

Ostensibly a piece of fiction, this was written by one of the senior officers of the councils involved in the amalgamation, who while not a Shire Engineer himself, had worked closely in more than one council with many who were. The excerpt provides an excellent summation of the community's view of councils – only involved with fixing roads ("pot-holes"), staffed by people who do not want to work and managed by people who look like they are working but are indeed doing nothing. This brief paragraph also highlights the stereotype of the "typical" council worker – invariably male, outside worker, who filled potholes (sometimes) and bludged.

Although expressing sadness in his reminiscences, the author's position, ostensibly with humour, perpetuates the poor perception of council workers. This is in marked contrast to the view of a young woman, employed in administration and customer service. While she challenges the label of bludger, is clear the stereotype of a council employee is so enduring that it transcends the stereotypes of gendered labour.

I WORK HARD

> I often get ribbed about "oh, you stand on a shovel half a day", and all this sort of stuff, you know. That is peoples' concepts sometimes of councils. I say, "No. I work hard". (SB5)

In defending her work ethic at the council, one can only note again the pervasiveness of the image of the outdoor council worker, not corrected by a female employee who absolutely fits the category of 'indoor' staff. Still it is noteworthy how often the stereotype of the male council employee, working on the roads, constitutes the employees' own self-perception. Yet another employee, invoking the same imagery of council employees, remarks with cynicism,

> In the good old days there used to be workers watching the work being done, leaning on the shovel (PI5).

In the conversation that followed with this person, it was clear he had some discomfit with those work practises of old. There were many who shared his opinion, as

their statements on the inefficiencies of councils emerge in the following,

> IT WAS ALL TO BE STREAM-LINED
>
> Well my understanding with all this [amalgamation and competitive tendering], was that it was all to be streamlined. We were going to make everything far more efficient and weren't going to have these council workers non-productive and all of that. I still think we have got a very, very long way to go (W1).

Other voices from the other former councils agreed, noting that,

> I THOUGHT COUNCILS WERE TOO INTROVERTED
>
> I thought councils were too introverted, couldn't see the big picture. They were loathe to move ahead because of small-time thinking (PI5).
>
> I SUPPOSE BEFORE AMALGAMATION, PEOPLE WERE PRETTY SLACK
>
> I suppose before amalgamation, people were very slack, no matter what you say. No matter what they said before about working efficiently and productively, there was always a lot of room for improvement and I guess the amalgamation has shown you can gain these efficiencies (PI1).
>
> AND A LOT OF COUNCILS WERE HOPELESS
>
> Well, I guess it [the amalgamation process] was in part to make it more efficient and more effective and a lot of councils were hopeless. There is no question about that. Absolutely hopeless. (BW1)
>
> IT IS EASIER TO ALWAYS SEE SOMEONE ELSE'S PROBLEMS THAN YOUR OWN
>
> The particular places I have worked in [other councils mentioned], most of them are fairly well run. I could always see a lot of failings, in other areas, particularly in neighbouring councils. It is easier to always see someone else's problems than your own. (BW5).

In the final example from this 'conversation', the employee, acknowledging he may experience "loyalty blindness", nonetheless insisted the councils where he had been employed had not had problems; in contrast to other councils that did. Amongst those he perceived had problems, was a former council within the amalgamated Bass Coast Shire. Indeed, of the three councils involved in the amalgamation, the former Shire of Bass was consistently named by the others for its poor performance. In a group interview, the former shire was even blamed for contributing to the need for amalgamation.

A BASKET CASE

> [The former Shire of] Bass was a basket case. Poor financial management was one of the reasons for amalgamation in that area (W 1-4).

Other employees also expressed critical comment on the performance of the former Shire of Bass. One stated, "Anything that we touch from Bass is a big mess (PI6)". Another commented on their reputation, "Bass had a shocking reputation for poor performance" (BW3) and yet another reported the reputation of Bass, but at the same time endeavoured to ameliorate the criticism with humour. "I mean it is a bit of a joke, but we still have a dig at people from Bass. "Oh typical Bass worker!" Wonthaggi doesn't really have a stigma. But Bass...(PI3)". Although there were some hints of traditional rivalry between all the councils, such as the banter disparaging Wonthaggi as a community of moccasin wearers (PI5) or as "people with two heads" (PI4), and Phillip Islanders as "spaced out hippies and surfers" (BW3), the comments about the former Shire of Bass were consistently critical and damning. The following exchange during one of the interviews provides not only some indication of the tensions that continued to exist between the council areas, but again the perception of Bass as "the loser".

> Respondent: If you talk to Phillip Island people, they will say "Oh, typical Wonthaggi – they just want to do things over there [ie. spend council money in Wonthaggi]." But if you talk to a Wonthaggi person they say "Oh, you are spending all the money on Phillip Island". If you talk to an Inverloch person "Oh, they are spending all the money on Wonthaggi or Phillip Island."
>
> Interviewer: What about the Bass person?
>
> Respondent: They never had anything and they are probably happier than what they were because they are getting a lot more things, a lot more services. (PI5).

So, according to these interviewees, the former Shire of Bass did exemplify the practises that had contributed to the poor reputation of local government and subsequent amalgamation. The suggestion of poor performance by Bass was not a view shared by those employees who had been employed with the former shire; their interviews revealed no evidence of self-criticism or responsibility for the structural reforms in the region. If the interview data were painted as a psychoanalytic portrait (eg. Hirschhorn, 1989), it is possible the projections and scape-goating of Bass may be noted. Perhaps the dynamics that marginalised the rural shire, might be hypothesised. Once more however, that is outside the frame of this portrait.

Amongst those who expressed frustrations at the problems in local government, criticisms were directed not just at "councils", but at the elected representatives, their councillors. But again, perhaps reflecting the integrated nature of council employees and their community represented by the elected councillors, the criticisms are gentle. They even conclude with the suggestion that their weakness is in fact a strength.

THEY NEVER THOUGHT BEYOND THE POTHOLES

> I think the former councillors that made up the shire were, I think, they'd get very set in their ways and they never thought beyond the potholes. That's not to say they weren't good people, they were great people, the people we work for, our council. have been wonderful....they never interfered but they never got past the pothole mentality...you had so many representatives for such a small area there was a lot of interaction between councillors and ratepayers and they were probably snowed under to a degree and never had the opportunity to get beyond complaints from the ratepayers (BW1).

What is clear in this account is inference of the close connection between councillors, their constituency who were the rate-payers, and the council employees (Evatt Research Centre, 1990; Williamson, 2000). Although what follows is a fictional account, it too illustrates the relationship between council staff and their councillors. Again, this is written from the perspective of the Shire Engineer, who, in charge of outside workers tended to be out of the office enjoying morning tea, as follows.

> ...whilst the poor fellow [the Shire Clerk] was sending the junior clerk out for a Boston bun[49] for morning tea, I and my fraternity were scoffing pumpkin scones in councillors' houses while the grader smoothed the road out front. Yes, it wasn't hard to get your road graded if your wife cooked pumpkin scones (Hayes, n.d. unpublished. 2).

While the narrative invokes a period of Australia's rural history that may have passed, it still provides a wonderful illustration of the mutual advantage gained by close relationships between councillors and council workers. The author notes later in his reflection, "The world has changed". It had changed. But what follows is an account from a senior member of staff who expressed concern that with the impending return of elected representatives (to replace the appointed Commissioners), was the possibility that previous councillors may be elected to the new Bass Coast Shire. Should this occur

[49] A large round sweet bun with a smattering of dried fruits, topped with creamed pink or white icing with desiccated coconut sprinkled on top, often served for morning tea.

he anticipated difficulties, because they may not be aware the world had indeed, changed (see Brown *et al.*, 2000).

AN OLD BOY'S CLUB

Previously, you know, the, the councils were seen almost as a, sort of, a...an old boy's club. You know. You drop in. Had a beer. You talked. And you had a council meeting that went on and on for ever...it's going to be a real problem to say to them, "Look you don't go into the depot and tell the foreman [sic] to go out and fix a pothole. It doesn't work that way anymore." (BW2)

A colleague from another former council raises different concerns about the former councillors but again invokes the ubiquitous pot-hole sobriquet.

FUTURE COUNCILLORS WILL BE BOARD MEMBERS RATHER THAN POT-HOLE FILLERS

I suppose by the new rules, the expectation is that the future councillors will be board members rather than pot-hole fillers...They will drive policy instead of responding to complaints...A lot of the councillors were very suspicious being tied down to documents...I suspect or hope that they [the newly elected councillors] will be creatures of strategy and policy, rather than digging pot holes. (SB3).

Yet, despite the expressed perception of the weaknesses of local government, and criticisms of the previous style of operation, neighbouring councils who were now their colleagues, and their elected representatives, the employees continued to work for the council. Why? Because, "people have pride working for the council" (SB4). For many, to work for the local council was a conscious decision (Rabin, 1985). And it was a decision they were willing to defend against what was perceived as attacks by the commissioners, in the latter's' efforts to employ new staff from "outside the council".

WE ARE NOT JUST HERE BY DEFAULT.

And it was made quite clear too, not told directly to people, but it seemed quite clear that the [appointed] commissioners were intent on getting new blood into the organisation. Getting people from elsewhere and I guess that hurt the most I think, to myself and to a number of others who left. It is just not on. We set things up in the interim, or we built things up for our former councils, and we've got a bit of passion and a bit of feeling for the place. We more or less were being told that we were incompetent, the existing staff are incompetent and it is because of those incompetent staff that amalgamations are necessary. So I guess that was what we were being told in an indirect way. That was the hardest thing

> for me I suppose in saying, "Hey, listen here we go. That is not true." And so going about and showing them, "Hey we are quite professional in what we do, we are not just here by default. Working in local government was not the last option for us..." (PI1).

This person mentioned the passion and "the feeling" working for council. Another talked of the "soul" in local government. This view was echoed by those who spoke very positively about their years, which ranged from three to well over thirty, working for the council. Many expressed regret that their future employment may not be in local government.

The reasons people gave for joining local government were many. Some were for reasons of pragmatism.

> IT MEANT SECURITY
>
> I suppose then in those times that it was important. It meant security. It meant I could use what brains I had. Um. I felt then I was good at what I did....I like the sense of family involved in it. (PI2).

For one it was "because they got more pay and seemed to have a good time" (PI6). Having worked for council for over a decade, and dissatisfied with the new direction of the council, she was less certain why she stayed. "I don't know why I work for them now". Yet another commented on the lack of positions for professional women in rural areas; a circumstance that contributed to her decision to work in local government (W3). Another woman made comment about the life-style on the coast that her continued employment in the council allowed her (PI7). This was endorsed by another employee who not only thought the job would be stimulating, but was attracted to the area because it would be a "nice place to live" (SB3). Notwithstanding those reasons, including their own, one was to add, "I wouldn't let my kids go into local government" (W2-4). The comment was not elaborated.

The attractions expressed by these employees of working for the council included perceived reasonable income, career opportunities, interesting work and a chance to live in a preferred region. It has been stated that individuals who join the public service "have a high degree of dedication and altruism" (Rabin, 1985, p. 399). These sentiments were evident amongst others who indicated they worked for the council for what can be understood were reasons of idealism. The enthusiasm for

working in local government is palpable in the following excerpts,

THEY GAVE ME THE JOB

...They gave me the job and I just loved it. It was fantastic being an engineer in your own town. I really had a passion for it...there were so many things that should be done in the place, that needed to be done and I had the opportunity to do something about it. So we did (BW1).

LOCAL GOVERNMENT WAS GOING TO BE MY CAREER FOR EVER AND A DAY

As I said to you earlier, local government was going to be my career for ever and a day and all of a sudden I face the thought that possibly it wasn't going to be... (SB4).

IT'S GOT A SOUL

Well, to a person outside local government it's terribly hard to explain that it's got a soul (PI2).

YOU CAN ACTUALLY MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Well, I mean, I like doing things for the community, making improvements ... and you can actually make a difference by chipping away at the edges, so there is a chance of making a difference (PI5).

INFLUENCE FROM WITHIN

I think the most satisfaction I get is being able to influence from within policy development and particularly the direction to take the community there (BW5).

PROVIDING A SERVICE BACK TO THE PEOPLE

One day I picked up a brochure about this local government course and I also had this idea of helping people...so I saw local government as a chance to do, I guess that managerial type job as well as providing a service back to the people (SB4).

YOU FELT YOU COULD DO SOMETHING THAT IMPACTED ON PEOPLES' LIVES.

At least when you worked for local government you felt you could do something that impacted on peoples' lives (W2-4).

CARING, HELPING, PUTTING BACK

I don't think there was ever a day that I felt, "I don't want to go to work today." I quite enjoy the people I work with and the position and the caring, helping, putting back (PI4).

For those for whom working for local government was a vocation, included in their responses to the organisational change programme that was part of the new approach of local government, were many examples of cynicism (see Andersson, 1996; Andersson & Bateman, 1997; Ford, 1997; Dean, Brandes & Dharwadker, 1998; Reichers, Wanous & Austin, 1997). Cynicism has been defined as "an attitude associated with disillusionment and negative feelings toward and distrust of another person or an organization" (Pugh, Skarlicki & Passell, 2003, p.203).

Contrary to the position presented throughout this thesis that has included cynicism in the range of emotional responses to organisational change and potential organisational death, Andersson and Bateman (1997) have described cynicism is a(n) (negative work) attitude. Irrespective of whether cynicism is an emotional response or an attitude, there appears to be general agreement (see Andersson, 1996; Pugh *et al.*, 2003; Reichers *et al.*, 1997), that cynicism is not a personal attribute. And, as Reichers *et al.*, (1997) do add, cynicism tends to emerge from experience rather than personal disposition. Factors that may contribute to the development of cynicism include the perceived likelihood of success (or not) of the change (Reichers *et al.*, 1997), disillusionment (Andersson & Bateman, 1997), and a belief in the futility of the change (Dean *et al.*, 1998). Andersson (1996) also suggests the violation of the psychological contract between the employee and organisation is a primary determinant of employee cynicism.

In the excerpts from interviews that follow, some of these attitudes that have been said contribute to cynicism, are apparent. In the first quote, the interviewee questions the likelihood of the success of the amalgamation process, trivialising the name of the new council, linking it with hypothetical company names of fatuous-sounding businesses. The second extract, again using cynical humour and evocative description, offers what may be an expression of disillusionment. Irrespective of the basis for cynicism, the sentiment successfully diminishes and infantilises the activities of the new corporate model.

> I think Bass Coast Shire is a very good name. It's very logical. Um. But of the suggestions that were put up it was probably the best...But a lot of organisations have, like you've got the Bass Coast Tooth Extraction, you know Bass Coast Food Products, Bass Coast Taxi Service, and to a certain extent we have to wait and see whether that's positive or negative in terms of the council...(PI2).

> WE USED TO SIT ROUND AND DRIBBLE ORANGE JUICE DOWN OUR TIES

> We sort of had a different management style I guess to corporate breakfasts. We had never heard of crap like that. The next minute we are sitting down at breakfast every Monday morning with people I don't really want to have breakfast with. Much rather be at home with the family...We used to sit round and dribble orange juice down our ties. It was terrible. Because I didn't eat anything I would have a cup of coffee and cigarette. That was funny. I used to laugh. (BW1)

This same person continued with his commentary on the reformed expectations of local government. Prior to the amalgamations, he had occupied a senior management position and was very disillusioned by some aspects of the new managerialism including the council's corporate plan.

> ...I have never been for meetings and all the bullshit that goes with management these days. That was not my style...There is a corporate plan for here...the truth of the matter is the ratepayers don't give a stuff. Right? They don't care about the corporate plan. What they want is services. How many ratepayers out there would want to go and read a corporate plan for goodness sake? (BW1).

In finalising this pose, the cynicism sits alongside the expressions of enthusiasm, excitement, embarrassment, contempt and pragmatism of working for the council. It is this holding of seemingly contradictory positions that has contributed to the portrayal of these perceptions as ambivalence. What is remarkable about the ambivalence, is that amongst the interviewees who expressed enthusiasm and excitement for local government, were a number whose status and position in the new organisation was considerably less than in the previous councils[50]. Having spent significant energy reflecting on their careers and their relationship to local government, each indicated at that time, their continued desire to work for local government.

What this pose has captured is the contradictions and ambiguities about what it means for employees to work for local government. They knew that local councils had a poor reputation, and they shared the criticisms of the poor performance of the local government sector. They were critical of the councillors, of financial incompetence, of system inefficiencies, of small-time thinking, and of work-shy employees (colleagues). And working for the council offered opportunities not available elsewhere. Working for the local government was a passion and a vocation. To work for the local council was clearly then, not just associated with stigma and bludging. Working for council gave

[50] Again, for reasons of anonymity I will neither indicate the current/ previous position nor the former councils of these employees.

people a chance to make a difference to, and in, their community. With this representation of ambivalence it is possible to see the tensions for those who work for local government, despite community opprobrium and their own perception of the poor status of the position.

What will emerge as the different poses of the portrait unfold is the movement of the shifting tensions within the frozen moment of the portrait. Continuing the theme of ambivalence, the presentation of the next pose in the portrait clearly illustrates the personal struggle of employees as they grapple with their regret and for their perception of what has been lost as a result of the amalgamations.

Portrait of a council employee (2) "Loss/Regret."

Within the change literature is extensive reference to experience of loss as a result of organisational change (see Dent & Goldberg, 1999; Fineman, 2003; Stein, 1999; Stuart, 1995; Wolfram Cox, 1997). And the potential losses in this period of organisational change were many - loss of a job, loss of a future in local government, loss of friends, loss of certainty, loss of identity and so on (Dent & Goldberg, 1999). And it should be remembered when reading these extracts that these have been taken from interviews with staff that retained positions in the newly amalgamated council. These are employees who having retained a position post-merger and subsequent redundancies, are often referred to in the change literature as "survivors" (Brockner, 1988; Brockner, Grover, Reed & Dewitt, 1992; Cartwright & Cooper, 1993; O'Neill & Lenn, 1995). Interestingly, the notion of "surviving" was remarkably absent amongst those I interviewed, with only one employee suggesting, "not too many people survived amalgamation" (PI4). Nonetheless, for those who did continue with the organisation, the time was not without pain and awareness at the sense of loss for those who have left and (with apologies to Proust) for memories of times passed.

Wolfram Cox (1997) in her study developed a typology of primary and secondary losses, identifying instrumental losses such as loss of pay, loss of skills and so on as primary losses, and the expressions of loss that involved temporal movement such as loss as regret (past), loss as relief (future) as secondary losses. Other approaches to the presentation of loss may focus on the emotions associated with loss such as anxiety, grief, sadness, anger, resistance, resignation and acceptance (eg. Kiefer, 2002; O'Neill & Lunn, 1995; Stuart, 1995). In this aspect of the portrait, the emphasis will be less on classification of responses to change, or verification of particular emotions and more on depicting again, the almost universal ambivalence aroused by the changes that

were implemented during amalgamation. Again, what will emerge in this portrait is a picture of an employee in which there is regret at what had been lost, acceptance that the loss has occurred and at times, excitement by the possibilities that have emerged with the passing of the old local government and the advent of the new.

Having said there was ambivalence, there was one event associated with grief and loss (Kiefer, 2002) about which there was no ambivalence. This was associated with sadness and tears as people talked of the death of a loved former manager. The discussions about the death of Eric (for that was his name) have been included in this portrait because of what his death appeared to signify to those who talked of him. As I had mentioned in Chapter 9, a manager from one of the former councils was diagnosed with lymphoma shortly after the announcement of the amalgamation, and died within six months. At the time of his death, Eric was employed by the new Bass Coast Shire Council. The following provides a flavour of the way in which he was remembered,

> A LOT OF PEOPLE BLAMED THE COUNCIL AMALGAMATIONS FOR HIS DEATH
>
> I think what made it hard at Phillip Island is our Manager for Technical Services died in the process of amalgamation. He was diagnosed with cancer and a lot of people blamed the council amalgamations for his death and that was really sad because we were very close to Eric...[he was] a very, very caring manager (PI3).

This view was supported by another former employee of Phillip Island, who noted,

> A lot of people did blame the council, not so much the council, but I guess the whole restructure process saying he might have got cancer eventually but they believe this whole anxiety process brought it on quicker (PI1).

As if to reinforce the possibility he added "I know of three people who have died of cancer in local government in the last twelve months." Did he think it was from the restructure? "I don't know. It just seems coincidental" (PI1). Amongst those deaths was another employee, the Town Planner, also from the former Shire of Phillip Island. Although his death was considered sufficiently remote from the amalgamation process that "I don't suggest that that [the amalgamation] had anything to do with it" (PI4), it nonetheless contributed to sense of loss for the employees. "It is all a loss. Another form of loss that we have had" (PI4).

Contrary to the view of others, one person was not sure about the causal relationship between the amalgamation and Eric's death.

I CAN'T SEE HOW THE AMALGAMATIONS COULD HAVE ACTUALLY CAUSED HIM CANCER

> I am sure there was a lot of stress on Eric with the change and everything, but I can't see how the amalgamations could have actually caused him cancer or an early death or anything like that. I just can't. I don't know. But that was very traumatic. That was awful (PI3).

Irrespective of the cause of death, Eric's death was mentioned in connection with the amalgamation by all those who talked of this event. Unlike the ambivalence of other aspects of employees' responses to organisational events, their collective response to Eric's death was without ambiguity or equivocation. Despite this apparent lack of ambivalence, the organisational responses to his death do reveal some of the points of tension faced by the decision-makers within the new council, and it does appear that Eric's death served as a catalyst that exposed many of the tensions of the amalgamations. What emerges from the following description is the ambiguity that emerges between the fracture lines of pragmatism and emotional sensitivity.

IT WAS ALMOST LIKE A LITTLE SHRINE.

> Then when he died I think things like, he had his office and I remember I think it was Paul Cooper was moved into that and people were just so upset that, how could they move somebody in to his office when it was almost, I know it sounds a bit morbid, but it was almost like a little shrine. After he died his stuff just wasn't moved, everything stayed as it was and I think we had staff coming and going and new staff being employed and with the amalgamations and they needed the office space and you know it was pretty traumatic for them too because I think they must have been to feel that there, oh, that is Eric's office sort of thing (PI3).

And again,

> It was awful, I actually had a huge fight with Max [the Chief Commissioner] because I felt very attached to Eric and I really missed being with colleagues at Phillip Island and I felt that Max...I remember the papers were ringing and saying "Would you like to put something in the paper?" and he was just so blasé, "Could you write something out?", and I felt really, he was so detached from staff and so detached from what people were feeling at Phillip Island. There wasn't any real...he wasn't very sensitive towards those issues at all. I remember that day we actually had a huge argument about it and he said that,

> "You know. I was very saddened about Eric's death and that, but I either had to get on with my job or live in the past."

She continued,

> I think that was the day that I decided that the job really wasn't for me. It wasn't very pleasant at all. It was very hard (PI3).

The sadness of his former colleagues when talking of his death was perhaps a testament to the depth of affection for Eric. But because his death was always mentioned in the context of the stresses of amalgamation I did wonder if his death may also have come to symbolise the difficulties they all experienced at that time. Irrespective of the reasons for significant sadness generated by Eric's death or the meaning this death assumed within the organisation, his death was, as mentioned by one of the employees yet "another loss".

At the commencement of this pose, there was a suggestion there were two major expressions of loss. Having discussed the first, the death of the manager, attention will now be focussed on the other emotion associated with loss within the organisation, which I have identified as regret. Regret at what had occurred and regret at what had been lost. Although there is some disagreement about the meaning of regret (see Gilovich, Medvec & Kahneman, 1998), the following definition by Landman, (1993, p.36 cited in Gilovich & Medvec, 1995, p. 381) does seem to encapsulate many of the dimensions of regret expressed in the quotations that will follow.

> Regret is a more or less a cognitive and emotional state of feeling sorry for misfortunes, limitations, losses, transgressions, shortcomings or mistakes...The regretted matters may be sins of commission as well as sins of omissions; they may range from the voluntary to the uncontrollable and accidental...committed by oneself or by another person or group...

Although regret can be expressed for one's own individual actions or inactions, in the quotations that form the basis of this portrait, appears to be essentially for what has been lost (Fineman, 2003). The connection between loss and change is very strong motif in organisational change literature (see Chapter 9).

As is apparent from the excerpts that follow, regrets are not limited to matters associated with the amalgamation, redundancies and the moving of employees into the council offices in Wonthaggi. There are also regrets about the past that longer exists . An example of this regret is "Our jobs are not a job for life – not like the good old days (SB1). Interestingly this is the only reference in all the interviews to the "good old days". There are possibly many reasons why this may be the case; nonetheless there

were some who did invoke a time where their world of work appeared gentler, more caring and far less complex. There was also some regret at the passage of close connections with the community they served, and the family atmosphere many experienced at work.

The first quotation that has been selected could perhaps be typified as a reflection on one person's capacity to adapt to the changing nature of work and his changing self-expectations. While I believe this quotation is steeped in wistful regret, I am struck however by an extraordinary humility and self-awareness consistent with the person I encountered during the interview.

SO MANY THINGS WERE NEW.

> I mean, it was a time when I knew (sigh) probably 90% of everything I had to do, I knew how to do. And in the last five years, I suppose I would have brought that back to about 55%. So many things were new. So many things had to be transferred out to other people who had to manage the new disciplines. So I had to give ground. I had to say, "Well, I can't do everything. I expect you to do that, and if I'm to be educated I'm asking you". Or, "If somebody hits me with a question I don't know, I'll ask you to answer it for me." (PI2).

In accommodating the new, this person expressed regret at what had passed, which in this instance, is his knowledge and skill and the authority based on that knowledge. These are very powerful losses to acknowledge (Stuart, 1995), and his regret is palpable. For some employees, what also appeared to be expressed was regret at the loss of certainty in the dimensions of their work – and possibly their loss of their sense of competence in performing the job they had previously known.

IT WILL BE CLEAR WHAT WE HAVE TO DO

> Once the amalgamation had happened they thought, "We'll all know our job then, it will be clear what we have to do. Just get along with how we used to work. Might be covering more area but still the same sort of job basically". But that process doesn't have a defined end, so you don't know when you have amalgamated everything (PI1).

The expressed regrets at what had been lost with changes to the work situation were many. Invariably, the changes were presented as the outcome of the reform package of amalgamation and the internal restructuring that arose from the need to compete on the open market as service providers. From the perspective of the following extracts, the change was far-reaching.

> Whereas beforehand we had a chance to stop and chat for five minutes and that just made for a healthy work atmosphere. We don't have that now. Now everybody is really busy (BW4).

From this person's perception, regret is expressed at the loss of social contact and connections with colleagues, regret of the need to work so hard, regret at the pressure of time and finally, regret at the loss of what is described as "a healthy work atmosphere". For the next person, is again a growing awareness that although there may be a desire to return to what is described as "easy street", that that past will not be part of the future (see Dunford *et al.*, 1998 for commentary on increased work pressures with public sector reform).

> WE WILL DROP BACK TO EASY STREET AGAIN
>
> People are doing a lot more, admittedly people are working in excess of thirty eight hours too, which is our full-time hours. They are actually not being paid it. They just feel obliged to or they are feeling that we will see this through. This is a rocky time. We will do the extra – go the extra mile just to see it through and so once we get over the hill we will be back to sort of easy street. That's what people are thinking, that there is a crest and we will drop back to easy street again. I think this is it forever (PI1).

Included amongst the specific regrets with the changed working environment was sadness at the loss of the social and personal contact with their public,

> I THINK THAT IS PRETTY SAD
>
> I think probably the main difference that I would see is the customer relationship. I don't believe it will ever be the same again...I think that it is the personal one-on-one contact that the public won't ever get again and I think that is pretty sad (BW3).

There was also concern that the amalgamation and the professionalisation of the new council (see Brown *et al.*, 2000), also involved the loss of the sense of belonging to a family. In the extract that follows, the interviewee invokes the image of a family, which included the council and the rate-payers (the people), to describe the previous shire This image in which both the people and the staff were known to the other, happily, does seem to capture some of the regret this person expresses at its passing.

> SORT OF HAPPY FAMILY-TYPE SHIRE
>
> Well it [the former council] was more the one sort of happy family-type shire. Smaller family-type syndrome. Where the customer service people would know the people (PI5).

The family metaphor has also been used by another employee who in reporting the distress of a colleague as she was leaving the organisation, referred to the council itself as the family.

> "THIS IS THE ONLY FAMILY I EVER HAD".
>
> And these are the, there was another woman, a mature woman, divorced, didn't have many friends, ah, what she did, I mean the people around her, in the job and everything, that was her life and her family. And she'd go home to sleep and come back to her family in the morning...And many of these attitudes didn't really spill over until the time came when they were saying in three weeks they'll be gone! And you know, they'd start to suddenly blubber and say, "This is the only family I ever had" (PI2).

These comments give some indication of the feeling that perhaps what has been lost is the belongingness and comfort that work provided some of its employees. These expressions of "lost family" were also apparent in the following quote in which the interviewee talks of the time during which the amalgamating councils were shifted into the one building in Wonthaggi.

> IT WAS JUST A FEELING OF HOMELESSNESS
>
> I think even though we are altogether here now, we have lost some people through redundancies or they have taken other positions. It was just, oh I don't know. It was just a feeling of homelessness. It was like we had been torn apart and sent somewhere else...(PI3).

Again, the regret at what had been lost is very clear – both the amalgamation and the closure of former shire offices created in employees, the feelings of losing home and family. But these were not the only emotions exhibited by employees when reflecting on their experiences of amalgamation. Other regrets that are expressed include the sense of having lost a past in which each council had its own unique identity.

> IT'S NO LONGER UNIQUE
>
> I think Phillip Island always saw itself as unique. An island, a place where the penguins are. Beaches. The natural attraction of all that bit. But. But now that it's part of something else it's no longer unique. And I think people lose the sense of uniqueness about it. We're simply part of Bass Coast. It's no longer **our** information centre. It's Bass Coast's. It's Wonthaggi's. Ah. Um...The senior citizen's club is one of five....The kindergarten is one of six (PI2).

What has been lost for individuals of course will vary, and for some, there was no sense of loss as a result of the amalgamation process. Indeed, as one of the interviewees noted,

although there are colleagues who feel amalgamation has left them behind, this is not the case for all.

I DON'T VIEW AMALGAMATING AS A LOSS PERSONALLY

> I don't view amalgamating as a loss personally. I think it was a definitely a gain for me but you could talk to ten other people from the [former] Borough of Wonthaggi and they would say they lost...There will always be problems but I don't view amalgamating as a bad thing at all. It had to be done (BW4).

From another employee,

> Respondent:. ...the vibe is still, "what about us? We are being left behind".
>
> Interviewer: How do you respond to that?
>
> Interviewee: From my point of view, amalgamation was the best thing that happened to me, career-wise. I have really benefited from amalgamations. I have been able to grow and I love working with bigger organisations. My opportunities have been increased (PI3).

For this person, their career has benefited from the amalgamation. That "career-wise", was used as a qualifier may indicate there were nonetheless other regrets. If so, they were not expressed at that time. For another person who reflected on how amalgamation may have impacted on the service provision by council, it was suggested there were no losses to the community; the view was also expressed there were no gains.

I DON'T SEE THEY HAVE LOST ANYTHING

> I don't see the service to ratepayers as having changed. I mean they still get their meals on wheels, they still get their home help, infant welfare centres are still open, the kids still go to preschools. I don't see they have lost anything, but at the same time I don't think they have gained anything either (BW3).

Other employees when commenting on what they perceived had changed since amalgamation identified particular practises that were no longer part of council operations. For one employee, this was a loss to the community; for another the cessation of those behaviours was felt to be a positive gain. Despite the variance in their response each were of the view there had been "little" practises that while not in themselves important, were nonetheless of assistance to the community.

IF YOU DON'T HAVE A BUDGET FOR IT, YOU CAN'T DO IT.

> ...there was a lot of, not back-scratching but assisting the community with little bits and pieces. "Oh yes, we will grade that for you" or "We will give you a few free trees there." "We'll help you do that." "Just send it in. We will photocopy it

for you". Now all that sort of thing has gone because if you don't have a budget for it, you can't do it. (PI5).

This person has clearly identified the lack of financial flexibility introduced with the compulsory competitive tendering component of local government reform, as an unfortunate restriction on the council assisting the community with little bits and pieces. Given as an example of what had been lost by the reforms, it is clear this interviewee is expressing some regret the community can longer be assisted in these informal ways. This is in marked contrast to the following person who suggested that one of the major changes was indeed the end of the informal processes that both council employees and the community relied upon to provide assistance to the community.

IT'S NOT ON ANY MORE

Just doing little things for the community. A little community organisation that might have come in historically and done all their photocopying or done those sorts of things. The [amalgamation] has forced the hand to stop them because they turn up at the counter and that familiar council officer is not there anymore and they have got to ask someone and it's not on any more. So I guess those sorts of things have stopped and lots of other ones as well. I think that is definite gain (PI1).

For another employee however who used different criteria to evaluate the impact of amalgamation and the centralisation of council services into one building in Wonthaggi, there were tangible losses to the community. As this person noted, the closing down of the former shire offices and the subsequent redeployment of staff to another town was having a significant flow-on effect on businesses and the community.

Even me going down the street and having my hair cut now. OK, well if you have thirty people in the building you must get at least 50 percent of those people who would go down the street and get their hair cut. Well we don't have those people now...Even the monthly account at the supermarket for morning and afternoon teas and that type of thing, has gone from $400 to about $30. And the chemist and the doctors...We'll get that in Wonthaggi now or where ever else. (PI4).

This view was endorsed by yet another employee who indicated the perception of amalgamation in Phillip Island and what he suggested is the loss of not only business but the identity of the island provided by the council.

I still see that the Bass Coast Council as being the Greater Borough of Wonthaggi. I think that would be the perception...I think what, what Phillip

> Island has probably lost and people are grieving over, the rate-payers, our clients, is the sense of ownership, a sense of er, a central place. This is the Shire Office. This is where the municipal leadership is, the councillors, our elected representatives, our home-help service...we're allowed to go in and complain, ah, it's ours. I think the loss of that is ah, is essential (PI2).

Together with this loss in which again the council assumes the identity of the community, that is, the council is the community, it is also not surprisingly, the loss of the history of the town and the council.

> THE HISTORY HAS GONE
>
> There has been a lot of losses to local government in terms of knowledge, people have left...The expertise that has gone from local government, I think is a shame and I think that the history has gone...I think that has been a really big loss to the community (W1).

These sentiments were echoed by another interviewee who added the loss of skills and knowledge from the organisation.

> I think there has been a tragic loss of history. People have really thought that as well. It has been a loss of knowledge from in the organisation from a staffing point of view. Not only knowledge but skills as well. They sort of walked out the door (PI1).

The regrets are therefore for what has been lost. Loss of identity. Loss of history. Loss of belonging and so on (Dent & Goldberg, 1999; Wolfram Cox, 1997). There are also regrets that an anticipated future may no longer be realised.

> I WOULD HAVE STAYED THERE UNTIL I WAS 55
>
> Well, I would have worked, what I was doing originally in the shire. I would have stayed there until I was 55...and we hopefully would have seen some wonderful progress ...(BW1).

This employee was one of at least five who indicated during their interview they had anticipated their continued employment by choice with their former council. In acknowledging this future was no longer so certain, the employees' expression of regret was also indicative of their expressed loyalty to their former councils.

Portrait of a Council Employee (3) "Making Adjustments."

Kurt Lewin (1951), in his classic model of planned change described three stages associated with the change; a period to unfreeze, move and refreeze. While this model of change may be useful in some circumstances (see Graetz *et al.*, 2002, in this

instance, it appears not to resonate with the experience of the employees at Bass Coast Shire. For many of the staff, the amalgamation process appeared to be experienced as three major events; the first stage was the anticipation that I have characterised as anticipating the inevitable. The second stage was the announcement of the amalgamation and the creation of the new Bass Coast Shire. The third was the closure of the former shire offices and the transfer of staff to Wonthaggi. Fineman's (2003) model that refers to the three stages of change as anticipation, the experience and the aftermath is a closer approximation to the experience at Bass Coast..

In this, the third pose, what shall be painted is the picture from the third stage; the aftermath, which one employee described as "it felt like a takeover rather than an amalgamation" (PI6). The responses to the move to Wonthaggi varied, not surprisingly between those staff from the other councils who had to move into Wonthaggi and those in Wonthaggi, who had to make room for their new colleagues. What is interesting to note is not only the metaphors derived from warfare such as intruders and invasion, but the repeated use of language derived from the home (see Illes & Ritchie, 1999). Indeed more than one of the interviewees did draw on the domestic environment as an analogy of what occurred within their working environment.

IT IS LIKE MOVING INTO A NEW HOME.

> ...you are trying to push together three people. It is like moving into a new home. Everybody has their own habits and ways (SB6).

This is a delightful quote that conveys much meaning with linguistic economy. Certainly, it is possible to identify with the notion of pushing together essentially three councils' worth of employees (albeit with reduced numbers), into a building designed for only one council. The sense of being squashed into a confined space and then trying to negotiate not only the newly organised physical space, but individual and organisational cultural "habits and ways" is clearly communicated. For the people in Wonthaggi who had to accommodate their new colleagues within the building the feeling was described thus;

IT WAS LIKE HAVING SOMEONE LIVING IN YOUR LOUNGE ROOM.

> I mean, you had people invading you. James[51] said at one stage it was like having someone living in your lounge room (BW2).

Invasion implies aggression, hostility, possible resistance and certainly not invitation. The idea of having someone living in your lounge room, provides some

[51] Not his real name.

inkling of the overcrowding, while the presence of essentially strangers taking over the room usually devoted to family activities, offers some sense of the response by Wonthaggi employees. What had been experienced by the employees of Wonthaggi as invasion, was a not dissimilar feeling to those of the employees who were moving in – one reporting they felt as "intruders".

I FELT AS IF I WAS INTRUDING ON THEIR TERRITORY

It felt as though the older staff were suspicious of the new ones moving in. I felt as if I was intruding on their territory (W2-4).

With the language of invasion and intruders, it is perhaps little surprise to read of the dehumanisation of peers and colleagues. For instance, one employee reported others' perception of her,

OH, SHE DOESN'T HAVE TWO HEADS

So it was difficult and it was funny because people came over and I showed them through the offices and you could see the initial reaction was, "Oh, she doesn't have two heads or breathe fire". Oh, she is actually nice" (BW3).

Was she a monster? A dragon? An alien? All were possibilities. Fortunately her colleagues found she was, after all, actually nice. And presumably human. For some staff, this may have been issue as indicated in the quotation that follows.

The move into the new building appears fraught for all employees whether based already in Wonthaggi or being moved into the office because not only did the physical space require some negotiation, but relationships also needed to be established within the new working environment. Adjustments were required to not only new colleagues but also to the newly appointed Commissioners. Unlike the replaced elected councillors, the Chief Commissioner was a full-time appointment, and the other two commissioners part-time. They all had offices at the council and were physically present. This also required some adjustment by the council employees, one of whom suggested she had to wait to find out if they were "actually human".

IT IS DIFFERENT NOW THAT YOU FIND OUT THEY [THE APPOINTED COMMISSIONERS] ARE ACTUALLY HUMAN

The whole of the Borough of Wonthaggi changed immediately really because right from the start you felt that you couldn't...it is different now that you find out they [the appointed Commissioners] are actually human. You couldn't sort of laugh and congregate and have a chuckle. So that social side that was so important to a small organisation had diminished. You had to leave it till you knew they weren't in the building just in case they came in (BW4).

The process of moving out of the old offices appeared to be similarly fraught as indicated by the following,

> THERE WERE TEARS AND BEST OF LUCK.
>
> I know when I left to come over to Wonthaggi it was sort of like you were leaving the Island. It was awful. There were tears and best of luck, and "Are you sure you are doing the right thing?" (PI3).

As noted elsewhere, the travelling distance between Phillip Island and Wonthaggi was no more than thirty five minutes – a distance travelled regularly by residents from both areas for sporting, social and recreational functions. And yet the psychological distance between the two localities appears to be far greater than the mere thirty kilometres of road that separated them. For the person with the responsibility of organising the move of staff, this too was also a difficult time. Cast in the role of "baddy" by one group of staff, this employee was required to carry the projected anxieties and hostility within that part of the organisation. Interestingly, and perhaps contrary to expectations, the other group did not put up a struggle.

> [At Bass] I was seen as this baddy that was closing their office and moving them to bad old Wonthaggi...[at Phillip Island] nobody was putting up a struggle as long as they could take their old desk and chair with them, they were happy (PI1).

It is difficult not to wonder at the psychological processes and anxieties being experienced by employees that render office furniture as objects to assuage anxiety and to offer security (see Winnicott, 1958). Irrespective of the process however no doubt the interviewee was relieved at their compliance. One can only speculate about the struggle that may have been anticipated.

Concluding Comments

The purpose of this chapter has been to present the portrait of an employee of local government using a technique that captures simultaneously the unstable, the indeterminate and fragmented nature of organisational experience **at the same time** as providing multiple perspectives that hint at the complexity of that experience. With its emphasis on technique of presentation the chapter does not seek to frame the employees' experience according to an externally imposed series of hypotheses nor is it trying to massage the experience to further develop theoretical understanding (see Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

The contextual moment of the subject that was frozen in the portrait is that of the experience of a particular organisational change program and as such would be expected to be located within the change stream of the discipline of organisational studies. Researchers of organisational change conventionally adopt a finely detailed and unidimensional unit of analysis into particular aspects of change. Recent examples of this approach relevant to this study include studies of employee resistance (eg. Coram & Burnes, 2001; Trader-Leigh, 2002), psychological responses to organisational change (eg. Cunha & Cooper, 2002) and even the role of individual psychology in resistance to change (eg. Bovey & Hede, 2001).

With the painting of this portrait *Ambivalence,* this convention has largely been maintained. It is self-evident that to attribute a title to a body of research immediately applies bounded limits (Lawrence, 2000) or a container (see Bion, 1977/ 1985), within which particular phenomena can be explored. Although *Ambivalence* does suggest the possibility of multiple dimensions, its very use serves as a boundary around the area of interest to be reported. But, what is also apparent is that the particular title was selected not only because it was a meaningful summation of employees' responses to the change, but because inherent to the concept of ambivalence is the holding of many seemingly contradictory emotions simultaneously. With this as the dimension of interest comes the greater opportunity to represent the complexity of organisational experience.

Is it then just the title of *Ambivalence* that lends to the researcher the capacity to represent different dimensions to change such as those employed by Piderit (2000)? Certainly paying attention to expressions of ambivalence does provide opportunity to portray multiple responses to organisational change from varying perspectives. Thus, within the themes that formed the basis of the portrait were examples of embarrassment and pleasure at being a council employee; pride and cynicism about the growing professionalisation of the council; mourning for a lost past and anticipatory excitement for a future made possible by the amalgamation. This approach that challenges the dualisms established by the dichotomy of "either/ or" (Knights, 1997), in favour of "both/ and" is possible within a study that seeks to work with ambivalence.

The other consequence of using a theoretical construct that undermines the presence of any dualism in organisational change is the possible recasting of the concept of "resistance to change". For indeed, in the two chapters that have presented the research data, has been no mention of resistance. Does this silence represent an organisational amalgamation that was implemented with no resistance? Or is the silence on these pages, because I was tardy in identifying and "naming" particular behaviours

as resistance? In answer to both those questions, I would suggest neither to be the case. Instead, because of the characterisation of the employees' responses as ambivalent, came the capacity and the requirement to represent the many different and at times, contradictory responses, of which resistance was just one.

Certainly, with the model of analytic Cubism as my guide, the portrait was formed to reveal the complexities of the employee archive and not my own personal history or character. I have shaped and fashioned the portrait through selection – which of course, must involve decisions of inclusion as well as exclusion. I have however not sought to assert any role as narrator of the organisational story (see Hatch, 1996). My role is represent the words in a depiction I have called a portrait. I have attempted to limit description to that of context only and have allowed interpretations to emerge between the interviews, my portrayal of those words as a portrait and the reader of the portrait. Reading is of course an active process (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996) irrespective of the level of analysis provided and in this instance, the reader will be invited to engage actively with the material.

What however is unique to the contribution of the model of analytic Cubism is the structure that celebrates the fracturing and fragmentation of experience, irrespective of the essence of that experience. As a style utilised in the representation of organisational experience, the fragmented multiple positions challenge the traditions of ontological certainty and epistemological linearity in favour of discontinuity, uncertainty and instability. Freed from the constraints of mimeticism, analytic Cubism invites its exponents to work with this fractured discontinuity without compromise. Presented as a single moment, time is nonetheless fluid as the chronology of past, present and futures is represented simultaneously within the material.

Additionally, because analytic Cubism demands that those who work with this technique attend to the detail in the fabric of lived experience, it is an approach that privileges no prescribed aspect of the represented subject and thus offers no normative assessment of significance (or insignificance). Analytic Cubism is however not just a style of multiple positions. Although fractured in these multiplicities, it is nonetheless a style of representation that does seek synthesis as a completed image. It is apparent then that in concluding, irrespective of the bounded area of study that was selected, any representation modelled on analytic Cubism requires the examination and presentation of multiple perspectives.

One of the features of analytic Cubism previously mentioned by Kozloff (1975: 51) is the indeterminate structure of visual form so that "each passage being arbitrarily

valid a starting point as the next". Such arbitrariness of order (note – this is not disorder) is a distinct challenge to the conventions of linguistic and grammatical structure as well as data presentation requirements of explanations and causality (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The order in which the different poses are presented is in the main, arbitrary and no particular pose is to be privileged by its position. Unlike visual presentation, text cannot be absorbed simultaneously and there is always an assumption the reader will "work through" or read the material as it is presented. There is no hierarchy of sequencing and because each pose is to provide a particular facet of the council employee, each contribute to the construction of the developing sense of the council employee. It is with this assumption the portrait is "painted".

In summary, this portrait of the council employee is unfinished and uncertain. The images of the employee are inconsistent, contradictory and inconclusive and because of the intensity of the particular, it is not possible to generalise any experience. And yet, from the fractured and dissected lines has emerged a reconstructed portrait that does contain multiple perspectives within its image.

CHAPTER 12

ENDINGS

Purpose

The purpose of this chapter is twofold. The first purpose is to address the final research question that asks;

Research question 7: What contribution to organisational understanding can be made by the utilisation of Cubism as the representational template for organisational complexity?

In addressing that purpose, is a requirement to evaluate the strengths and limitations of using Cubism to represent organisational experiences. Attention will be directed to an analysis of the apparent gaps, the distractions and the contributions of the use of Cubism, in the representation of organisational complexity. What will then be argued is that with an approach to social reality that is based on an ontological plausibility and epistemological contingency, Cubism offers creative and interesting potential for representation within organisational studies.

The second purpose, not dissimilar to the first is to offer a final analysis of the strengths and limitations of this thesis, with suggestions for further research and analysis.

Background Summary

The first point, upon which the thesis rests, is that for writers in organisational studies, organisations are complex and their complexity is constructed as either an ontological variable of an organisation, or as an epistemological construct of organisational analysis. It was in addressing research question one that asked, *What is understood by organisational complexity, and is this different to complex organisations?* that the identification of the two different approaches to organisational complexity occurred. For, as discussed in Chapter 2, while there was no discernible difference between complex organisation and organisational complexity there was nonetheless two quite distinct ways in which complexity was constructed. Following analysis of the literature over the last forty years, it appeared that complexity is both a feature of organisations (ie. an ontology) as well as a description of the way in which organisations are known (an epistemology).

Having identified these two different constructions of complexity, it is then argued that this complex nature of organisational complexity required a representational style or technique to accommodate that complexity. It was from this need to find a suitable representational style that literature was reviewed and analysed to address research questions two and three that enquired; *Can Cubism serve as a theoretical and stylistic frame for the representation of organisational complexity?* and *Can the subject material of Cubist works (such as still life and portraiture) act as contextual frames for the development of motifs identified within organisational data?*

To address those questions, two chapters (Chapters 9 and 11) were developed to showcase the creative and philosophical potential opened by the embrace of Cubism into organisational studies. In the spirit of working on a "painting", each of the chapters that preceded the Cubist work, were used as "readers' notes" to offer background theoretical contextual material. Because a Cubist representation is of a "something", there was also the necessity to paint a picture relevant to organisational studies. That something that was painted was data that were gathered while conducting research to address the research questions four and five that asked respectively, *What was the experience of organisational change for the organisations and employees involved in the amalgamation process that formed Bass Coast Shire Council?* And *What were the responses of the employees and the organisation of the different amalgamating councils to the process of amalgamation?*

With the presentation of Cubism as one possible approach to the representation of organisational complexity, the thesis then explored the position of Cubism, widely acknowledged as an (the) exemplar of modernism in literature and art (Clark, 1999; Schwarz, 1997; Vargish & Mook, 1999).

Because of its significance as an exemplary modernist artform, the use of Cubism necessitated further study of modernism in aesthetics, the discipline of Cubism, as well as in organisational studies, and the discipline in which this thesis is based. Through analysis of the modernist turn in aesthetics, modernism emerged as a temperament that challenged tradition, subverted bourgeois pretensions, fragmented what was known and destroyed the mono-dimensional perspective in favour of multiple perspectives and simultaneity (Antliff & Leighten, 2001; Everdell, 1997; Poggi, 1992a; Schwarz, 1997).

This portrayal of modernism was in sharp contrast with its characterisation in organisational studies as an ideology that revered scientific reason and objectivity

(Burrell, 1996), that valued stasis over change (Chia, 1995) and whose grand theories based on reason, progress, the individual and equality centred privilege and marginalised the periphery (Calás & Smircich, 1999; Gergen & Thatchenkery, 1996). It was at this point, that research question six was formulated that asked *How can the apparent confusions between the different discipline-based constructions of modernism be accommodated in this thesis?*

To address this question, attention could not be confined to generalised differences, nor even to matters of representation (see below). To posit the use of Cubism as an appropriate representational model, also necessitated substantial clarification of the philosophical bedrock upon which the thesis was to be built.

Philosophical underpinnings

The philosophical position that has been characterised throughout the thesis is one of ontological plausibility and epistemological contingency. This position is not dissimilar to the concept referred to as "critical realism" (see Johnson & Duberley, 2000) that shares a belief in an objectivist ontology of realism and a subjective epistemology. Similarly, this philosophical position has found resonance with the Cubist approach to the acknowledgement of an external reality that can be known based on conception and perception. Although strongly identified with Cubism (Chipp, 1968; Cottington, 1998; Kozloff, 1973), these ideas of conception and perception are not exclusive to Cubism alone.

For instance, in his discussion of theory developments, Weick (1999a) also makes mention of perception and conception when he invokes one of Kant's axioms that perception without conception is blind and conception without perception is empty. To paraphrase Kant is to suggest that if we see without thought, that is, without any conceptual or theoretical framework, we can not see. If we think, or form ideas without reference to what we see, our ideas are groundless. Accepting the circularity of this argument demands that attention be given to the reflexive framework (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2000).

And yet, Weick (1999a) sounds a note of caution in his argument for what he refers to as, "disciplined reflexivity", when he suggests an inability to find the balance between conception and perception may lead theorists to be stuck in reflexive acts with the belief that doubt is the core of the human condition. Arguing for the need to construct images that capture what he believes organising is about, Weick (1999a) very simply envisages a plausible representation of the truth and reality of his experience of

organisations. And for this he argues the necessity to craft those images from both the perceived **and** conceived to avoid the potentiality of blindness and emptiness.

For Weick, an organisational writer who pursues study in what matters (Weick, 1999b), and endeavours to make sense of organisational experiences (Weick, 1995, 1999a), what is important is providing "tools to help people make sense of an unknowable and unpredictable world" (p. 803). While this is a view with which I have enormous sympathy, this thesis is predicated on the notion that such a laudable ambition can not be realised. It is because organisations are unpredictable and unknowable that I believe doubt must be present in all representations of organisations.

It is this personal philosophy that lead initially to the search for a representational form that affirms on the one hand, the notion of a reality with a plausible existence, while at the same time, how that reality is known is contingent on the context. Because of this ontological and epistemological complexity, the criteria for representation were uncharacteristically clear and unambiguous; a representational form that privileges no one position; whose creative spirit is predicated on reflexivity, difference, multiplicity, uncertainty, tension; in which the ontological demands of being and becoming (Chia, 1995) and the episteme of fractured inclusion all have a place.

Representation

With the acknowledgement that representation occupied such a central position in the thesis came the requirement to address what is currently known as "the crisis of representation" (Calás & Smircich, 1999) in organisational studies. Because this crisis has been identified as emerging from the modernist faith that language is "a mirror of reality" (Rorty, 1980), the antimonies between modernism and its critics, have also required examination. Although modernism and postmodernism has been portrayed in organisational studies as occupying positions that were antagonistic and dichotomous (Alvesson & Deetz, 1996; Burrell, 1988; Cooper, 1989; Cooper & Burrell, 1988; Gergen & Thatchenkery, 1996; Hancock & Tyler, 2001; Hassard, 1993), in the discussion in this thesis, it is these points of conflict that have been problematised.

Further to research question six, detailed analysis of modernism and its critics was conducted. With its scientific "foundations", modernism scholarship suggests that methodological rigour is predicated on scientific research and analysis that can produce "an objective, exact and unmediated copy or simulacrum of the reality to which it pertains" (Reed, 1997, p.23). With this modernist position, understood as the positivist approach to organisational research, the researcher is cast into the role of objective

observer independent of what is being observed (Johnson & Duberley, 2000). Preoccupied with criteria such as internal and external validity, reliability and objectivity (Guba & Lincoln, 1998), positivist research sought to erase all contextual considerations from the research event. The objective of all research writing from the modernist perspective was then understood to "represent accurately in our minds using linguistic or visual forms what the world 'out there' is really like" (Chia, 1996c, p. 36).

Under postmodernism, the separation of the researcher and the subject is no longer assumed, reality is mediated rather than objective, and language constitutes or "censors" rather than reflects or describes (Cooper, 1989). As summarised by Calás and Smircich (1999), this crisis of representation involves the de-stabilisation of the taken-for-granted association between structure and meaning of the idea that "[m]odern knowledge (or theory) is presumed to represent some form of stable phenomena existing outside their representation" (p. 653). Similarly, Kilduff and Mehra (1997, p. 466) have argued that the problematisation of representation implies the "undermining of all claims to methodological purity", that although there is fear this may lead "to the death of scientific enquiry" (p.454), nonetheless does imply "an unmediated, objective representation of the facts". Further, Gergen and Thatchenkery (1996a, p. 366) wrote that [under] postmodernism, methodology loses its status as the chief arbiter of truth".

Such concerns have lead to calls for organisational research to adopt new styles, with the emergence of alternatives to the "suspending rather than rejecting positivistic scientific frameworks" (Marcus & Fischer, 1986 cited in Gephart, Boje & Thatchenkery, 1996, p. 7). The task of the alternatives has been to conduct research that "aims at resistance and indeterminacy where irony and play are preferred to rationality, predictability and order" (Alvesson & Deetz, 1996, p. 205). Alvesson and Deetz (1996) noted the emergence of different styles such as "ironic, self-ironic or impressionistic ones"; and suggested that perhaps the inspiration "to develop new ways of writing will turn out to be one of the most powerful and interesting contributions of postmodernism" (p. 211). For Kilduff and Mehra (1997) the new ways of writing would,

> seek to include and use techniques, insights, methods, and approaches from a variety of traditions, reaching backwards, forwards, and sideways with little regard for academic boundaries or the myth of progress that condemns some texts as old-fashioned while proclaiming others state of art. From this postmodern perspective, all styles are simultaneously available (p. 457).

Although having observed the attractiveness of the confidence with which Gertrude Stein played with language (see Exhibit 8.1), and Pablo Picasso worked with

irony (see Figures 8.1, 8.2), it is clear that some seventy years later, calls from postmodernists to embark on similar representational explorations are still not immune from criticism (eg. Parker, 1995; Rosenau, 1992).

In returning to the alarming inconsistency between the understanding of modernism from the two fields of aesthetics and organisational studies, reference is again made to Cooper and Burrell's (1988) classification of what they called "systemic" and "critical" modernism. Because in Chapter 4 the differences between the two modernisms were discussed at length, I shall not return to that material. However, it appears that for postmodernists, that which is contemptible about systemic modernism is characterised as modernism; that which is appealing about critical modernism is co-opted into postmodernism. In addressing research question seven that asks, *What contribution to organisational understanding can be made by the utilisation of Cubism as a representational template for organisational complexity?* the relationship between modernism and postmodernism shall be put aside. Not because the answer to question six is insurmountable, but in answering question seven, question six loses its relevance.

Contribution of Cubism to the Representation of Organisational Complexity

The Schema of Cubism

What has been demonstrated in this thesis through both theoretical discussion and application is the development of a new representational schema that is either both modernism or postmodernism; or it is neither modernism nor postmodernism. This schema offers an other way to think about and represent organisational experience. I am loathe to argue this is "a third way" (Bernstein cited in Purvis & Hunt, 1993, p. 476), or a middle ground (see Gergen & Thatchenkery, 1996a) or even Connell and Nord's (1996) agnostic position. The reasons against offering a single view are many. For instance,

> Late twentieth century thinking, art, science and [I would add organisational studies] are all eclectic. Our concepts and ideas are littered with parts and pieces from other civilizations, past and present. This abiding awareness of pluralist realities – multiple points of view – prompts informed viewers to question the completeness, if not the veracity, of any world view that can be fully depicted from a single viewpoint (Dunning, 1993, p. 132).

An additional concern is that should I do so, is the implication of the privileging of just one alternative, a point of view inimical with Cubist philosophy. I am also conscious of

the history of this discipline of organisational studies that gave credibility (see Donaldson, 1995, 1998) to an idea popularised by Luthans (1972) some thirty years ago, that the knowledge of management could be contained by a single theory. Irrespective of the value contingency theory may contribute to organisational understanding (see Ofori-Dankwa & Scott, 2001), recent developments in organisational theory (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2000; Weick, 1999a), make any claim to the "one best" theory, methodology, paradigm or representational style as unreconstructed naivety and/ or hubris.

What is this new schema? Because I think Cubism offers an other way of thinking about organisational representations, I have decided to present this schema without overt reference to either modernism and/ or postmodernism. Because it is outside the boundaries of the usual organisational style, form and reference (Schapper, Wolfram Cox & De Cieri, 2003), Cubism is both disruptive of, and oblivious to, the modernism-postmodernism antimonies. The intention in this section is to present the schema of Cubism as I have worked with the ideas in organisational studies. The perspective on Cubism that follows is essentially "recycled" from previous chapters that were referenced and documented. Because these materials are now re-worked and shaped together to form a particular schema of Cubism, no particular references will be made in this next section to the literature on Cubism. While this may minimally minimise the repetition or insistence of Cubism, this erasure of external referentiality is not however, to be read as a denial of the external realities previously included. Should the reader be concerned at the academic sloppiness of this next section, I shall return to academic protocols when offering thought on the contribution of this Cubist schema of representation.

In this thesis, Cubism is portrayed as a philosophy or a way of being that is more involved with inclusion and less on dichotomy, and exclusion. Using the portrait of *Ambivalence* as an example, through the process of deconstruction and fragmentation of the elements of the poses, the picture of the employee was simultaneously constructed in an image of intense complexity and remarkable humanity. With its title, the portrait offered multiple perspectives drawn from the participants' words; providing layers of meaning and understanding, and insight into some of the responses to the amalgamation process. There were inconsistencies on some views and consistency in other responses. Each had a place and were included.

With its fracturing of the subject and the multiplicity of simultaneous images, Cubism has also allowed the presentation of an individual not as a separate, discrete

individual, but instead as an individual whose history, culture, geography and temporal experience is imbedded within the words used to describe the experience. Referring to the portrait of the employee painted in Chapter 11, it is apparent that the experiences of amalgamation have been expressed through individual voices, rather than voices expressing individual experiences.

Neither the analysis nor the synthesis has been privileged; for there was an interdependency and relatedness that contributed to the whole. With Gertrude Stein as my muse, I considered her words as she explained Picasso's capacity to delve deep, deconstruct, explore and re-construct; "the features seen separately existed separately and at the same time it all was a picture, the struggle to express that at this time was happy rather than sad (Stein, 1984, p. 25). The struggle with the separate and the all was happy.

Referring to Cubism as my philosophical guide, each of the Chapters 9 and 11 that were crafted, were also to be examples of self-reflexive pieces of writing. The reality of each was contained within the pages, and although each referred to an external (plausible) reality, the chapters were themselves a reality. From such a position, what is represented is the representation and there are no truth claims that lie beyond that representation. For instance, there have no suggestions of generalisability of the portrait, and no suggestion that the portrait is representative of all who experienced the amalgamation at the council. The portrait is the portrait derived from the views expressed by the interviewees.

In each of the Cubist chapters, the author was present and my position declared. There was no claim for an objective or neutral distance, because my role in constructing the representation was explicit. When reading a picture from a Cubist perspective, there is no certainty or stability. For what is certain may be an arbitrary signification which renders its "reading" to be complex and mystifying. Any analyses were offered, not as an authority, and as much as possible to assist the contextualisation of the participants' view of their experiences.

In a Cubist painting, the structure and the technique is laid bare for all to see. In the Cubist chapters, the technique was explicit and clarified. Because the styles of both synthetic and analytic Cubism are intrinsically uncertain, indeterminate and discontinuous, the image is not final and yet the art object, the chapter is of itself, complete. The reader is not presented however with a sense of completion. The invitation is made to search the image beyond its presence for the representation of the absent. In visual Cubism, the absence may be an unpainted portion of the paper or

canvas. In these chapters, the absences are many; the absent employees, the departed employees and the employees who had died.

Cubists clearly enjoyed expressing their sense of fun, their play and more particularly in their collages, irony. The use of visual puns; incomplete sentences that hinted at a range of possibilities; *trompe d'oeil* to subvert the demands of realism; the juxtaposition of marketing slogans with newspaper reports of military activities; the pastings of drink coasters and bar tabs; the inclusion of techniques from the painting and decorating trades and finally the use of collage previously considered a domestic craft, all allude to a representational style that encourages play and allows the expression of irony in its techniques. Despite the delicious temptation to engage in similar play, I was concerned that such play could trivialise the dignity of the participants in this research. This is an issue to be considered at a later date beyond this thesis.

The narrative of the chapters is not fluid or linear and internal hierarchy has been avoided. Some of the stories are fragmented and presented as a montage. The imagery is rich, because the fragmentation hints at multiple readings of the story. The stories are small and they are many. The whimsy and detail of these small tales highlights yet another element of the Cubist fragmentation; the concentration on the small and the overlooked or Derrida's *petit recits*.

In the main, Cubism avoids the grandiose or inspirational; the philosophy of *rhopography* that values the trivial, mundane and diminished is imbued through visual and literary Cubism. The use of *collage*, in which the textual scraps of daily living are pasted to a canvas, is just one obvious example of this honouring of the stories traditionally neglected by the custodians of High Art.

Finally, Cubism is a style that encourages eclecticism, diversity and multiplicity. No one perspective has been privileged, and reminiscent of the organisational bricoleur, scraps of theories, ideas, data have been used to contribute to the chapters.

Having gathered previously discussed material on Cubism to re-construct a new schema of representation, I shall now move into a brief analysis of the contribution this schema can make to representation in organisational studies.

Contribution of the Schema

The development of the schema emerged from dissatisfaction with traditional representational styles that did not accommodate the complexity of the complex organisations. With its dedication to the presentation of a conceived reality, Cubism is

thus a representational form that can accommodate the ontological constructs of organisational complexity. As a representational style that also strives to represent the multiple knowledges of the realities, it is again a representational form that can accommodate the epistemological constructs of organisational complexity.

With the development of a new representational schema, it is suggested that the disruptive Cubist techniques that fracture and fragment, may contribute to existing efforts to complicate empirical organisational research. For example, rather than contributing to wholeness or some sense of metatriangulation for theory building (Lewis & Grimes, 1999), multiparadigm inquiry can be recast as an example of Cubist simultaneity, a disjunctive representational strategy that provides different, fragmented conceptions of organisational experiences (Schapper *et al.*, 2003). the assumption of a Cubist temperament, paradigm incommensurability is a given rather than a problem; attention shifts to the mode and the material which simultaneity may be represented.

For those, such as the critical theorists (eg. Alvesson & Willmott, 1996; Knights, 1992; Knights & Willmott, 1989; Willmott, 1993), who support the critical modernist tradition to challenge the totalising ideologies and practises that control, dominate, marginalise, silence and repress individuals (Alvesson & Willmott, 1996; Kincheloe & McLaren, 1994), the schema of Cubism is a form of representation that is essentially very democratic in the establishment of a relationship of equals between the author and the reader and viewer. Working in this way precludes any possibility of certainty or fixed point or single (correct) reading. In order to stimulate the creative dialogue between artist, audience and the piece of work, the writing or painting must be fluid, contingent and relative. The creation and reading of a Cubist piece of work is thus inherently complex because of the fluidity and indeterminacy of its essence. This acknowledgement of limitless experience and readings made possible by simultaneity, serves as a defining element of Cubist work. What is also apparent in Cubism is the absence of privilege in the dynamic between audience and artist (visual or literary) - both artist and audience partners in the creative flux of knowingness. The audience must engage with the work without judgement and without the desire to "solve the puzzle (of the text or painting)".

The democratic nature of Cubism is also highlighted when reference is made to what are presented as desirable features of postmodernist representation. Consider this comment from Rosenau (1992) as she describes the postmodernist approach to representation, "[postmodernism] focuses on what is nonobvious, left out, and generally forgotten in a text and examines what is unsaid, overlooked, understated and never

overtly recognized" (p. 168). This is surely very resonant with the Cubist tendency to present in their collages the trivial, the domestic and the overlooked of *rhopography*. As Kilduff and Mehra (1997) have noted that with this approach, the voices of those who may be dismissed as marginal, unimportant or statistical outliers in traditional representation of organisational data is heard.

With its representation of the construction and de-construction of being and becoming, Cubism is also closely aligned to postmodern thinking which is concerned less with the facts of organisation as it is with "the structure and logic of organizing" (Chia, 1995, p.595). Unlike postmodernist representation though, Cubism does strive to represent reality, no matter how contested or diverse those realities may be.

Cubism's democratic base is also apparent in its trend to portray the particular over the generalised and universal; again, this is a trend that is resonant with the postmodernist turn;

> The postmodern preference is for detailed understanding of the particular, for local knowledge and local times, as opposed to statistical trends....Researchers adopting postmodernism tend to pay great attention to the writing process itself. This means striving to involve the reader in the text, eschewing passive objectivity for an active authorial voice, and carefully crafting an aesthetically pleasing text (Kilduff & Mehra, 1997, p. 466).

Paradoxically, although Cubism honours the overlooked and marginalised, it also manages to escape the celebration of the subject and "the individual". Chia (1995) has argued that 'individuals' are "provisionally ordered networks of heterogeneous materials whose resistance to ordering has been temporarily overcome" (p. 592); that is "people are who they are because they are a patterned network of heterogeneous materials" (Law, 1992 cited in Chia, 1995, p. 592). If as Law and Chia argue, individuals are not discrete and separate entities but networks of experiences seeking expression through the particularity of an individual, then in order to make any sense of organisational experience requires detailed attention to what Chia again refers to as the 'micro-processes' of organising. The fragmentation of experience expressed by the schema of Cubism encourages attention to detail, and to the micro-processes of what is studied.

For those who seek reassurance of ontological certainty, the challenge of epistemological relativities of the Cubist schema may again prove too overwhelming for acceptance. And yet, as discussed in Chapter 5, Cubism is firmly grounded in the representation of reality (see Frascina, 1993; Fry, 1966; Golding, 1988; Kamber, 1971;

(Burrell, 1996), that valued stasis over change (Chia, 1995) and whose grand theories based on reason, progress, the individual and equality centred privilege and marginalised the periphery (Calás & Smircich, 1999; Gergen & Thatchenkery, 1996). It was at this point, that research question six was formulated that asked *How can the apparent confusions between the different discipline-based constructions of modernism be accommodated in this thesis?*

To address this question, attention could not be confined to generalised differences, nor even to matters of representation (see below). To posit the use of Cubism as an appropriate representational model, also necessitated substantial clarification of the philosophical bedrock upon which the thesis was to be built.

Philosophical Underpinnings

The philosophical position that has been characterised throughout the thesis is one of ontological plausibility and epistemological contingency. This position is not dissimilar to the concept referred to as "critical realism" (see Johnson & Duberley, 2000) that shares a belief in an objectivist ontology of realism and a subjective epistemology. Similarly, this philosophical position has found resonance with the Cubist approach to the acknowledgement of an external reality that can be known based on conception and perception. Although strongly identified with Cubism (Chipp, 1968; Cottington, 1998; Kozloff, 1973), these ideas of conception and perception are not exclusive to Cubism alone.

For instance, in his discussion of theory developments, Weick (1999a) also makes mention of perception and conception when he invokes one of Kant's axioms that perception without conception is blind and conception without perception is empty. To paraphrase Kant is to suggest that if we see without thought, that is, without any conceptual or theoretical framework, we can not see. If we think, or form ideas without reference to what we see, our ideas are groundless. Accepting the circularity of this argument demands that attention be given to the reflexive framework (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2000).

And yet, Weick (1999a) sounds a note of caution in his argument for what he refers to as, "disciplined reflexivity", when he suggests an inability to find the balance between conception and perception may lead theorists to be stuck in reflexive acts with the belief that doubt is the core of the human condition. Arguing for the need to construct images that capture what he believes organising is about, Weick (1999a) very simply envisages a plausible representation of the truth and reality of his experience of

Kozloff, 1973; Lemaitre, 1945; Vargish & Mook, 1999). Just as it was for Cubist, so too do organisational writers confront the challenge to represent the known and not-known reality of their chosen study – the representational approach differs but yet there is resonance with the commitment to develop a representational style that reflects reality (Schapper *et al.*, 2003).

Limitations of the Cubist Schema

In presenting argument for the contribution of Cubism, there is also a requirement of scholarship to offer some thought to the gaps and the limitations of the use of Cubism. The difficulty with this requirement is to establish from what perspective the analysis of the absence shall be conducted. In order to be true to Cubism, I am thus going to offer a reflexive analysis of the strengths and limitations not just of the schema but of this Cubist exercise and it is to be understood that with the identification of the limitations that suggestions for improvement may well be implied.

The first limitation has emerged from a reference that opened Chapter 4 on modernism and that is, the overwhelmingly Westerncentric perspective of the thesis (see Clegg, Linstead & Sewell, 2000). The constructions of modernism and postmodernism, the perspectives surrounding the matter of representation, the discussion of epistemology and ontology, and the attempts at using Cubism as the representational template are all constructed within a Western ideological and philosophical framework. Although this is an obvious reflection of my cultural background, there is nonetheless future potential to explore issues of representation from a non-Western perspective (eg. Bentz & Shapiro, 1998).

From within the history of Cubism itself, there are examples that establish precedence for the pursuit of material beyond the philosophical constraints of the United States and Europe. For instance, Picasso in particular, turned to African culture (Bois, 1987; Chave, 1994; Klawana, 1994) to explore alternate ways to represent his conception of reality. Although this effort at cultural diversity may have been of laudable intent, considerable controversy surrounded the influence of African art on Picasso in particular. Chave (1994), one art historian has argued the use of "Africanesque" masks in his portrayal of prostitutes in *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon* to be "racist and neo-colonialist" (p. 598).

Other art historians have responded in what can only be understood as racist and derisory. For instance, when Rosenblum (1976) referred to African sculpture as

"unbearably ugly" and others (cited in Klawana, 1994) stated that African art or primitivism was "grotesque and savage", there is clearly hostility to the use of imagery from another (unknown) culture. From such a perspective, that Picasso and Braque found there was something to be learned from tribal peoples, could only be understood by Rubin (1994) as an attack on the bourgeois aesthetics embodied in High Art.

This brief example from Cubism can serve as a warning of the potential difficulties that may emerge in attempts to move outside one's own cultural milieu. It is not however reason to continue the perpetuation of the cultural and ideological hegemony that pervades organisational studies at this time. In highlighting this limitation, I am thus giving indication of an intention to conduct future research with a broader level of cultural inclusion.

Another limitation that can be identified in this thesis is the lack of creativity in the presentation of the data. There was tremendous potential for a multimedia presentation in which notes, pamphlets, photographs and other visual and written texts from the organisation could have been literally pasted as an original Cubist collage. The idea was considered but rejected. This is an area that nonetheless I think may benefit from further exploration and in the spirit of multidisciplinary research and knowledge, worthy of collaboration with a Fine Arts/ multimedia practitioner.

Yet another aesthetic limitation to this thesis was the limited cases that were presented. Although the themes of *vanitas* and ambivalence emerged from the research data, there is also the possibility that in pursuing what may be construed as attempts at grand narratives, that the smaller themes had been overlooked. Had the thesis set out from its inception to represent Chia's (1995) micro-practises, there would undoubtedly have been closer attention to the stories that may have been lost in the search for the significant themes. This is again, an exercise that could be pursued in the future to re-examine the research data for the stories that have been ignored, that were not allowed to surface and that do comprise the rich complexity of organisational experience. Alternatively, further studies could be conducted with the Cubist schema itself as the research methodology.

In looking for what has not been mentioned in the thesis, there is a necessity to give thought to even some of the grand themes one would traditionally expect to read in a thesis that encompasses an issue of significant organisational change. For instance, although the portrait of the council employee represented a plurality of voices in which difference and points of tension and conflict are readily apparent, the analysis within the portrait was remarkably quiet about such matters as resistance and leadership (see

Schein, 1965). Of course, having said that, it is also to be remembered that in being faithful to the spirit of Cubism, that the reader may well have identified these themes already from the data that has been presented.

Adopting the reflexivity required of a Cubist, it is clear there are many opportunities to further explore the role of the researcher and author in the processes of research and subsequent selection and exclusion of data. For instance, what was the resistance of the author to include the representation of organisational resistance in the representations of the data? Another way of asking this question is to give thought to what about the conception of organisational change was blinding the perception?

Yet another weakness of the thesis is the failure to deconstruct what was understood by the artists as well as art historians when referring to the Cubist reality representing "conception and not perception". Again, although a limitation what this does suggest is the opportunity to give further thought to the relationship between our "network of beliefs" and representation.

Although its absence was explained earlier, humour, play or irony are notably silent in the construction of the Cubist schema. Cubism was an art that was naughty, cheeky and subversive; and the Cubists used their art to tweak their collective noses at bourgeois society and artistic tradition. Some of their visual games may have been puerile (eg. the pun on urinal with (jo)urnal, or their literary games obscure (eg. Stein's *Tender Buttons*, 1914), and yet their humour brought a vibrancy and engagement to their work. For it appears that through the use of play and humour, the Cubists imposed an obvious authorial presence to their work. There was no pretence at objectivity and no claims to neutrality; theirs was an art that was generous in its honesty. Again, to highlight the absence of humour or irony in this thesis serves as a possible future project – either as an exercise in discursive analysis, or as a subject of enquiry itself.

In concluding this section on the limitations of adopting a Cubist approach to the representation of organisational complexity, it is apparent there is still much work required to develop the concept. Future efforts may benefit from greater courage in attempting experimentation, creativity and aesthetic boldness. Cubism can be used a point of entry into the study of parody, humour or irony or paradox. It can be used as an alternative tool to deconstruction, as it represents the many tales within organisational experiences. The use of Cubism as a means of representing organisational material could also be the basis of collaboration across the disciplines of fine arts and organisational studies. Finally, Cubism could be used as a further justification for reflexivity within representation of organisational studies.

Concluding Comments

Irrespective of the limitations of this study, it is still argued that the schema of Cubism can make a considerable contribution to enhancing our understanding of organisational experience. Although Cubism is not usually a body of work that is relevant to representation of organisational studies, there has nonetheless been increasing attention to the study of aesthetics in organisations. Its attention to the small-scale of organisations demands we pay attention to the previously overlooked and ignored. It honours repetition and accommodates diversity and eclecticism of views, styles and techniques. Cubism encourages innovation, creativity and new ways of representing the complexity of organisational data and experience. For those who do not want to be locked into a polarised antagonism across the modernist-postmodernist divide, Cubism is offered as an other way of representation.

There is awareness there may be those reassured by the Cubist acceptance of ontological plausibility for whom the challenge of epistemological contingencies may prove too overwhelming for acceptance. Similarly, the reference to reality, no matter how conceived, may deter adoption by others. Nonetheless, the Cubist temperament, whether expressed in painting or in writing, is the desire to present a range of knowledges and experiences as a reality, while at the same time inviting the audience to contemplate their own repertoire of experiences and knowledges of that reality. It is in the spirit of Cubism that the reader is invited to explore the possibilities of the knowledges and realities that Cubism may open in the representation of organisational studies.

APPENDIX A

LOCALITY MAPS

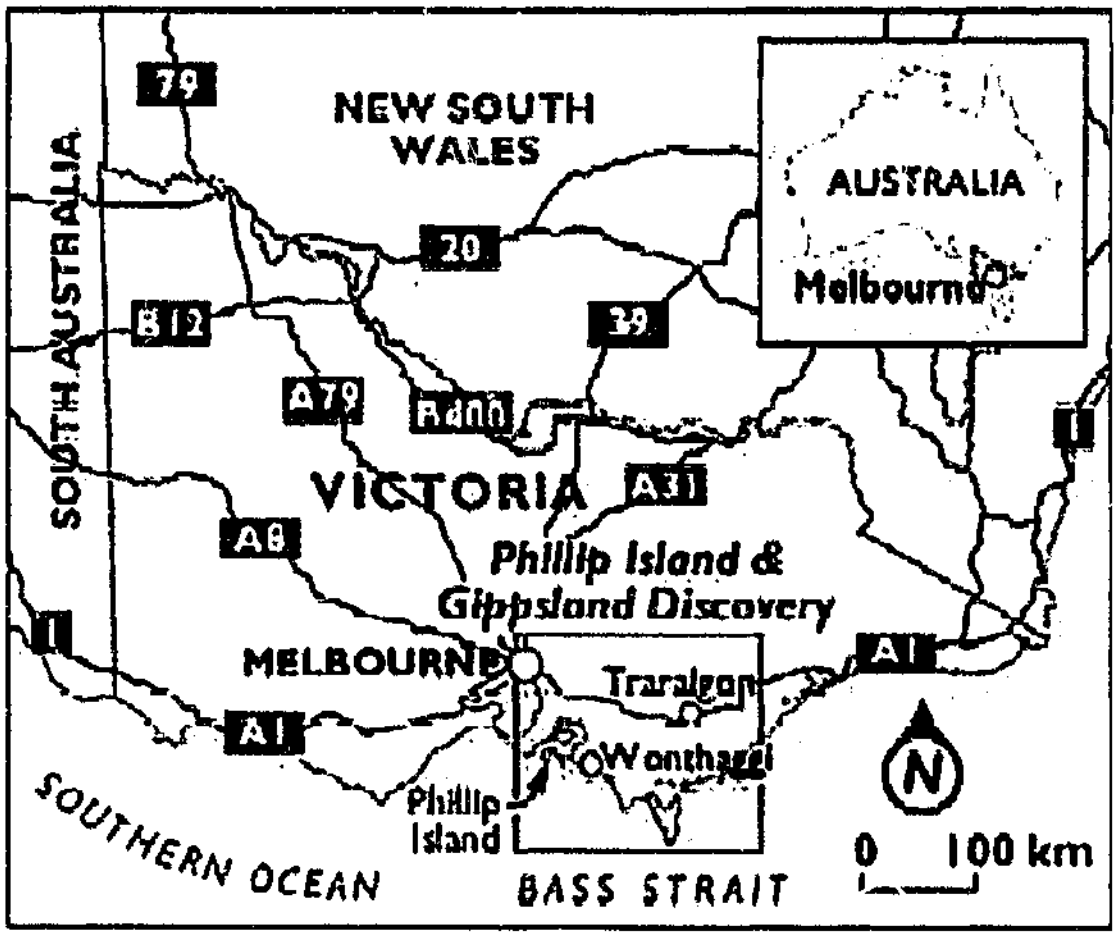

Figure A1 Map of Victoria (Phillip Island, Wonthaggi and Gippsland highlighted)
Source: www.visitvictoria.com

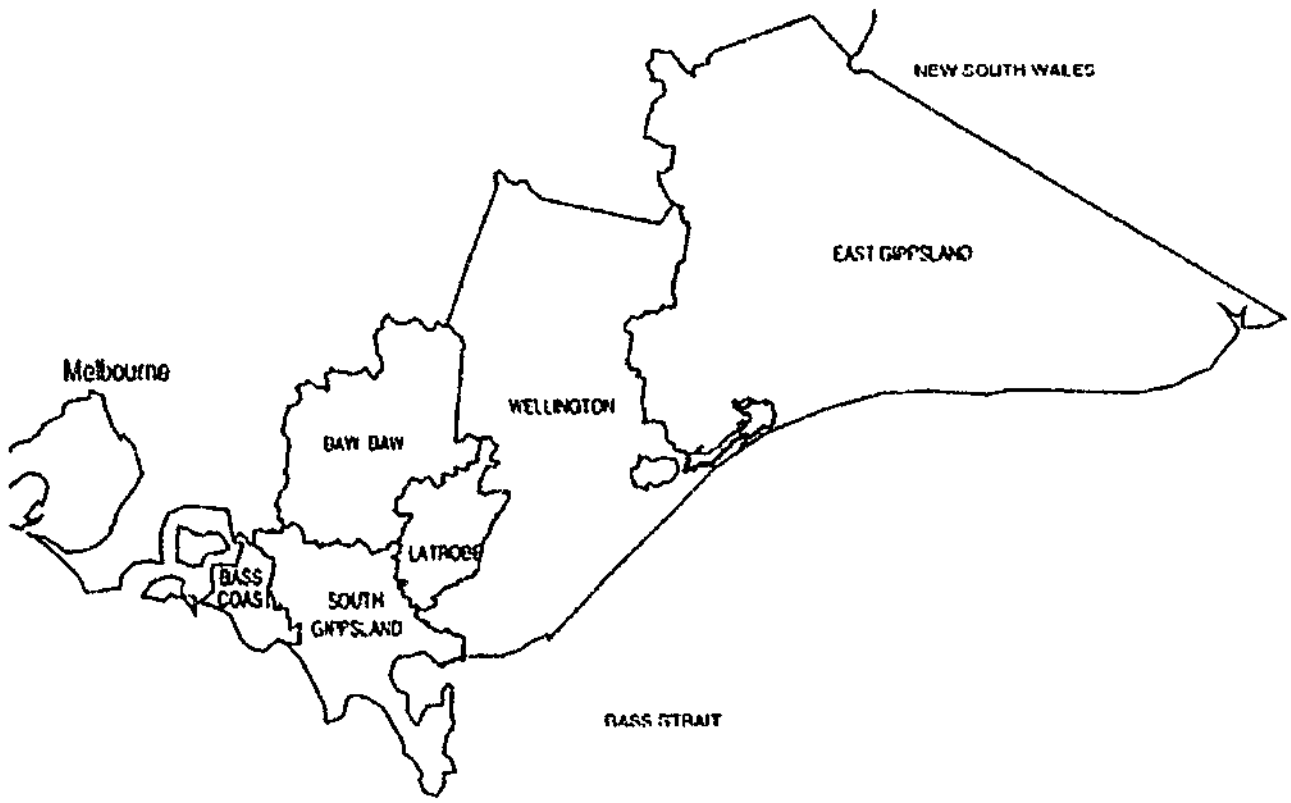

Figure A2 Gippsland Shires
Source: http://homepages.rootsweb.com/~surreal/AVG/Resources/maps-bcs.html

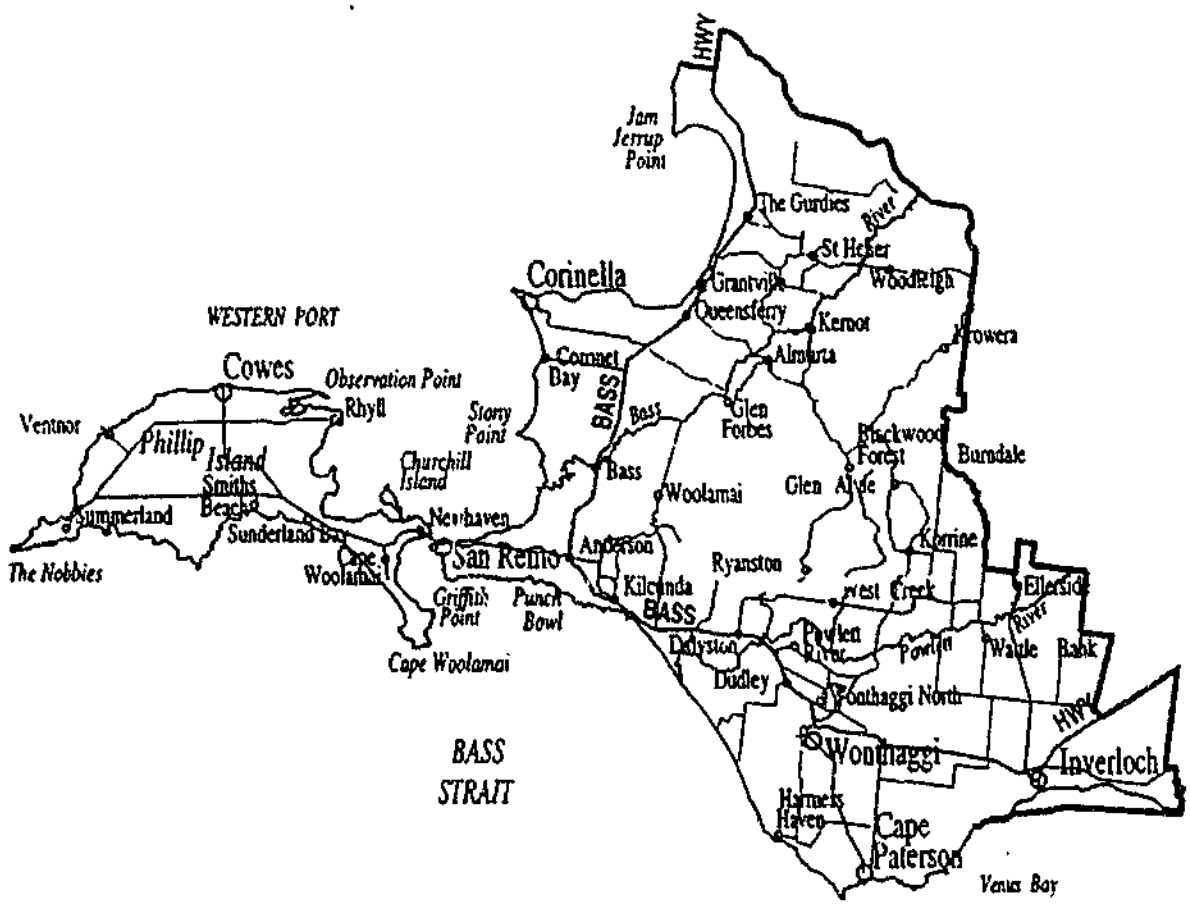

Figure A3 Bass Coast Shire boundaries
Source: http://homepages.rootsweb.com/~surreal/AVG/Resources/maps-bcs.html

APPENDIX B

INTRODUCTION TO STAFF

BASS COAST SHIRE COUNCIL **INTERNAL MEMO**

jw\

To: CMSR'S, MGR'S, EO'S, ODO

From: Human Resources Co-ordinator

Date: 14 August, 1996

File No: 30-02-0002

Subject: **INTRODUCING JAN SCHAPPER**

I wish to introduce to you, Jan Schapper, of Monash University who is writing a thesis on change management as part of her Doctorate studies.

Jan has requested, and gained approval from the CEO, to base her thesis upon this organisation having particular regard for the many changes which have recently occurred and which continue to occur.

Over the coming months Jan will be spending time at the Civic Centre collating data and speaking with particular officers and commissioners. I will be Jan's contact and reference for the purpose of supplying data and making any necessary introductions.

While it is obviously Jan who must do all the work, it would be appreciated if you could assist her with any insights, knowledge or documents which you may have that will assist in her research. Jan has promised to make a copy of her findings available to the organisation when complete.

JOHN WYNEN
Human Resources Co-ordinator

14.8.96 [redacted]

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Staff

1. What position did you have prior to amalgamation? What were the major functions of that position? What is the position you now have? What are the major functions of this position?

2. What would describe as the most significant difference in the way you conduct your work now compared to before the amalgamation?

3. Can you take your mind back to the months that lead up to the amalgamation and the amalgamation itself? What do you think of? What are some feelings or memories you have of this time?

4. How would you describe the atmosphere of the council/ people's feelings at that time?

5. How would have described the role of local government in the past? What about now?

6. What did you understand were the reasons for council amalgamation? How were these reasons conveyed to staff?

7. Do you believe there was much support for the amalgamation within council during the process?

8. What do you think was the most difficult aspect of the amalgamation process that you had to face? How did you manage this?

9. Looking now at the new organization, what do you believe to be the most significant changes that have occurred as a result of the amalgamation? What do you think has not changed at all?

10. How would you describe the identity of this organisation, the Tasman Shire?

11. There is a lot of emphasis now on organisational culture and organisational climate that includes such things as management style, customer awareness and so on. How would you describe the culture of the previous council? What about this current council?

12. It is now nearly two years since the amalgamation. In retrospect and with the advantage of hindsight what would have done differently or recommend to be done differently?

Managers

1. Can you take your mind back to the months that lead up to the amalgamation and the amalgamation itself? What do you think of? What are some feelings or memories you have of this time?

2. How would you describe the atmosphere of the council/ people's feelings at that time?

3. How would have described the role of local government in the past? What about now?

4. What did you understand were the reasons for council amalgamation? How were these reasons conveyed to staff?

5. Do you believe there was much support for the amalgamation within council during the process?

6. What did you see as your role as manager at that time?

7. Did you feel supported in this? What support was provided senior management during the process?

8. What do you think was the most difficult aspect of the amalgamation process you had to face? How did you manage this?

9. You mentioned your position at the time of amalgamation was .... And now you are doing..... Have there been any changes in your position? What has remained the same?

10. Looking now at the new organization, what do you believe to be the most significant changes that have occurred as a result of the amalgamation? What do you think has not changed at all?

11. What would describe as the identity of this organization?

12. There is a lot of emphasis now on organisational culture and organisational climate that includes such things as management style, customer awareness and so on. How would you describe the culture of the previous council? What about this current council?

13. It is now nearly two years since the amalgamation. In retrospect and with the advantage of hindsight what would have done differently or recommend to be done differently?

APPENDIX D

TIMELINE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT COUNCIL AMALGAMATIONS

Year	Month	Event
1986		State Labor government abandons attempts to introduce reforms to local government, including "boundary restructures".
1989		State Labor government introduces administrative reforms to local government. No arrangements for boundary restructures.
1992	October	State Liberal Party wins with decisive majority in both Houses.
1993	May	City of Greater Geelong created by State Government from nine councils. Elected councillors replaced by government-appointed commissioners.
	August	First meeting of Local Government Board convened and conducted; • Surf Coast Review (three councils reviewed; one new council created)[1] • Bannockburn Review (six councils reviewed; one new council created)
	September	• Ballarat Review (six councils reviewed; one new council created) • Bendigo Review (five councils reviewed; one new council created)
	November	City of Melbourne created by State Government; boundaries redrawn with the loss of 20, 000 residents, and the gain of 600 commercial ratepayers. Elected councillors replaced by government-appointed commissioners.
	December	• Inner Melbourne Review (twenty-one councils reviewed; six new councils created)
1994	March	• South West Victoria Boundary Review (twenty-three councils reviewed; eight new councils created)
	June	• North East Boundary Review (thirty-seven councils reviewed; eleven new councils created)
	July	• Middle and Outer Melbourne Boundary Review (forty-one councils reviewed; twenty-four new councils created) • Gippsland Boundary Review (twenty-four councils reviewed; six new councils created)
	August	• North Central Victoria Boundary Review (eighteen councils reviewed; five new councils created) • North West Victoria Boundary Review (twenty-seven councils reviewed; nine new councils created)
	December	Bass Coast Shire Council created from former Shires of Bass and Phillip Island, the Borough of Wonthaggi, Inverloch township from Shire of Woorayl and the Wattle Bank and Lance Creek districts of Shire of Korumburra.

Figure C1 Source: Local government documents and news reports.

[1] With the creation of the new councils, all elected council representatives are replaced by government-appointed commissioners.

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