COMMUNITY AND MENTAL HEALTH

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ABSTRACT

In this thesis I look at the communitarian critique of liberalism, which claims that we need a concept of community in order both to understand persons and to sustain those moral features of our social life which we value. I go on to examine whether communitarianism adds anything to our understanding of community care for people with mental health needs, a policy which seems to assume that such people benefit from being treated "in the community".

After considering some of the charges and counter-charges that liberals and communitarians level against each other, I argue that some version of communitarianism can be sustained and that a concept of community ought to be central to both political theory and social organization.

I then explore the concept of community itself and point to a number of features - its stress on both authority and participation, its claim to be both inclusive and exclusive, its tendency to be nostalgic as well as utopian and its emphasis on the creative capacities of its members as well as the need for social order - many of which appear to be contradictory. I argue, however, that these are necessary tensions in any moral community. Most theories about community, and most actual communities fail to acknowledge some of these essential features.

After exploring ways in which we can promote the need for community, I conclude that communitarianism need not commit us to a rejection of liberal society. By promoting the needs of membership, for citizenship and for a participative democracy which is protected by a system of rights, that it can point to ways in which "community" can be enhanced within existing structures.

In the second part of the thesis, I look at the philosophical and practical problems in treating people considered to be "mentally ill" as members of a community. I argue that a "progressive" communitarian approach to community care improves others which ignore fundamental health and social needs. I go on to look at some of the difficulties recent community care legislation may encounter given that we have structures which fail to sustain communities.

Current community care policy assumes that users themselves ought to be consulted about their needs, and I conclude by examining four ways in which users may see themselves as members of a community. Although the demands which they make sometimes appear to be contradictory, I argue that they express different kinds of need which arise from different experiences of difficulty. I conclude that these ought to be accommodated within the mental health care system in such a way that they enhance a sense of attachment to, and control over, the institutional and social processes which affect them.

DECLARATION

No portion of the work referred to in this thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or other institute of learning.

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FOR MY MOTHER AND FATHER

PART ONE

THE NEED FOR COMMUNITY?

INTRODUCTION

At the beginning to the middle of the twentieth century one of the most significant and most articulate critiques of liberalism and the capitalist framework of the liberal world was Marxism. As the totalitarian nature of existing Communist states came to be known the credibility of the Marxist critique came to be discredited, and as the Stalinist States began to collapse, the significance of its critique appeared to crumble. At the same time social, political and economic developments have paved the way for liberal life and thought to become the target of another, though not entirely different, body of thought. This body of criticism has become known as communitarianism.

From a social and political perspective, the importance of community, or the lack of it, has been recognised at many different levels. In the first place, with the collapse of the Communist States, there was a belief that we had entered a new phase of history, or what has been over optimistically called a "New World Order", which suggested that we now had the foundations for establishing a sort of global community in which problems could be ironed out through mutual consent within a, more or less, common ideological framework. There were no longer any major ideological rifts to inhibit such an undertaking. At the same time as this globalisation was occurring, to confound the communal enterprise, nationalistic and fundamentalist battles were being fought out with a seemingly renewed ferocity. Instead of an era in which people from different nation states felt that they belonged to a global community, on the contrary, in many parts of the world, their

sense of allegiance was still attached to a particular people, to a particular set of beliefs or to a particular piece of territory. So the possibility of developing a kind of world "community" has appeared to have been confounded by the actual wars staged between national and religious communities.

On a more domestic vein we have also seen a disenchantment with state or corporate solutions to social problems and an emphasis on the community as having the resources to deal with a range of difficulties in a more efficient as well as a morally appropriate way.

Obviously the notions of "local community", "national community" and the "world community", mean very different things, but all of them share some fundamental values pertaining to the importance of the "group" rather than to the individual person or individual state. The problem is, say many critics, that liberalism, with its focus on the individual, is unable to deal adequately with issues which demand a communitarian way of looking at things. Not only has liberal society neglected the social foundations which make a thriving community life possible, but liberal theory has lacked the capacity to incorporate the concept of community as a central aspect of our understanding about people's relationships to each other and the moral world which they inhabit.

Within the realms of political philosophy itself the liberal/communitarian debate has been located by other commentators rather than by the writers themselves. The "communitarians" (the main commentators are said to be Michael Sandel, Alasdair MacIntyre, Michael Walzer and Charles Taylor),

have been seen as establishing a body of criticism reacting against certain features of liberal life and liberal theory, especially that of John Rawls in his work A Theory Of Justice (1971). A highly charged debate has been perceived to exist between Rawlsian liberalism and communitarianism even though a) none of the "communitarians" have applied the label to themselves, b) only one of the above four, Michael Sandel, directly addressed Rawls' arguments, and c) it is difficult to piece together from the four just exactly what the communitarian argument is, since they produce different arguments, come to some different conclusions and focus their attack on different aspects of liberal theory and culture.

However, the fact that an important conflict has been seen to have arisen does itself indicate the importance of communitarian issues at this time. As for the fact that it is difficult to pin down what we mean by communitarianism, the same could be said about liberalism. Liberalism has encompassed a wide range of theories, and many liberal theorists would completely disagree about what is important about liberal societies. Many would include "libertarianism" within the body of liberal thought, even though libertarians would have fundamental disagreements with those would write from a more welfarist perspective, which places more emphasis on the state's obligation to support and create opportunities for the individual. Nonetheless, there are some crucial features of liberalism which we may say distinguishes liberalism from other political theories - for instance, the centrality of individual rights, the concern for individual autonomy, and the importance of

tolerance as means of respecting the values, beliefs and projects of other individuals or groups.

In the same way communitarianism can be identified as a range of political and moral theories which point to quite different features of our social and moral life as being crucial to living in a morally acceptable society. Just as libertarian thought could be brought under the umbrella of liberal philosophy, so too could Marxist or Socialist thought be seen as a branch of the communitarian theory. This, however, is controversial since the "new communitarianism" would have grave doubts about the class analysis of history as a means of understanding social relations and social development. It could also be argued that Marxism pays no attention to the importance of people's primary associations to each other and on the importance of tradition as a source of values. However, there are important shared features between socialist thought and what is now commonly thought to represent communitarianism and for that reason I would prefer to see them as different strands of communitarian thought (Gutmann, 1985).

In this thesis, therefore, we shall not centre on the so-called debate between Rawls and the communitarians. We shall, however, look at some of the general communitarian claims to see whether firstly, they can contribute to our understanding of society and how it ought to be organised, and secondly, whether it can assist us in coming to a better understanding of the nature of community and under what conditions a morally acceptable community can occur. In part two of this thesis I will try to bring what we have understood about the nature of

community into a critique of the mental health service as it proceeds to develop as a form of "care" in the "community".

It may be helpful, however, to introduce the four main contributors to the more recent phase of communitarian thought.

As I said, the focus of the four main communitarians has been somewhat different. Michael Sandel (1982), the only one to offer an explicit exegesis of Rawls' work, focuses on what he sees as a mistaken concept of the person. He rejects what he sees as Rawls' assumptions about the nature of the person. For Rawls what is important about people is that they are autonomous choosers of their own ends and that society ought to be organised in such a way that they are able to do this (Mulhall and Swift, 1992). The capacity for choice, rather than the projects that are pursued and the beliefs and values that we hold, is what ought to be protected. For Sandel this implies the existence of an antecedently individuated individual who cannot be understood at all in terms of the social settings that she inhabits. Sandel believes that such a "thin" theory provides us with an impoverished concept of the self, since it excludes all those self understandings that people have as members of a community.[1]

MacIntyre (1981, 1988) and Taylor (1985 & 1989), on the other hand, focus more on our cultural heritage (and, for Taylor, also

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[1] Rawls has argued that the communitarians, especially Sandel, have misunderstood his arguments and indeed, since A Theory of Justice, he has been keen to demonstrate that he grounds his theory within a liberal social framework (Rawls 1985, 1988). Others (Arneson, 1989) have argued that Rawls has actually changed crucial features of his original views to become more communitarian.

our linguistic heritage) which has led us to place a mistaken and misguided emphasis on the autonomous individual. It is not so much that we have a mistaken concept of what it is to be a person, as Sandel argues, but that certain features of our liberal life have deprived us of understanding ourselves, and what we value, as essentially social. We lack an overarching framework (MacIntyre) and the horizons (Taylor) through which we can understand our selves and the goods that we value. For both philosophers (although they present their arguments in different ways) it is through our membership of the community (Taylor) and through the understanding of our social narratives (MacIntyre) that we can begin to understand ourselves and, therefore, how we can begin to secure in our political community the goods that are important to us.

Michael Walzer (1983) takes us right away from the concentration on what it is to be a person and focuses on "goods" themselves. All valued goods, for Walzer, are social goods. He argued that any theory of justice must be concerned with the values and practices of any particular community, and that it is the social meaning of these goods that suggest how these goods ought to be distributed. A communitarian understanding of social justice, for Walzer, requires the critic to stand at a different vantage-point. Instead of standing from a external point of understanding in order to establish timeless and universal standards by which we can judge the moral worth of societies, we must immerse ourselves within the social concerns of a particular society in order to discover the best way to distribute the values that we share.

The four commentators appear to have different attitudes to the worth and relevance of liberal thought and liberal society itself. For Sandel liberalism is not totally flawed but, because it fails to recognise crucial aspects of our being as socially constituted, its value is very limited. Sandel also appears to argue that the concentration on rights and justice means that we exclude the important of certain social arrangements in which the demand for, for instance, fair shares, is inappropriate. He gives the example of family life as an important and obvious demonstration of this.

MacIntyre appears to be the most critical of liberal life and thought. For him, we need a new unifying myth to bind us as members of a community. However he doesn't appear to believe that the good life is impossible to find, and his return to the Catholic church could be seen as MacIntyre's own attempt to discover his own sense of purposes within an explicit moral framework.

Both Taylor and Walzer, on the other hand, appear to endorse liberal society and the values that it holds. For Taylor, the problem lies in some of the arguments that we use to support it. For Walzer, we get into trouble once we start to think of liberal values and the goods of liberal life as somehow universal. For Walzer and Taylor, liberal theory is insufficient to offer ways of underpinning liberal values within their public institutions and through their systems of distribution.

For my part, I take the view that any communitarian theory must take as its starting point the liberal society in which

live now. This is not just because, whether we like it or not, liberalism is the culture from which our identity has been formed, but because liberalism has institutionalised certain forms of freedom which are crucial if the good life is to be brought about by the members of society themselves, and not by some dictator or by some fundamentalist cult.

We shall look, in the next few chapters, in greater detail at some of their arguments. What is important is what they all commit themselves to, and how this distinguishes them as communitarians. Firstly, all of them believe that the notion of community is central to our understanding of ourselves and that community should be a central feature of our moral and political life. Secondly, all of them maintain a commitment to the notion of the good life. Whereas liberalism tends to argue that what is important is that we develop a framework in which each of us can pursue our own, freely chosen, conceptions of the good life, communitarianism looks to those shared understandings of what is good and to the best ways of life that can support these shared goods. These two central beliefs are backed up by a range of arguments about the nature of our being, the content and source of what is good and the way we think about rationality.

In this thesis I shall mainly be looking at the nature of community, which is central to the communitarian argument. This is because the good life itself is dependent on our understanding of community, and we can gain some understanding of the nature of the good life through our understanding of what we mean by the community.

We also need to have some idea of what we mean by community in

order to begin to look at some of the problems that present themselves to us in modern political life. I shall look at some of the problems than are inherent in the notion of community which appear to suggest that community is the antithesis of a society which values autonomy and individual freedom. If we need, firstly, a concept of community in order to understand ourselves, and, secondly, the realisation of community in society in order to lead "good' lives, then we must also attempt to question what we need to do to our existing political and social institutions in order to support people as members of communities.

In the second part of this thesis I have chosen to look at the problem of mental health care in the community. This is not only because changes in social policy are occurring now which force us to look at the community as a feature of health and social care, but because of the conceptual difficulties in the association between "madness" and "community". It is not only that mental illness has previously been formerly treated away from the community but that there is something about our conceptions of "madness" which presupposes exclusion from the community. Given this problem, the task of community care (if it is to be supposed that through their treatment people with mental health difficulties will be treated as members of a community) appears to be beset by very deep seated impediments. A communitarian philosophy, if it is to be morally acceptable, must show that it can offer a better solution to the "threat" that the "outsider" poses to us than the liberal arguments which centre around the notion of individual rights.

CHAPTER ONE: THE LIMITS OF LIBERALISM

1.1 Introduction: The Fair Society

Communitarianism has almost as many variations as there are proponents of it. Generally, however, there are three main areas where communitarians find themselves at odds with liberals, all of which are closely linked.

Firstly, they are critical of the philosophical assumptions that are made concerning the concept of the self. Whilst liberals assert, in varying degrees, the essentially independent nature of the self as a chooser of the projects and beliefs to which people may commit themselves, communitarians stress that what is important about a person is the nature of her involvement in those activities and practices in which she participates and which she values. Secondly, they disagree about the aims of society and what vision of society is appropriate for persons, as we have come to understand them. Communitarians accuse liberals of reducing the quest for the good life to the merely private aims of individuals. Thirdly, they disagree about the status of the means for achieving those aims. Although not all, if any, communitarians would dismiss the concept of rights as appropriate for achieving common social goals, they would see them as insufficient. An undue emphasis on negative rights, in particular, leaves no room for discussion of the good (Bellah et al., 1985) or of the common aims of society, and no public reason for persons to be concerned for the well-being of others.

Liberalism can be seen as a body of thought which attempts

come to terms with the fact of conflict (Barber 1984). It opposes all forms of political philosophy which assert that there is a single form of life which ought to be imposed on everyone. If one recognises that all individuals have different ideas about the good life and wish to lead their lives in ways which accord with their varying beliefs, choices and preferences, the best society will be one which will allow individuals to live in accordance with their choices in such a way that they do not prevent others from doing likewise. The just society will be one in which this balancing act between different ways of living has a fair outcome.

Liberalism, like communitarianism, is concerned with people's quests for the good life (Kymlicka, 1989). Both are concerned with the best conditions in which this search can be undertaken. Liberals have accused communitarians of being too concerned with the nature of a good life which, if imposed, would severely restrict the freedom of individuals to make their own plans. Communitarians have, on the other hand, accused liberals of being overly concerned with the individual endeavour whilst neglecting the framework which would make pursuits for the good life meaningful.

In the course of this and the next two chapters we will examine the validity of these charges and counter-charges. In this chapter we shall examine the liberal case and explore the charges that communitarians have levelled against it.

The first criticism is that the liberal view rests on mistaken assumptions about the nature of the self.

1.2 Ontological Assumptions

For communitarians liberalism, even in its less individualistic guises, always assumes that the individual is in the end distinct from the social world to which she belongs. Even though it may be accepted that a person's choices, beliefs and commitments can only be understood in terms of the social context, individuality, on the liberal view, can only make sense if understood as independent from any particular sets of commitments. Communitarians have taken this to mean that whatever is essential to the person is acontextual. That a person lives in a particular society is contingent, not essential, to her essence as an individual.

This position appears to involve at least one of two claims which are related but which need to be looked at separately. First, that the self is essentially prior to society as such; and secondly, that the self is not essentially tied up with a particular social world. The first is the strong claim that insists we can understand the self without any reference to society. The second may concede that we are social beings, but still maintain that we can and must be given the appropriate political freedoms to question the validity of any social practices or projects of which we are a part. In other words, these liberals do not argue that we can make sense of any self without any present social commitments but that we can imagine a self unencumbered by any particular beliefs, practices or commitments (Kymlicka, 1989).

Much of what has been written by communitarian philosophers appears to have assumed that liberals make the strong claim.

They focus on the impossibility of being able to understand an independent self, and argue that this view has had disastrous effects on modern moral culture. MacIntyre (1981), in particular, argues that such a view deprives us of the necessary foundations or framework from which we are able to sustain those values which have been associated with the rights of the sovereign individual. Both liberal thought and liberal culture lack means by which they can defend the social worth of the values that they espouse.

According to MacIntyre the fragmentation of modern society is mirrored in modern western philosophical thought in both its analytic and existential traditions. Both make a separation between individuals and their roles so that we have no means by which we can see ourselves as a united whole with a coherent set of purposes and practices. Liberal thought has deprived us of the framework with which to articulate our essential relationship to our beliefs and practices:

> "And all these separations have been achieved so that it is the distinctiveness of each and not to the unity of the life of the individual who passes through those parts in terms which we are taught to think or feel" (MacIntyre, 1981, p191)

In being left to such a world we are in danger of creating ourselves in the image of Nietzschean man, who is no fiction, but the outcome of a society in which the person can never come to terms with the moral world which she has created.

Although this is not an essential concern in his work, Walzer (1983) is also critical of the ontological assumptions upon which liberal society is defended. He argues that the

independent individual assumed in "minimal State" theories, such as that of Nozick (1974), simply could not exist, since people will always require the interdependence of living with others. Sandel (1982) similarly, in his criticism of Rawls' ontology, argues that the kind of person which must be assumed in Rawls' theory of justice is one that we cannot recognise and one which we would not wish to accept:

> "To imagine a person incapable of constitutive attachments such as these is not to conceive an ideally free and rational agent, but to imagine a person wholly without moral character, without moral depth." (Sandel, 1982, p179)

For Sandel, to posit a person who is completely unencumbered by the commitments that she has made simply presupposes a state of radical disengagement which cannot be defended. For a person to be truly a moral agent she must already inhabit a moral world in which certain actions and choices are said to matter (Taylor, 1985g); otherwise a person is not free but totally empty.[1] This

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[1] It is arguable that Sandel is merely attacking a straw man of his own making. Both Gutmann (1985) and Kymlicka have argued that Rawls' original position never assumed the possible existence of a radically disengaged person. Although persons in the original position were to be deprived of knowledge of their particular position in society, they were to bring with them their education, their knowledge of sociology, economics and politics. In fact the general culture of liberalism was to serve as an archimedean point upon which the principles of justice could be discerned. In other words the just society he argues for, is not the best society that any rational person, anywhere could imagine, but the best society possible for those who already accept liberal society as the best possible society in which to live. Whether Rawls has moved to a more culture specific theory (Arneson, 1989) or whether it was always implicit in his A Theory of Justice, as Gutmann argues, is a moot point.

At the same time, the argument could be put that if the rational methods that he uses are also culture-specific, then he would have a hard task, maybe even an impossible one, to convince someone from an alien culture to accept his conclusions

is not to say that a person cannot be critical of the choices that she has made, but that criticism does not take place from a situation of disengagement. People do not change their minds or change their way of living through some abstract notion of choice which is unrelated to action. They change their minds because the world has changed for them. [2]

Communitarians argue that a view which defends a radically disengaged self is both false, in that it is impossible to conceive of such an entity, and dangerous, in that it ultimately leaves us with a morality of individual will with no grounds for supporting common values or common goods. However these criticisms are directed at a "liberal" view of the self which few liberals today appear to support. Rawls, whose A Theory of Justice (1971) was perhaps the main target for communitarians, seems to be mainly preoccupied with developing the grounds by which we may best judge our projects and commitments (Kymlicka, 1989). But this is not to say that liberals are not concerned to develop an overarching framework through which certain human goods can be developed, since certain goods, such as education and health, can be seen as essential social goods which enable

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even if she was asked to presuppose that we accept liberal society as the best of all possible worlds. There appears to be no suggestion that we must presuppose that his rational method is culture-specific.

[2] The argument is not that people are not amenable to rational debate. They can often (though not always) change their minds if they see that their views are based upon a false logic, so long as they share a belief in the legitimacy of the kind of logic that is used and the relevance of the logic for the lives they lead. However, the person's beliefs and values are constituted from the nature of the practices which are shared in any particular society. Peoples' choices are an expression of the way they think society is and ought to be.

us to make the most of, and the best judgements with regard to, our projects and commitments.

Some framework of understanding which is secured in our social institutions is necessary if we are to make sense of who we are and what we are doing. However liberals appear to be united in criticising the view that we can understand the person in terms of the particular practices that are predominant in any particular culture. An authoritative framework becomes a tyrannical one if it attempts to unite in some rigid mould the problem of reconciling who we are with what we ought to do.

Whereas the liberal account of the self that we have outlined tends to emphasise the idea of the person as a set of properties or capacities given prior to the social context, this notion has been replaced, since the nineteenth century, by the idea that individuals are essentially developmental (Freeden, 1990). They do not enter into the world with a set of fully developed properties, but with a range of potentials that can be developed in almost limitless ways.

For Taylor the static conception of the person as defined as fixed set of properties, generating universal and absolute rights is, in any case, absurd once you accept that people are beings who are both active and are agents for whom things matter.

> "Ultra-liberalism can only appear unconnected with any affirmation of worth and hence obligation of self-fulfilment, where people have come to accept the utterly facile moral psychology of traditional empiricism, according to which human agents possess the full capacity of choice as a given rather than as a potential which has to be developed." (Charles Taylor, 1985b, p197)

Once one accepts the view that it is only potential that has any existence prior to society one is not far from accepting Taylor's view that if human nature only makes sense within a developmental framework, then you must involve society in the securing of public institutions in order to make the development of that potential possible. Collective provision of education, for instance, is not an interference but the creation of the possibility of pursuing many kinds of goods.

Welfare liberalism tends to see the person as having a wider set of attributes than the capacity to choose. In as much as the person has a wide range of attributes - physical, emotional, mental as well as moral - society has an obligation to ensure that the range of human faculties are able to thrive and not merely to survive. Society could, on this view, be seen as an impediment when it refuses to support the development of certain social goods. A degree of welfare is considered to be consistent with the belief that people ought to be able to pursue those projects that they wish to.

However, although welfare liberalism satisfies many of the communitarian demands for a society to support the person's broader social needs, the problem remains that the guiding assumptions about the nature of the person are basically individualistic. The notion of the personal is merely that of a more fully inclusive human capsule (Freeden, 1990). The argument between the libertarian and the welfarist strands of liberalism could be seen as about where the legitimate "boundaries" of the person lie, and how far they impose on society the obligation to protect those human attributes which

pertain to the "human capsule". Welfare liberalism is, therefore, in constant tension with its libertarian counterparts, and under pressure to limit its definition of the person. To argue for too many social requirements will build into our conception of the individual too many ideas about how society ought to be and what goals ought to be pursued, at the expense of the ideal of the free individual who must be able to exercise her own judgements as to how her life should be led. Indeed a principal objection to the institution of welfare, especially within health care, is that the user's perspective is completely ignored within the bureaucratic structures which have evolved. Treatment is already determined on the basis of what is thought to be good for the individual.

Communitarians argue for a stronger notion of the person's social character. The public sphere, for liberals, though it may have instrumental value (it can provide conditions which assist us in helping us make judgements about our actions and commitments) does not have value in itself and says nothing about what is essential to persons and how we can understand them as an individuals. We have been conditioned to think of ourselves as distinct from the public sphere, and this view is backed up by liberal thought. Thus MacIntyre complains that we have become alienated from any recognisable social narrative that binds us, and retreat into the private domain to search for any sense of belonging. Indeed the idea that privacy is intrinsic to the notion of "home" is a modern idea (Douglas, 1991). Home, for communitarians, inhabits a broader domain than that which is kept hidden from private view, and more properly

relates to one's general being-in-the-world.

Liberalism, according to communitarians, is also ultimately undesirable in its own terms. Since our actual commitments do not themselves tell us anything essential about ourselves, our choice to continue or dispense with a commitment is always arbitrary. The choices and commitments that I make now bear no necessary relationship to the choices and commitments that I may make in the future. Since we are alienated from our commitments, we never have any conception of who we are and what we ought to do with our lives.

Surely, however, the liberal critic would reply, this is better than the other alternative, whereby people have no respite from the consequences of painful social obligations (Moore, 1984) and where people are understood purely on the basis of the commitments that they may have made in the past (Kymlicka, 1988). One important feature of liberalism is that it does concern itself with the capacity for individuals to be critical of their own choices, and allows individuals, on the basis of this capacity, the freedom to be critical of and to examine the beliefs that they have previously held. To say that people and the values they hold are somehow constituted by their ends, as Sandel argues, has to be shown to be true, and, if true, condemns them to beliefs and roles which they may at any time reject (Sher, 1989).

Communitarians, on the other hand, would answer this question by approaching it from another angle. That is, they argue that without a social conception of the person which derives from the person's social practices and history we cannot make any sense

of individual freedom at all. The supposed inner core which constitutes our essential being, does not really exist. A concept of freedom which is derived from such a mistaken notion of the self is bound to be misconceived. It is not freedom as we experience it. Communitarians do not deny that privacy, for instance, is indeed something that ought to be valued, but argue that the liberal conception of privacy is both unfounded and has other undesirable consequences for the way in which we promote freedom as a political value.

Modern liberal theory also differs from communitarian theory in that it emphasizes the inward and the contemplative. As George Kateb writes:

> "...The theory of democratic individuality distinguishes between the expressive self and the cultivated inward self, and judges the former to be much less significant than the latter, while making the latter an opening onto the reality of the world." (Kateb, 1989, p938)

However, the expressivist emphasis on the public nature of our values, preferences and commitments, which is inherent in communitarian thought, also demonstrates the sense in which the person can be thought of as free. The very fact that we are inherently social beings requires us to speak freely about ourselves and the world around us. In this sense, communitarians can be seen not as dispensing with civil liberties (in particular, the freedoms of opinion and expression) but as regarding them as essential to give voice to social values which have become internalised (Etzioni, 1989). Civil liberties, though not sufficient for the good society, are

necessary in some form as an affirmation of community. Only then can we begin to discover the nature of our interrelatedness. Moreover, through our choices and commitments we are giving public expression to the nature of our relationship to the world. Without an understanding of the power relationships in society which condition our choices we can never be certain of what constitutes the nature of our membership to that society. The question as to whether we are free or are enslaved does not require searching into some inner recesses of our souls, but an examination of the social, political, economic and interpersonal relationships which bind us. Even our thoughts should be seen for what they are - as expressions of the world in which we are embedded.

The liberal notion of the self is also undesirable, according to communitarian theory, because it provokes a deep mistrust and potential fear of others. Views which emphasize the idea of the person as a bearer of negative rights, the same belief that allows us to have respect for people as persons of intrinsic individual worth, makes them potentially dangerous. They are essentially opaque and unknowable. They are not connected to us through any shared social experience, since they are essentially beings who interpret the world for themselves. The private home is not merely a place where the sense of belonging is sought, but a place of refuge and escape from others. It is a place where one is shielded from a world which is conceived of as alien and potentially hostile.

> "One gets involved in private life only to protect one's hearth and home and one's decent neighbours from the evils of a mysterious,

> threatening, complicated society composed of shadowy, sinister immoral beings." (Bellah et al., 1985, p185)

Social life, therefore, cannot be something which is entered into with any real confidence, but is tempered with suspicions which hinder any real cooperative enterprise. This fear has its counterpart in politics and in the nature of our concern for security. An emphasis on negative rights, over and above social goods of positive worth, reveals the frailty of their existence. It provokes the fear of invasion in which the person could become engulfed by a world which is not of their own choosing or making.

> "The protection of the citizen against interference with civil liberties by government officialdom is a matter of great moment, else the pendulum will move, like the evening shadows, slowly and unnoticeable across the interface between democracy and totalitarianism" (Young, 1978, p4)

The fear is not only that of the power of States to exceed their legitimate role, but of the imposition of a way of life which, if it is not freely and individually chosen, must be alien. This collective nightmare of invasion and of the engulfment of the individual has been exploited by politicians, especially during the Cold War, who warned us that there may be "reds under our beds". This collapses the two forms of invasion together, the political and the private, by portraying them as one.[3] It conjures up the belief that invasion to our way of life will entail the encroachment by others, using the symbol of

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[3] This is, of course, what Stalinist and Nazi Totalitarianism did with great success. These fears are not totally devoid of real political examples.

the bedroom, into what is most private to us. This is not to say that we are not justified, on occasion, to be suspicious of our neighbour, both in the social and the political sense, but that this rhetoric of fear frustrates the development of positive communal values.

To summarize, liberalism grants the influence of, and dependence on society, but does not admit that society creates personhood. For liberals, and this is certainly true of Rawls, what is special about the person is that she has the capacity to chose, and it is this capacity which ought to be defended above all other goods that individuals may choose to commit themselves to. For the communitarians (especially Sandel, who argues that it is the ontological conception of the person that is to blame), this does leave room for some co-operation, but it is an uneasy association, characterised by suspicion, and not a positive development.

Even the more social version of liberalism espoused by those who emphasize the need for public goods in order to enable the person to develop the potential she has, is too weak to defend itself against the consequences of ultra-individualistic liberalism. Such a view has no philosophical devices to defend any common values and ultimately leaves the individuals to a world which is, at best strange and at worst menacing.

1.3 Liberal Aims and Visions

The liberal vision of the good society is one in which all individuals are autonomous and are free to pursue the good life as they see it, within the bounds of justice. Most of the

criticisms that communitarians level against liberal conceptions of the person concern this liberal vision of the moral and political world that they are striving to create. It is argued, as was discussed in the last section, to begin with, that liberalism has a false vision because it is built upon assumptions about the nature of the person which are simply unsustainable. That is, it projects a vision of society based upon certain beliefs about the person and her relationship to society that are simply wrong. It is therefore an unattainable vision since it distorts the nature of human life.

On the other hand many communitarians also argue that the liberal vision is increasingly transforming us into a society of strangers where we are deprived of the resources to recognise the nature of our common experiences and therefore, the importance of communal values. In other words the liberal vision is becoming a self-fulfilling prophecy. It therefore says something that is true abut the relationship between the person and her relationship to this society.

This apparently contradictory position is inherent in the communitarian critique of liberalism (Walzer 1990). Liberalism is said to incorporate a vision of society which is, at once, an illusion and bankrupt. To complicate matters further, communitarians seem to be undecided as to whether liberalism can have a vision of society at all. Sandel argues (1982) that all moral conceptions of the person project a vision of society into which that person fits. At the same time, communitarians appear to argue that the problem with liberalism is that it has no vision of the good society at all. It is a theory of human

society distinctly lacking in any "language of the good" (Bellah et al 1988).

To deal with the latter problem first (whether liberals have a vision of society or not), part of the reason why communitarians criticise liberals for lacking a moral or political vision is that liberals themselves claim to have no vision which is specifically social. Their aims concern the potential for individuals to be able to pursue their own goals. Therefore a framework has to be set in which all persons are able to develop their own beliefs about the good consistent with the principles of justice (Rawls 1971). To speak of a specifically social vision, other than the multiplicity of private visions of individuals, is to subject persons to ends they have not chosen.

Thus one of the arguments between communitarians and liberals is between the conception of the good versus that of the right (Kymlicka 1988). Sandel sums up the liberal position on this:

> "Society is best arranged when it is governed by principles that do not presuppose any particular conception of the good, for any other arrangement would fail to respect persons as beings capable of choice; it would treat them as objects rather than subjects, as means rather than ends." (Sandel 1982 p9)

The liberal aim, therefore, is to enable individuals to be able to pursue their own visions of the good life. The fact that many people choose to pursue the same goals, in cooperation, and the fact that there may be communal or indivisible goods which are required in order that individuals may be able to pursue these goals equally, are not problems for the liberal theorist since these facts are not essential to our

conception of the person as free and rational. The problem occurs when conflicts arise and in developing a framework which can resolve disputes in such a way that it does not favour any particular group of people, set of beliefs or way of life. Gutmann sees this as Rawls' aim in his A Theory of Justice (1971). For Rawls:

> "The major aim of liberal justice is to find principles appropriate for a society in which people disagree fundamentally over many questions, including such metaphysical questions such as the nature of person identity." (Gutmann, 1985, p313)

The communitarian criticism of those liberals who claim that the principle of right must come prior to any particular conception of the good is that this is impossible. We cling to certain principles, not because they preserve some abstract notion of justice, but because we believe that they protect some way of life that we believe to be good. Not only that, but our visions of the good are premised on beliefs about who we are and what we could be. These beliefs, in turn, are caught up in a vision of how society ought to look. Our self-projections are therefore formed within an assumed ideal social framework. For communitarians the danger is that our projections are based on false beliefs about the self (Sandel, 1982), which are themselves based on the belief that there can be no shared conception of the good. We are therefore lacking the essential social foundations to sustain even a minimum shared understanding about the best society for distinct individuals (MacIntyre, 1981).

According to Charles Taylor (1985b) the nearest that we can

come to an impression of the underlying liberal vision is through the state of nature. At least, the vision is one that assumes the state of nature to be natural condition of the person. The best society therefore will be one in which "natural man" is freed from the worst effects of the state of nature (that is, the potential harm that it could inflict upon persons, and the lack of a just framework with which to deal with conflicting beliefs and ways of life). Thus, modern society concerns itself with order and efficiency and not explicitly with the good life (Habermas, 1971). Benjamin Barber has noted the different ways in which liberalism has attempted to deal, on a political level, with this assumed natural conflict between individuals (1984), as opposed to structural conflicts between groups of people or classes.

However, liberalism seeks to create a society which has a positive aim rather than the mere negative one of dealing with conflict. Let us leave the question of whether liberalism really has a vision of society or not, and settle for the claim that liberalism champions a society in which autonomous individuals are able to pursue their different projects and experiments in life. This is a vision of sorts. Its primary aim is to create a framework in which individuals are able to pursue their own version of the good life without impeding similar quests by others.

The problem for communitarians is that any political philosophy which stems from the point of view of the individual is not only incoherent but will have undesirable consequences. Even conceding that welfarist conceptions of liberalism do

incorporate a notion of common, indivisible goods which are necessary in order that individuals may act in accordance with their beliefs and choices, liberalism's aims are conditioned by false conceptions of the relationship between persons and society. Liberals incorporate an unrealistic notion of individual self-control and end up by discouraging cooperation, even though this may itself enhance autonomy. Ultimately the liberal vision removes any way of understanding and discriminating between different social values.

Let us look now first at the liberal conception of the person's relationship to society, and then see how this affects the aim of a society in which autonomous individuals are able to pursue the good life for themselves.

As we have seen earlier in the chapter, for communitarians the problem is that liberalism does not ground its conception of human nature in any social context. When it is declared that people have an equal right to be free, this is often done without mediating the right through any concept of membership (Freeden, 1990). Liberals mistakenly attribute to individuals traits which only make sense within a social framework.

The first criticism then, is that liberalism does not conceive of a social framework within which that vision of individual autonomy could be sustained. Whereas liberals from Mills to Rawls have been concerned to set out the conditions for a society in which individuals may best pursue the good life, they have not concerned themselves with final ends. They are not willing to specify the framework in which the good life itself could be sustained. For liberals, we must not complete the

story, we must not say what society should look like, because to do so would be to reduce all individual projects to only one legitimate view of the good life. This tramples on any conceivable liberal view of individual freedom, which stresses the importance of being able to criticise any society or view of society which actually exists.

However, to say what form the good society may take is not the same as specifying what individuals living in such a society should do with their lives. Communitarians can argue that liberals have a mistaken view about the way in which individuals value the world and choose to pursue the projects that they do. Liberalism ignores the way in which individual autonomy arises out of certain social situations and is not solely an internal state of being. Part of the argument stems from different conceptions of the notion of autonomy.

For instance, let us look at Feinberg's argument that individual autonomy makes sense only when we understand people as having an internal structure of functions and preferences. His notion of freedom depends, as he sees it, on this psychological fact. He uses Durkheim's theory of anomie to support his case.

> "A person who had no hierarchical structure of wants, aims and ideals, and no clear conception of where it is within his internal landscape that he really resides, would be a battlefield for all his constituent elements tugged this way and that, and fragmented hopelessly. Such a person would fail of autonomy not because he is a mere conformist whose values are borrowed secondhand, for his wants, ideals and scruples could be perfectly authentic and original in him, but these values lack internal order and structure. This defective condition, which in its extreme

> form tends to be fatal, Durkheim called anomie." (Feinberg, 1973, p14)

For communitarians, as well as for Durkheim, it is not only a lack of an internal hierarchy which creates such a state, but also conditions of society. Anomie relates to the structure of society rather than the state of an individual. It occurs in societies which lack an authoritative structure or framework. Anomie is essentially a social and not a psychological fact, occurring where, Durkheim argued, "there are disturbances of the collective order" (Durkheim, 1952, p246). The moral landscape which a person inhabits extends beyond herself to the social and ideological structures in which she resides. The unified person, of whom Feinberg speaks, cannot exist in isolation. In so much as we are concerned with the unified person we must identify her within the structures of society.

Sandel makes a distinction between the deontological conception of society, which he believed liberals such as Rawls to advocate, where the unity of the self is held to be prior to society, with the teleological view, which he advocates, which sees the unity of the self as revealed <u>in</u> society (1982). Sandel sums up his version of the deontological view as follows:

> "Society being composed of persons, each with his own aims, interests, and conceptions of the good, is best arranged when it is governed by principles that do not <u>themselves</u> presuppose any particular conception of the good; what justifies these regulative principles above all is not that they maximize the social welfare or otherwise promote the good, but rather that they conform to the concept of <u>right</u>, a moral category given prior to the good and independent of it." (Sandel, 1982, p1)

So according to this view, the principles of the right are

context-independent and presuppose no vision of the good life which might be held by the people who live within it. The good life is purely a matter of the beliefs of individuals. So we cannot make judgements about the nature of individuals from the values that they hold and the projects that they pursue, since they might reject them at any time (Kymlicka, 1988). Therefore, the best kind of society is one which will satisfy the demand for individual fulfilment of ends, the content of which may change at times, without there being a commitment to any particular ends.

Such a view, for Sandel, as well as creating an impoverished view of how society could be (since it systematically excludes those communal goods that presuppose our membership to society), prevents us from seeing persons as bearers of a social identity. For MacIntyre (1981), we have created a society which deprives us from seeing ourselves as unified within ourselves and with our community. We only see ourselves as the fragmented and isolated individuals that we have created.

If we do not ground our conception of personal being through a concept of membership our moral and political vision will be lacking the essence of worth that all persons seek. In attempting to create a society in which there is universal respect for persons, which is able to encompass the respect for strangers (Vlastos, 1962), we are creating a society in which we are incapable of seeing others except as strangers. According to one strand of the communitarian critique, argues Walzer (1990), this vision of society is obviously lacking in any positive value at all:

> "The members of liberal society share no political or religious traditions. They can tell only one story about themselves and that is the story of ex nihilo creation, which begins with the state of nature or the original position." (Walzer 1990 p8)

To summarize the above. Firstly, by emphasizing individual ends, to the exclusion of collective ends, one creates a society in which the capacity for self-sufficiency and autonomy is diminished rather than strengthened. Many individuals in such a society, according to Nisbet, will be crushed by the expectations that are placed on them:

> "This may lead some to evince the most fruitful ingenuity and courage, while it overpowers others with a paralysing sense of individual helplessness and despair." (Nisbet, 1970, p16)

It creates an illusion of individual control where there is none. When we try to govern our own lives completely, we fail to do so since we fail to take into consideration the intensity of involvement (Marris 1974) that we have with others. Our lives are therefore built upon false hopes and beliefs about the capacities of ourselves and others.

As well as heralding a false and therefore destructive conception of autonomy and of self control, liberalism encourages the formation of a "society of strangers" which, at best, discourages cooperation. Secondly, therefore, we fail to realise our true potential since our true creative nature is realised through our associations with others. The limits of liberalism are set because only individualistic values are assumed, and individualistic goals pursued (Sandel, 1982). Cooperative values are least likely to flourish. We are

therefore impoverished as a result.

For Nisbet there are real dangers inherent in a society where the values of one's communal attachments to others are not acknowledged. It creates a situation in which people's sense of belonging is taken away from them, leaving an emptiness which is easy prey for totalitarian movements. They fill a vacuum which satisfies the person's need for a society which establishes a sense of purpose. He is concerned that some liberal countries, in that they perpetuate a collective sense of alienation and not community, may leave themselves open to totalitarianism. He argues that it is belonging and not escape that is the imperative moral value (p26).

Other communitarians are less sceptical of the consequences of liberalism, partly because its extreme individualistic versions are so untenable. Most modern theories of liberalism do emphasize the importance of cooperation and the need for some notion of common goods. Walzer argues that, in any case, because we are naturally sociable, always seeking the company and aid of others, we will never live in a society of complete strangers (Walzer 1983). We are all members of different formal and informal structures which have intrinsic value to us. Nonetheless, he sees communitarianism as playing a necessary part in reminding us of this fact. We need a theory of membership and a concept of belonging to protect us from the possible excesses of the consequences of liberalism (Walzer, 1990).

Without a vision of the good life, in which the relationship between individual and society is mediated through a concept of

membership, the society that is created is likely to be an alien one - one to which we have no allegiance and through which we fail to recognise ourselves. Individuals are less likely to see themselves as autonomous but as isolated and fragmented, living in a world which appears alien and ungovernable (Barber 1985). Alienation is therefore not an individual state, as Feinberg argues, but a hallmark of a certain kind of society.[4] Nisbet says:

> "By alienation I mean the state of mind that can find a social order remote, incomprehensible, or fraudulent; beyond real hope or desire; inviting apathy, boredom, or hostility." (Nisbet, 1970, p.ix)

On the one hand liberalism is concerned with the individual's capacity to control her own life - to be the best overseer of her own life-plans. At the same time society itself appears as ungovernable; individuals are bombarded by social forces which appear beyond their control. It is a society in which, therefore, individuals will have less power over the political processes which govern their lives. The communitarian argument is that, so far as there is a liberal "tradition", it has deprived us of a framework through which we can see ourselves as actively and collectively creating that society. Liberal society aims to create autonomous individuals where that autonomy is seen as requiring our independence from, as opposed to our participation with, others. It is a criticism of the

[4] Of course, Marx himself believed that alienation was a product of the capitalist mode of production and therefore a feature of capitalist society (Marx 1971). This could only be eradicated when workers themselves gained control over the production process.

view that the best society will be a kind of container of independent persons with their own preferences and ideas about the good life.

So what communitarians appear to argue is that what is needed is a vision in which people are part of and actively participate in their society. This does not mean that individuals are not permitted to create an independent space for the pursuit of their own projects within it. Communitarians tend to stress the values of participation within the world rather than escape from it (which is in any case impossible). For Barber (1984) communitarian democracy, or strong democracy, is preferable to the representative democracy which is defended in liberal thought. Not to be fully involved within the political process, at all levels, deprives individuals of any control over their lives rather than giving them the freedom to do what they please.

Communitarians do not so much disagree with liberal aims (though they are insufficient) but with the underlying vision and the assumptions which concern the relationship between the person and society. It is because they are built on false assumptions that the values that liberal society aims to protect for individuals (such as freedom, autonomy, equality, dignity, privacy and security) are in danger of being undermined. T hey have become distorted through the very assumptions we assumed would safeguard them.

For instance instead of privacy, we have created a more fearful society, which is seen as increasingly alien and hostile (Bellah, 1988). Instead of autonomy (as we shall argue later on

in the chapter), which is guaranteed to us through our freedom of choice, we live in a society in which choice is both an increasing burden and is an arbitrary exercise in which the notion of the worthwhile choice is lost to us. We have no means of knowing whether or not our choices are good (Ignatieff, 1984). In liberal society we have, to a large extent, been left on our own. We have failed to attend to those social foundations which would serve to underpin our commitment to these shared values that we have (Taylor, 1985b).

Finally, we have created a society of strangers in which communal values and collaborative ventures are undermined by the overriding concern to fulfil individual desires.

Communitarians disagree over the extent to which communitarianism should merely fill in the gaps that liberalism creates or should replace liberalism altogether (Miller, 1989). What they agree on, however, especially Sandel and MacIntyre, is that the liberal vision itself (although the aims may be valuable) is one which is lacking in some essential goods for society as a whole and therefore for individuals. To imagine a society simply built on liberal principles alone would be to imagine, as we have mentioned before, a society completely lacking in character or moral worth (Sandel, 1982). At best, it would be a society that would simply not be worth choosing, and at worst, a society which had the capacity to destroy the minimal values it purports to defend, and be unable to prevent the engulfment of the individual which it most fears.

This also suggests that the means to those aims, such as individual rights and freedom of choice, are also limited. We

should look at the extent to which these means fail to fulfil their task.

1.4 The Means to Liberal Ends

Freedom of choice and individual rights are necessary to bring about and preserve a society in which individuals are able to pursue their own projects. Without such conditions persons cannot truly be autonomous. Liberals often go further in suggesting that having rights and having the capacity to exercise freedom of choice are integral aspects of what it is to be autonomous.

However, as we have shown, communitarians argue that liberal theory is itself based on sets of assumptions about the nature of the self and the relationship between the person and society that are inadequate. It focuses on conditions which emphasize the person's independence from society rather than their involvement in it. Communitarians need to show how the conditions that liberals champion protect an inadequate form of autonomy in which individuals become more and not less vulnerable to the prey of powerful outside forces.

Let us look first at the notion of freedom of choice and how this kind of freedom relates to the creation of autonomous individuals. The liberal conception of the person assumes that she is essentially, though not exclusively, a rational being who is capable of choice. Being allowed freedom of choice is a necessary prerequisite of realising one's individual rational potential and exercising it autonomously. However, the communitarian argument is, firstly, that choice itself is not

sufficient to realise autonomy, and secondly, that without a social conception of the person only a slim theory of choice can be defended which in its extreme libertarian form turns out to render the capacity for real choice empty.

Let us take an example. In the area of childbirth there is an increasing awareness of the way in which the medicalisation of the act has diminished the choices and control of women over their bodies. In many progressive hospitals (although current spending policies in the health service has somewhat held back the trend), women are now encouraged to take control. They choose their own positions throughout the labour, choose their own methods of pain relief and produce their own birth plans, describing how they would like the whole process to be carried out. While one might welcome the reduction of professional interference it could be argued that women are often placed in the bewildering situation of having to make choices over individual processes when control over the general situation has already been taken from them. Childbirth is still seen as a medical issue and takes place within a medical context and form of discourse. All that women are asked to do is to make sense of the range of information presented to them, and make a decision on that basis. Perhaps it is not the individual choice itself which matters so much as the context in which those choices are made.

It could be argued further that merely giving women an opportunity to choose reinforces the predominant ideological viewpoint, rather than creating the possibility of change. The growing emphasis on the consumer and on consumerism can

legitimise what already exists, given the lack of real alternatives to choose anything else. The ready acceptance of professionals in the health service, for instance, to refer to "clients" rather than "patients", can be understood as a shifting of terms to accommodate historic changes in attitudes, important as they may be, rather than real shifts in power relationships. As David Ingleby writes:

> "...psychologists and social workers, though they prefer "clients" to "patients" nevertheless deal in "diagnoses" "treatment plans" and so on." (Ingleby, 1983, p163-4)

This is not to say that choice is not necessary for any argument which champions autonomy, but it is a useless abstraction if considered out of relation to the social context. Participation needs to occur at a deeper level if individuals can be said to be able to exercise a type of choice which gives them, in any real sense, control over their circumstances. For communitarians it is this participation which is essential for a person's involvement in their situation. For Barber (1984), for instance, a strong participative democracy is essential in a society which claims to respect the choices of individuals.

An example of the insufficiency of choice, in itself, to effect autonomy was observed by Frank Thomas who worked as a nurse on the ward of an institution for people with learning difficulties. The hospital decided to change its policy of serving up the same bland food for everyone and to introduce menus from which the clients could choose their meals for the week.

> " "What do you want for dinner today, Chris, quiche lorraine, that's posh egg and bacon

> pie, or braised liver?," I asked.
> "You choose, your the staff."
> "That's not the point, Chris. You've got a choice. Tell me what you want."
> "You heard me. You choose, you've got the white coat on."
> "Bacon or beans on toast, Benny?"
> "Chips, chips, chips," says Benny." (Ryan and Thomas, 1987, p38)

It could be argued that this is an extreme situation, since a choice of meals was introduced after many years of no choice whatsoever. Suddenly, they were expected to plan their meals for an entire week in advance - a task which would prove difficult for anyone. For Frank Thomas it was a great disappointment that the scheme was dropped for being too chaotic. However this was not because of the granting of choice in itself, but because it set the scene, quite by accident, for quite new kinds of relationship to take place. The context in which interactions and interpersonal relationships occurred was altered, in Thomas' opinion, for the better.

> "...as a social occasion the lads got quite a lot from it; discussing their preference for the meals was the most enjoyable part of the day, for me and for them. At least it was a legitimate excuse - because one was needed - to engage in long conversations with the patients and still be seen as working in the hospital sense." (Ryan and Thomas, 1987, p38)

The argument here has to do with the relationship between choice and autonomy. Being given the freedom to choose did, in fact change some of the conditions and the possibility of improving relationships in the hospital, but it was because it was the opening for much more drastic changes in the social organisation of the hospital that it was important. Simply giving people choice does not, in itself, give them the power to

control their lives or help them live a life which is more in line with their preferences, ambitions and life-plans.

Indeed, simply having to make a choice can increase the sense of anxiety and the feeling of being out of control. Making good choices does not depend, as we have seen Feinberg argue (1973), on some inner hierarchical structure of preferences, but on the social context which gives meaning to socially valued goods and ends (Walzer, 1983; Sandel, 1982).

For liberals the availability and the ability to make choices is essential to a liberal society. However, in order to ensure that one can live in a society where one can act upon one's choices, and that where disputes with others exist that these can be judged fairly, there needs to be a recognized system of rights. Whereas communitarians do not dismiss the need for choice, but disagree with the assumptions that underlie the liberal concept of choice, some communitarians, MacIntyre and Sandel in particular, appear virtually to dismiss the need for individual rights at all in a moral community.

MacIntyre (1981), for instance, sees them not as goods which are necessary for human agency, but as existing only within certain "socially established sets of rules". What is more he sees them as belonging to an Enlightenment age, the mere fragments of which we possess today. They do not truly capture the essence of who we are and, therefore for MacIntyre, what we ought to do. Sandel, (1982) also suggests that the concept of justice, as expressed in the language of rights, actually impoverishes shared values. He argues that a moral unit such as the family, where the value of mutual love predominates and in

which the language of rights is inappropriate, is hardly inferior to a group of people who demand, and get, their fair share of moral and material resources. Therefore, he suggests, it is possible to envisage an alternative morally healthy society which could dispense with the language of rights altogether.

It is difficult to believe that Sandel is really suggesting that such a society would be healthy, since the public concern over violations of mutuality within families indicates the complex and sometimes oppressive nature of family, and indeed community, life. The main point, however, is that there is something about liberal society, which is born out in the arguments used to back up liberal theory, which limits the extent to which it can support those relationships which do thrive on communality and mutuality.

Other communitarians, especially Taylor, have argued that rights, although insufficient, nonetheless must be seen as necessary. This is, in part, because rights are, contrary to what MacIntyre says, an integral part of our social and political culture (Taylor, 1989; Walzer, 1983; Gutmann 1985). To dispense with rights would be, in MacIntyre's own terms, to disrupt our narrative, to tear out an aspect of our political and social identity. Rights talk is central to our collective consciousness and entrenched in our very expressions about the world so that to abandon the concept as irrelevant would be, in truth, to undermine the very framework through which our society understands itself. It is this that accounts, in part, for the resilience of rights, and has power to transform the way in

which people think about themselves and others. For instance, rights talk has enhanced the way in which women think of themselves and has been used to question the subordinate status of women within a male dominant world. In a sense then, rights talk has helped to forge a perception of social membership that egalitarian communitarians, at any rate, approve of.

It would be misleading to say that communitarians are not concerned with the individual. What communitarians argue is that individuality ought be conceived of in a different way such that it clarifies the individual's inherent attachment to others. The claiming of rights forces us to recognise our allegiance to those public institutions which support those goods which we claim through our rights (Taylor, 1985b).

Rights, therefore, can be seen as cultivating a collective awareness of the equal worth of all persons. They force us to recognise the worthiness of the public sphere without which individuals would be stripped of any claim to socially valued goods. The development of social and economic rights can be seen as a public recognition of the responsibility we have to all members of a nation state to ensure that they share in the social and economic heritage (Marshall, 1964, p64). The development, in Britain, of national health, welfare and educational systems could be seen as forging a sense of our collective responsibility to each other through the creation of particular rights to certain goods. It is possible, therefore, to think of rights as accentuating our allegiance to the community rather than working against it.

Those communitarians who would defend the indispensability of

rights would also agree with liberal commentators who argue that rights are indispensable to the possibility for any kind of moral community. Buchanan (1989) for instance sees rights as necessary to ensure both a bulwark against national states, which he believes a communitarian ideology would be incapable of preventing, and the possibility of freely evolved communities.

> "They allow individuals to partake of the alleged human good of community by protecting existing communities from interference from without and by giving individuals the freedom to unite with like minded others to create new communities." (Buchanan, 1989, p858)

Others have argued for the importance of rights in terms of their social basis, as opposed to basing them, (as does natural law theory) on the fact of the individual human existence. Arneson (1989), for instance, has argued that Rawls' significance is in finding an acceptable basis for society. The hypothetical person in the original position must therefore not be seen as some abstract acontextual rational being, but someone who shares the consensus formed by people who share the liberal way of life and culture.

Miller (1976), even before he became a fully fledged disciple of communitarianism, argued that the significant thing about positive rights is that they are socially (and not merely legally) recognised:

> " A positive right is constituted by its social recognition. A person has a positive right when a certain description applies to him, and, in the society in which he lives, people falling under that description are acknowledged to have rights." (Miller, 1976, p65)

However, this is not how we think of the moral importance of

rights, especially human rights. We often assert the universal importance of rights which may well be recognised by our own state but which are ignored elsewhere. For Gewirth, therefore, the importance of rights is not that they have to be recognised in order to exist, but that they have universal and absolute appeal. Their constitution is other than in their recognition.

> "In the sense of "existence" that is relevant here, the existence of human rights is independent of whether they are guaranteed or enforced by legal codes or are socially recognised." (Gewirth, 1984, p3)

We are back to the same problem, therefore, of having to discover acontextual ontological foundations for rights, which refer to isolated individuals. Such a view, say Taylor and Walzer, will necessarily impoverish the liberal values that we seek to sustain and establish in our society, as well as failing to underpin the values which relate to communities. The theory of individual rights, therefore, as conceived within liberal philosophy, ultimately undermines those values which the liberal herself regards as being part and parcel of a society of autonomous persons.

We should look at some of these values to see what rights claim to do and what they fail to do. To start with, rights are supposed to be essential in the defence of the dignity of individuals. It is the claiming of rights which is said to protect the individual from the necessity of grovelling or begging for goods since they are considered to be constitutive of the domain of entitlements (Wasserstrom 1964). They enable individuals to stand up for themselves against the manipulations

of both other individuals and states. In this sense dignity is tied up with the notion of autonomy. They allow individuals to walk, as Bloch (1987) puts it, with an "upright carriage". This idea is succinctly expressed by Feinberg:

> "Rights are not mere gifts or favours, motivated by love or pity, for which gratitude is the sole fitting response. A right is something a man can stand on, something that can be demanded or insisted upon without embarrassment or shame." (Feinberg, 1973, p53)

Dignity allows the individual to be assured of her own worth as an individual as an end in herself and not as a means to someone else's ends, or as subject to, or dependent on, someone else's favour or pity. It is, in a sense, the value of separateness and distinctness which is itself an essential aspect of the liberal concept of autonomy as independence. Without the liberal concept of rights, it is argued, we would not have the dignity which:

> "...enables us to "stand up like men", to look people in the eye, and feel in some fundamental way the equal of anyone." (Feinberg, 1980, p51)

However the liberal concept of dignity could itself be seen as being undermined just at the point when rights are being invoked. Rights are employed at the very point when things go wrong; when there is a breakdown of human relationships. As Robert Young says:

> "When loving relationships break down, and caring for another's interest, which is morally proper, goes by the board, people fall back on the auxiliary apparatus of rights." (R. Young, 1978, p68)

A situation such as when a marriage breaks down requires the transformation of the person into a set of legal relationships

which essentially dehumanises her. The past becomes a legal narrative in which the failure of her marriage is portrayed. In order for this situation to become tolerable, there must be a dispossession of her past or else the indignity is just as evident as in any non-rights evoking situation. The important thing about rights is that the person herself, as a "lived being", becomes unimportant.

Foucault (1984) observed this transformation of individuals into legal objects. He tells the story of a farmhand in the nineteenth century who was "somewhat simple minded". One day he played a game called "curdled milk" which he had seen the other children play and which involved obtaining the caresses of a village girl. The girl told her parents who informed the authorities. He was not only transformed into an object of collective intolerance, but became a victim "of a judicial action, a medical intervention, a careful clinical examination". Foucault then goes on to say that the thing to note is "that they made him talk, that they questioned him concerning his thoughts, inclinations and habits sensations and opinions" (p313). In other words his entire life was dissected. The transformation of a private life into a legal entity is legitimated by the fact that it is done on behalf of our rights. In Foucault's terms, it is merely another form of discourse with different techniques of power.

This disintegration of the person is often contrasted with the pre-modern concept of honour, wherein the person is secured through the very social relationships in which she performs:

"In a world of honour, identity is firmly

> linked through the reiterated performance of prototypical acts. In a world of dignity, history is the succession of mystifications from which the individual must free himself to attain authenticity." (Berger, Berger and Kellner, 1977)

It could be argued, by welfare liberals, that this may be true of rights where they are based on the settling of disputes such as when a marriage breaks down (though most people would argue that we need some means by which people can extricate themselves from relationships which have become intolerable or, in the case of marriage, undesirable), but this is not true of many of the rights that we do claim such as social and economic rights which are to do with changing the social and economic terrain in which people already live. For instance, it is already accepted, or at least was until recently, that no one in Britain should be deprived of adequate food and shelter necessary for basic needs.

However the reply could be made that the very claiming of social rights creates the indignity of becoming a claimant. There is a vast difference between the rich person, who can live off money that she believes she has earned, and the person who is constantly reminded of her different status each time she queues up for income support or fills in her application form for the social fund.

There are other forms of rights which are also necessary, claim liberals, and communitarians are certainly in danger of facing contempt if they disregard the rights claimed by people who face various forms of tyranny. Surely there is more dignity in claiming ones rights as an individual against a tyrant than in allowing one to be subjected to the tyrant's demands.

Liberals would also argue that without a concept of rights all that those in need, such as welfare claimants, would be left with are the favours of the charitable. There can be no dignity for the individual who has nothing and has to be grateful to others for everything that she receives. Once we lose that dignity, or have it taken away from us, we cannot begin to act as autonomous individuals let alone as individuals who are also full members of a polity.

Communitarians cannot possibly argue that the liberal concept of dignity is a complete sham or that rights have done nothing to uphold the sense of dignity for many groups of people and individuals. Rights have had a tremendous impact on the way in which certain groups of people have found self value in a world which previously disregarded them. Arguments for the natural inferiority of women or blacks simply cannot be supported in a society which stresses the rights of very individual regardless of background (Wasserstrom, 1964). However, it is also this asocial component which limits the extent to which people see themselves as separated from and not as participators in a shared social world. For communitarians, in particular, it is unsatisfactory because people do seek out their sense of self value (even if they are individualistic values such as "self reliance") through their relations with others. There may indeed be dignity in one's needs being met without having to ask, but if one's soul is at the same time dishonoured (Ignatieff, 1984), it is a situation lacking in real meaning and value.

Connected with the notion of autonomy is security, in that in

order to act upon one's own legitimate choices and preferences one must be able to so with the knowledge and expectation that one will be able to act in such a way in the future (Miller, 1976). The "upright carriage" which rights guarantee not only allows us to enter the world as dignified persons but as individuals who are sure about their future plans and projects. So far as the security of expectation is concerned, rights are essential. Without this security we could have no sense of coherence. Life would lose its intelligibility and, therefore, our ability to gain control over it. As Wasserstrom wrote:

> "To live in a society in which there are rights and in which rights are generally respected is to live in a society in which the social environment has been made appreciably more predictable and secure. It is to be able to count on receiving and enjoying objects of value. Rights have therefore, and obvious psychological as well as moral dimension and significance." (Wasserstrom, 1964, p631)

However, as we have seen, whilst rights are necessary for safeguarding our future choices, in a context where individuals are essentially unknowable and unpredictable, the security that rights guarantee stems from the same beliefs that makes us fearful of others in the first place.

Linked to security, privacy is another value that rights protect for autonomous individuals. Privacy celebrates what is ours, the social, mental and physical space which belongs to us. What is more it is essential to our autonomy in that it allows us to be the creator of own plans and projects and not to have our lives entirely planned by the state or by others. For liberals this private space also represents some peace away from the demands and pressures of the outside world.

However, in a context where emphasis is placed upon the individual to be responsible for her destiny the private domain can become a sphere which is burdened by intolerable responsibilities.

Let us look, for instance, at the construction of the health and welfare services. In those liberal societies, such as the U.S.A., where the emphasis is on individual choice as opposed to the collective provision of goods which are regarded as choiceworthy, the private individual has to be concerned with an increasing number of problems. Instead of health care being something that we can take for granted, it becomes something about which individuals are forced to become experts.

I experienced the weight of this a few years ago on a visit to the States. I arrived with my 9-week-old baby with very little knowledge as to what I should do if things went wrong. Not only was I supposed to "shop around" for a paediatrician, but because each visit is paid for individually, we had to make difficult choices as to whether we should seek his advice or not. My private life became swamped with burdens I had hoped were of collective, or rather, national concern.

Another argument is that the liberal conception of privacy, as an empty space which is exclusively occupied by the individual, is an illusion. This encourages an "intrusiveness" of the public into the private which is ignored because it is denied. Instead of privacy being left quietly to the individual, it is something which has become publicly glorified and commodified.

The image of the private life is not created by individuals but is projected by a collective view of what the private home

should be like. Capitalism, in the name of consumer choice, feeds these images by generating new images of how the private home should be dressed, "as though a faster car might make my family life more intense and harmonious" (Taylor, 1985d p281). Contrary to the belief that what is private is under the control of the individual, these images of the ideal private home are controlled by other forces and impinge right into the centre of our private sphere in the form of modern communication systems such as the television. The point is that it is the very concern with this form of privacy which constructs a colonisation of the private world (or Life-world as Habermas calls it) which, in turn, subjects the individual to forces which are beyond her control.

In this section I have tried to show that liberalism, in emphasizing freedom of choice and individual rights as necessary to create the conditions under which truly autonomous individuals can live, has neglected the public, indivisible goods which are also necessary for us to be autonomous as members of society. This negligence often corrupts many of the values that liberals seek to defend as inherent in a society which respects autonomous individuals. I cannot find much favour with those communitarians who argue that the concept of choice and of rights are not essential in a good society that we could possibly recognise, but that liberalism is not adequately equipped with the philosophical language to defend a society in which communal life and communal goods are valued in themselves. Such attachments, I argue, are necessary for a full concept of autonomy which recognises that some individual goods are

dependant on our communal attachments.

1.5 Conclusion

Communitarianism provides us with a range of ontological and moral arguments which point to weaknesses in liberal theory, and inadequacies in liberal society, even in its most social versions.

To begin with, the extent to which the person is necessarily shaped by the society as to the possible goals and ways of life that she may pursue, is not done justice. Although liberals certainly grant that the person is shaped by society, even necessarily so, this is not seen to be crucial to our understanding of individuals. This is because, in the end, a person is, in principle, capable of rejecting any of the goods that she may have committed herself to. However, this neglects the fact that there are many features of our relationships to others that, if we were deprived of them, would have a crucial impact of our sense of who we are and the way in which we perceive our lives to be moving. For communitarians this central feature of our personhood should figure in our political institutions and in our moral conceptions of the good life. Liberalism's failure to do this has an impoverishing effect on the political and moral life of liberal society.

Secondly, the aim of a society of individuals pursuing their own goals and only contingently co-operating (because they coincide or out of practical necessity) is impossible as well as undesirable. It is impossible because it ignores the point that the extent to which we able to pursue our goals is dependent on

social arrangements with other people and on existing public institutions. For MacIntyre, Taylor and Walzer, such an aim fails to recognise the fact that all goods and all goals are essentially social. Our inability to recognise this means that we have failed to find arguments which, and the means to, underpin our allegiance to certain goods. This is undesirable in liberalism's own terms. Sandel (1982) goes further in arguing that it is also undesirable because it will exclude those goods which are dependent on the recognition of our membership to the community. Liberalism does not have the conceptual capacity to defend those goods which are essentially communal in nature.

Thirdly, rights and individual freedom are necessary, but not sufficient, to protect society. We must, Taylor in particular argues, see our commitment to rights and individual freedom, as pointing to a deeper commitment to society and those institutions which can defend these values. We need communal structures to protect individualistic values.

Finally, the model produces unhealthy attitudes. We have seen that although there is much that is to be valued in liberal society, such as its championing of individual rights and in its respect for the individual, because these are not themselves presupposed and supported by communal values and structures can lead to feelings of distrust and insecurity which inhibits our capacity to enjoy and benefit from our co-operation with others.

In the next chapter, I shall look more closely at the communitarian thesis both in terms of offering a more appropriate way of understanding the self and its relationship

to society, and as offering a better society in which we can sustain those values and principles which are considered essential to the good society.

CHAPTER TWO: COMMUNITARIANISM - AN ALTERNATIVE VISION?

2.1 Introduction: The Good Society

Communitarianism can be seen either as a feature of the political critique of liberalism (Walzer, 1990), or as offering an alternative vision of society based on the notion of the good life or the good society. In this chapter I shall explore communitarianism as an alternative way of understanding the nature of the person's relationship to society and as a vision projecting how society ought to be. This is not to say that all communitarians are advocating the destruction of liberalism before the good society can be established (such a view, I argue, is both incoherent and undesirable), but that some notion of "community", of shared goods and values, needs to be embedded in our political institutions and discourse if we are to continue to live in a society which is worthy of choice.

As I argued in the last chapter, communitarianism is not simply a critique of the extreme forms of liberalism but does point out some of its insufficiencies, even in its welfarist forms which at least incorporate some notion of goods which are necessary for society as a whole. What is more, communitarians believe that liberal society, for all its benefits, has created a world of which alienation and isolation are structural features. What is needed, communitarians argue, is a language, a way of thinking about and structuring our social and political institutions, which will "nurture the food for the collectivity" (Weil, 1978), of which we have been starved. Whereas liberal society only caters for part of our being, communitarianism claims to capture the needs of the "whole person".

It will be necessary, therefore, to examine what are claimed to be the necessary conditions for a communitarian society, and both the aims and the values that are promoted.

2.2 Community as a Requirement

As argued in the last chapter some social account of the self is held to be preferable to the asocial one assumed by liberal theory, even where it does concede that a social framework of some sort is necessary in order that there may be selves. Whereas liberal theory argues that the particular attachments in which the person finds herself are merely contingent and are not in themselves essential to the constitution of a particular person, the communitarian argues that we cannot make sense of the person except in terms of these particular attachments.[1] Unless one argues that some particular attachments are constitutive, then one still has to account for some residual self (Etzioni, 1990) who is able, in principle, to examine any of the opinions and beliefs that she actually holds (Kymlicka, 1988).

The social concept of the self is important in that it sets out a starting point for an alternative political theory. Whereas in liberal theory the condition for the liberal vision

[1] This does not mean that one is simply determined by the common practices of the community, as Kymlicka appears to assume that communitarians argue. The oppressed woman in a fundamentalist, male-dominated culture does not resign herself to her role because "that is the way things are done here". Identities are also formed by one's hopes for the future. Experience of struggle and the attempt to destroy one's unwanted but socially recognised roles is as important a way of understanding the person as are the roles that she accepts. We will clarify this view later.

is that we are freed from the illegitimate constraints that societies may place on us, in order that we may be able to pursue our life plans in accordance with "our own" beliefs about the good life, communitarians argue that certain conditions must be fulfilled in order that any conception and pursuit of the good life is possible. The worthwhile society must provide opportunities for self-fulfilment and self-realisation which recognise the intrinsic nature of the person's attachments to others.

For communitarians, some societies are better at realizing our social selves than others. MacIntyre, for instance, derides liberal society for creating a fragmented world in which we are only able to recognise ourselves as foundationless fragments - as disjointed narratives. It is a world without a framework (Connolly, 1988), without horizons (Taylor, 1989), without telos (Sandel, 1983). Leaving aside the issue of whether we would approve of such a model, MacIntyre clearly believes that Catholicism provides a social framework which realises the nature and the needs of the person. The Catholic vision is an entirely communal vision, uniting the person, within the body of Christ, as a physical, social and moral being, and seeing her as significant within an entire cosmological order:

> "I am my body and my body is social, born to these parents in this community with a specific social identity. What does make a difference for the Catholic Christian is that I, whatever earthly community I may belong to, am also held to be a member of a heavenly, eternal community represented on earth by the church." ((MacIntyre, 1981, p161)

The Catholic community therefore provides a framework in which

the public role of the person is intrinsically valued. Not only that, but it allows the private world to be public in that it dispenses with the necessity for a protected and entirely separate, private sphere. This is not to say that MacIntyre would approve of massive intervention into people's lives today (although liberals may argue that this is what would effectively happen), but that he maintains that the primacy of the private in liberal society is an indication of the rootlessness and emptiness of people's lives. It is a world in which there is no public home.

One's constituent attachments create the moral framework through which we value the world. Community is the realisation of those values; one's individual purposes are realised through the values and purposes of the community as a whole. In the "good society" a person's private choices have public affirmation. How broadly we can define the community and which attachments are constitutive, are questions which we will consider later.

Community, therefore, is not just an ontological concept which informs us of the nature of the self, it suggests a form of social organisation which is actually desirable for the self. Since the self cannot be understood in isolation from its constitutive attachments to others, some notion of community is what is presupposed in any form of society which is not simply composed of atomised individuals (and such a society is, in any case, inconceivable (Walzer, 1983)). Some notion of community is therefore presupposed in any society, even a liberal society. Societies which do not acknowledge the primary importance of

community are, however, lacking in something. Liberal society, according to some communitarians, denies the indispensability of the concept of community upon which it depends (Van Gunstern, 1988).

Some form of community is therefore both necessary and desirable in any society. For communitarians the public realisation of the value of community is a requirement for the good society.

Community is what links us as persons with a shared identity, and provides a psychological connection to the kind of persons that we would like to be. Our goals, hopes and aspirations are predicated on both the kind of society that we believe does exist and the one which we hope will exist. However, for one to be at home in the world, so that one's private visions have some kind of public affirmation, there must be the kind of unity between the persons and society that liberal society consistently frustrates.

That the person needs a public home though which she can discover the wholeness of her being is a core position held by communitarian philosophers. However, they would disagree about the particular forms of society in which this can take place and the point at which it engulfs, to the point of destroying, the individual (Miller, 1989), even though they agree that it is only through the community that a person can discern herself as a socially recognisable human being.

Once we accept this, our relationship to the community to which we belong is crucial. What communitarians are emphasising is the importance of those values which stem from our

relationship as members of a community, which, they believe, should be expressed in our public institutions which confirm our relationship as members of society. For instance, it may be possible to develop structures whereby it would be possible for everyone, to some extent, to share in the participation and distribution of socially valued goods. The recognition of stronger forms of participation within our public institutions is one way in which society could recognize the strength of the forms of relationship which we reveal as members of a community.

All communitarians, with varying degrees of success and through different emphases, attempt to postulate an ideal membership through which our intrinsically social nature may be satisfied. For Sandel and MacIntyre, this appears to require the abandonment of liberalism as a political ideal. For Taylor, Walzer and Barber, however, this entails an emphasis on public life which is missing at the moment, but if supported has the potential to reap the benefits of liberal enlightenment, through the collective consciousness and experience of its members.

The concept of membership provides us with the consciousness of our collective needs, the principle one being of that of the community itself. It is through our attachments to others, and our participation through public institutions, that we, firstly, become aware of our needs and the welfare of other members and, secondly, have any reason to be concerned about the welfare of others (Walzer, 1983). Membership fosters our obligations and commitments. What is more, the communitarians claim that the goods which are valued through a community are superior to those in a society which had no prior commitment. The theories which

underpin liberal society are premised on the belief that we are essentially distinct from one another. Liberal justice is concerned with what is owed to distinct individuals, and creates no obligations to give more than one would to a stranger in need.

On a liberal view strangers and friends have the same pre-determined rights; and the theory assumes that we should treat all as though they were strangers. Therefore, although the liberal may be concerned if someone has no shelter or no food, so long as her basic needs as a human being are catered for, we have no obligation to worry whether the shelter is homely or if the food is satisfying. We need not be concerned about the quality of her life so long as the possibility for life is supported (Ignatieff, 1984). Communitarianism, however, stresses the social quality of the needs themselves. A life which emphasizes shared experience assumes a social responsibility to ensure that all its members share in all that society considers worthwhile. It is not enough that a person lives but that she is able to live well.

Our needs stem from our togetherness, our social membership. This suggests other values which are also primary to a communitarian society and are premised on the social nature of our being. It suggests that a society whose members have no positive awareness of being members is lacking in something valuable and in a consciousness of being of value.

2.3 Home, Rootedness and Belonging

The first of our communitarian needs is really a cluster of

needs for institutions and feelings which are intrinsically related: home, rootedness and belonging. All of them indicate a relationship or a sense of attachment to a place, to a past or to other people or objects. This attachment is more than material, it is existential - it indicates a sense in which the person's identity is bound up in certain ways to the world. In fact this attachment may not have any tangible material reality, but may signify an ideal state - such as reaching the Promised Land.

These three needs are alike in terms of this existential attachment but their differences reveal variations in which this attachment can be understood.

We need a home in order to know who we are. Home places us at the centre of our universe (Schutz, 1976). If we feel we have a home, we feel that we do not merely live on the outskirts, on the borders of society, but are centred in the complex of relations and meanings that surround us. What is more, this central reference point is static. Indeed, it is what provides us with our reference points for other things. When we are not at home we feel detached from our context we begin to feel lost and alienated from others. As a "stranger", in Schutz's terms (1976), I am not permitted to consider myself as the centre of my social environment. When we do things we have no sense of their value, but are constantly looking for clues as to whether what we are doing is, in fact, good.

For instance if we enter a social environment which is alien to us we do things which enable us to "fit in" without having any sense that the things that we are doing are at all worth

while. They are gestures of acceptance, but they do not give us a sense of being accepted. We feel outside and detached from them, and we will not feel at home until these gestures are not merely understood, but become part of our reference point. The language of the society must not merely be understood, in terms of what the words represent; it must be embraced fully as expressions of who we are. As Schutz writes:

> "In order to command a language freely, one must have written love letters in it; one has to know how to pray and curse in it and how to say things with every shade appropriate to the addressee and to the situation." (Schutz, 1976, p101)

If we were constantly on the move, as it were, in the sense of constantly moving through alien contexts, we would have no reference point for our lives and no means of determining our relationships with others.

For communitarians "home" is an essentially public concept, or at the very least, a concept which locates one's private life within a defined public space. Home is a relation to others and not the absence of others from one's private space. However, home can mean different things in different contexts. It is possible for a concept of home, in the communitarian sense, to exist where there is a substantial amount of geographical mobility. After all, people can feel themselves to be at home in the world through a particular vocation, or a religion or political calling. It is, after all a sense of vocation which situates our private aspirations within a public sphere (Berger,

Berger and Kellner, 1977 and Bellah et al., 1985), [2] and this relationship is considered valuable in itself. Indeed, the nature of this relationship is what distinguishes a vocation from a job or career which are, in different ways, valued for instrumental reasons (Unger, 1987).

In a society in which social roles are seen as artificial constructs, as masks behind which the "real " person resides, the pursuit of home has been driven to the private spaces of peoples lives. This, in itself, deprives us of valuing the world of shared meanings. It throws us off the scent, as it were, on a search for a home world which cannot really exist. In such a world public life becomes either a means to some unspecified end, or a tremendous burden where, in everything that we do, we feel "but this isn't me".

This concept of home enables us to defend communitarianism from the accusation that privacy, in the sense that the liberal may define it, enables us to be anonymous. It allows us, according to liberals, to say things and to be ourselves without the sense that others are watching, accusing or judging us (Westin, 1968). However, as Schutz (1976) suggests, anonymity is a state which is only enjoyed by those who are truly at home in the world, since one is able to move through the world unnoticed just because one is not a stranger to the language, customs and habits of the world. The stranger, on the other hand, is not

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[2] As Bellah et al, argue -
"in the strongest sense of a "calling", work constitutes a practical ideal of activity and character that makes a person's work morally indispensable from his or her life." (1985, p66)

anonymous but alien, and appears as an alien. It is this state of alienation that the communitarian seeks to address, and not the state of anonymity which is already catered for in a society where its members are truly "at-home".

Rootedness is what anchors home through its past. It must have a past and that past must have value. One cannot begin to identify or value one's home without the sense of the context or the history of its existence. Home is not arbitrary or accidental, but is essentially significant to a person's life which has been lived through time. If it is chosen it is not only chosen because it is significant but it is also significant because it has been chosen. What is important about our projects and commitments is their value to us - a relationship does not become any more valuable if we have to chose to commit ourselves to it every day.

Communitarians are often critical of the way in which history or tradition is systematically devalued, as though it were irrelevant to people and their future projects. For instance, native populations all over the world can be said to have had, not merely their rights violated, but their own histories undermined and devalued. The same accusation has been made of the writing of history when it is written from the point of view of the empire-builders and rulers, whilst the suffering, struggles and victories of ordinary people are neglected (E.P. Thompson, 1979). This is not to say that all tradition is good (although some communitarians have difficulty in not reducing all possible beliefs about the good to tradition), but that a sense of where one came from is essential to knowing who one is

and what one wishes to do. This is the case even if this understanding propels a person into political action which calls for significant change in society.

Rootedness seems to imply a type of powerlessness - an excuse not to change anything for fear of being uprooted and therefore dehumanised. However, it is the contrary that has more truth. The most powerful of totalitarian movements have been those where history, and the symbols of a society's past, have been distorted and controlled by a ruling elite. Destruction of a past can be a powerful weapon. Book-burning is an example of a this kind of oppression. It is the attempt to destroy the variety of voices within any particular culture which give the lie to the particular ideology upon which the ruling elite's power is legitimated. A well known fictional example is Orwell's 1984 in which even the country's language was deconstructed in such a way that it severed all links with the past.

A sense of one's roots is what makes criticism possible. The past is what gives thrust to one's aspirations in the future and the capacity to realise the obstacles which stand in its way. A society without a memory is vulnerable to any power able to fill the vacuum. As the famous Czech novelist, Kundera, has been quoted as saying, "The struggle of man against power is the struggle of memory against forgetting."

Belonging is the sense of ownership and attachment that persons have to their home. For a community to be a source of at-homeness, there must be a strong psychological sense in which the community is "owned" by each person:

> "If a community is to claim my allegiance, it must represent a distinct way of life, there must be something about the community and its members that makes it my community" (Miller, 1989, p231)

C.B. MacPherson (1985) argues that the concept of property and ownership rights changed drastically after the Enlightenment period and especially since the development of capitalism. The meaning of ownership, with regard to material property in particular, has been changed from referring both to things to which persons have exclusive ownership and to those things from which persons are not excluded, to referring solely to the former. Only exclusive rights to property can be properly marketed: ownership is seen as necessarily including the right to dispense with property through the mechanisms of buying and selling.

Belonging, in the communitarian sense, is different in two ways. To begin with, it concentrates on those goods from which no one should be excluded -these are goods which are indivisible, and the means to labour and activity (MacPherson, 1985). Although we may have exclusive rights to those goods which are the means to life, such as food and shelter, as goods which sustain the lives of individuals, we do not all have the exclusive right to the means to labour, such as land, or to money and those goods which are necessary by virtue of the form of production which characterises any particular society. We do not have a right to participate in the distribution of goods and the processes of production which are nonetheless part of the determining structures of our lives. Belonging in this sense, therefore, refers to the sense in which a person is not excluded

from the means to socially valued activity.

Secondly, the communitarian notion of belonging refers not only to material goods but even more to existential goods of attachment.[3] The sense in which one's life belongs with others may indeed be the result of certain economic and political system, but it highlights the communitarian belief that belonging in the form of attachment to others and to the life of the prevailing culture is a basic form of belonging. Ideally, to say that "the community is mine" is to say not only that one has access to valued material goods in the community but also that one identifies with the political, social and spiritual life of the community (though the former may be a condition for the latter).

The above three needs suggest different ways in which people participate in the life of the world around them. However they also suggest the need for that way of life to be invested with some kind of authority for them. It provides meaning and guidance for them simply because it is a world which is not merely incidental to their lives. However authority and participation, in theory and in practice, can often be seen as opposing ideas. We therefore need to look at these concepts more closely to see how they can cohere within a communitarian position.

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[3] We can also extend this sense of belonging to "belongings". These, in communitarian terms, are material goods, but they are goods which are valuable for some reason other than their market value. For this reason, the loss of a photograph album, for instance, may be felt more keenly than the loss of a video recorder.

2.4 Authority and Participation

Communitarian theory is loaded with the language of the good and of worthwhileness. The community provides people with the necessary context through which a sustained moral framework, which is considered by its members to be worthwhile, can be attained. It ensures, not only that the moral framework has authority (in the sense that it informs a shared way of life), but also that it is participative, in that it is the membership which constitutes the nature of their shared concerns. However communitarians differ as to what they mean by participation. For Sandel and MacIntyre it appears to mean little more than identifying with the cultural values and purposes of the culture of which one is a part.

Thus both authority and participation, however differently the terms may be interpreted, are inherent aspects of the community, which, it is argued by communitarians, are requirements of the good life. It is possible to see these, sometimes mutually exclusive, values also as actual needs that persons, in society, have. The person needs to exist within structures of authority in order to make sense of the world. Without authority there would be no reason to suppose that one's beliefs or actions were either good or rational. We need authority in order to act within meaningful relationships at all.

Plant (1974) reminds us of Winch's argument that authority in this sense is nothing more than the mode through which any interaction is at all possible. Some form of authority is required, in the form of conventions or rules, if any kind of meaningful discourse is to take place between two or more

people.

> "Any form of human interaction and not just reflex behaviour must embody concepts which presuppose rules and these rules are intrinsically linked with the idea of authority." (Plant, 1974, p58)

Authority is the uniting principle. It is what makes sense of rational activity. To question continually the basis upon which rational argument, as well as everyday discourse, takes place is to deny the very possibility of that discourse. There is also a sense in which some particular beliefs between communicants are so basic that they just have to be taken for granted - they are part of our assumptive world although they may not be the same particular beliefs in all cultures at all times. Since they are conversations which take place at certain points of history which accept different forms of authority.

However, we believe authority to be rather more than the mutual assumptions that underlie all forms of communication. Authority has normative value. We turn to sources of authority to make judgements about what we or others should or should not do. This raises questions concerning legitimate and illegitimate forms of authority. Nisbet (1970), is keen to make the distinction between power, which is based upon the external use of force, and authority, which arises from the participation of its members. A good community rests its authority on its participants:

> "Community is the product of people living together on problems of autonomous and collective fulfilment of internal objectives, and of the experience of living under codes of authority which have been set in large degree by the persons involved." (Nisbet, 1970,

p.xiv)

Without these there cannot exist the sense of belonging which is essential in a community. Without authority, there is no reason to believe that what is valued is actually good. Without participation, there is no reason to believe that what is valued bears any relationship to my values.

Participation is necessary in order that forms of discourse can be relevant to the actual life-experiences and practical realities of the members. Without participation authority would become an external and irrelevant form of discourse. The person's rational capacities to interpret, criticize and transform her social environment would be an impossibility. The person would not belong to her society, in the sense she is of that society, but would merely be a function of it. When authority is no longer based on the participation of its members, then different kinds of social relationship are apparent.

Raymond Williams (1961) identified six types of relationship that persons may have towards society, of which only the member finds that she can identify fully with its codes of authority. Some may resign themselves to citizenship and, like the servant or the subject, conform. Some however, may not even see themselves as citizens and therefore refuse to recognise its rules, such as the rebel, the exile and the vagrant.

Different communitarians appear to emphasize, in different ways, the loss of authority and participation in the modern world. They emphasize the primary importance of one or the other, and give the terms different meanings. For MacIntyre,

for instance, it is the existence of a rational framework and social foundations that have been lost. It is the authority of social foundations which creates the opportunities for creating the good life. The loss of this authority has meant that we are encountering a grave rational and moral crisis, one which destroys the possibility of a shared morality or rationality at all. Like Lyotard (1984), writing from the point of view of post-modernism, MacIntyre appears to see the loss of a unifying "myth" or a "grand narrative" as the modern social tragedy. We appear to recognise the nature of our participation through the forms of authority that are available to us. Our sense of virtue derives from the social roles through which we discover our moral and social nature. Once the nature of our social roles is obscured or is perceived to be arbitrary, then we lose the sense of who we are. Without a sense of knowing who we are we cannot begin to develop a shared morality which is built up from an understanding of who one is in relation to the nature and good of the society as a whole.

So for MacIntyre, participation does not imply the need for democracy. Participation appears to be more to do with feeling that one identifies with the values and beliefs of the society of which one is a part. One is a participator in that community but only in so far as one understands one's place within it. Barber (1984), on the other hand appears to emphasise the lack of structures which enable us to participate. Liberal democracy, with its political institutions of representative democracy, is a limited democracy in which institutions are themselves distant from the practical realities of peoples

lives. Liberal political institutions are distant, inflexible and inhuman.

Nisbet, too, but from a different perspective, complains that political institutions have become irrelevant to the experiences that people find themselves through the relationships which matter to them. The community, the family and the church, the immediate associations to which people belong, no longer have the social and political authority in modern life. The forms of authority, in particular that of the liberal State, have become empty, external forms of power. There is a sense in which political institutions have developed in a separate sphere from the primary associations which naturally develop through social interactions.

For Nisbet the kind of participation where members take an active part in the setting of rules and objectives is only possible within small communities. The task is therefore not to deepen democracy in the political institutions which already exist, but to give a more central role to those associations in which people are fully involved.

This point raises a certain difficulty which we shall deal with in the next chapter. That is, can we actually make a distinction between natural and artificial social relationships? Nisbet appears to suggest that our primary associations, our immediate associations such as in the family or the neighbourhood, are natural, whereas those which are imposed upon us by governments and states are artificial. For Nisbet, it is only the participative and interactive relationships within primary associations that supply us with the forms of authority

that he believes are both natural and legitimate. However, since the political relationships are still very much a part of our lived history and experiences, in what sense are our primary associations natural and our political relationships artificial?

It appears, then, that authority and participation are both conditions of the good life, but that they stand in an uneasy relationship to each other. For liberals, communitarians end up defending systems which, if incorporated into our political institutions, would be oppressive and incompatible with the freedom and pluralism that we enjoy in liberal society.

However, for the communitarians, some form of participation and some form of authority is already at work in the all the forms of relationships that we have. For the communitarian the aim, however difficult, is to acknowledge that some forms of society are better at realising the most desirable forms of, and relationships between, participation and authority. To ignore them is to allow our society to bend to forces beyond our control and which have no relevance for us. For Nisbet, this leaves us vulnerable to totalitarian regimes which replace authority with power. For MacIntyre, it leaves us isolated and disengaged, unable to have any kind of shared way of life, which is necessary for any kind of social life at all.

2.5 The Communitarian Vision

The first and foremost aim, for communitarians, is the creation or restoration of public life. For communitarians this does not imply that one vision of the good will be imposed on others and that private life will itself become devalued or even

suppressed. Rather, public life will be valued in itself because it is seen for what it is, that is, the outcome of individual and collective practices.

For communitarians, the ideas of home and participation are combined to reinstate the person within the social structures which govern her life. Public life itself becomes a "home" which brings intrinsic satisfaction to its members. A sense of community is discovered through the reconciliation of the personal in the public, and the recognition that the concerns of others are my concerns too. It is the valuing of community itself which sustains the membership and creates a sense of belonging. Without a sense of community we become a society of strangers with all the dangers that are attendant on such attitudes. As Walzer says:

> "The community is itself a good - conceivably the most important good - that gets distributed by taking people in, where all the sense of that latter phrase are relevant; they must be physically admitted and politically received. (Walzer, 1983, p29)

Marx also recognised that shared life could be valuable in itself and noticed this, and the potential for the future society, in the associations of communist artisans. He wrote:

> "Their association itself creates a new need - the need for society - and what appeared to be a means has simply become an end...smoking, eating and drinking are no longer simply means of bringing people together. Society, association, entertainment which also has society as its aim, is sufficient for them." (Marx, quoted in Miller 1989b, p229)

Community therefore creates a coherent framework in which there is ideally no conflict between our private and public selves. The valuing of public life must itself be seen as a

benefit. Such an argument need not be a threat to private life itself. It does not imply that the community has a natural right to intrude upon private territory, but on the contrary that there are internal satisfactions that are to be found only in the public sphere.

For both liberals and communitarians, the best society is one in which its members are self-sufficient and autonomous. However, for the communitarians these states are only possible through the recognition of our dependence on others.

Self-sufficiency and autonomy cannot only be seen as ends; and for the communitarians, because they are based on different conceptions of the self from that of liberal theory, they have different implications for them. Self-sufficiency is indeed that state in which nothing is lacking - where all needs are catered for (or perhaps more accurately, that state of being where the question of need is eradicated). Whereas the most individualistic forms of liberalism imply that self-sufficiency indicates a state of self-reliance, self-sufficiency for the communitarian may include all those social and natural attachments on which she is dependent and which provide her with her sense of identity and of her own self worth. Even welfare liberals tend to see needs as goods which pertain to individual, though they have a more socialised understanding of what these goods are. However communitarianism goes further in seeing self-sufficiency as encompassing all those social relations which make up the complete way of life.

However, the notion of self-sufficiency on its own is problematic. Who decides that we are self-sufficient? Unless

we are willing to have our "needs" prescribed for us we believe that we should have participation in the evaluating of our needs. Autonomy implies that life is to a large degree self-directed and not imposed. For instance, the hospital treatment that a person who is diagnosed as mentally ill may undergo may well reduce the symptoms of her depression, but they may also diminish her capacity to perform other tasks that she wishes to undertake. Perhaps she will see the taking of pills as the source of another oppression even if it does make some aspects of her life more easy to cope with. Without a concept of autonomy self-sufficiency could justify almost any state of being. The attitude of many health professionals, for instance, is that if the pills are "working" then that is all that is needed. A concept of self-sufficiency without a concept of autonomy raises the question as to who decides what is "self-sufficient".

The criticism of welfare liberalism is that the goods which have been created as being needed by persons in order to attain a self-sufficient life are abstracted from and not embedded in the practical realities and difficulties of peoples' everyday lives. These social needs have become bureaucratized; they have become, in many cases, the means by which professional groups enhance their own reputations, rather than as goods which have anything to do with the community's own self development. The result has been that many groups of people, especially in health care (and in health care this is particularly noticeable amongst mental health service users, women and ethnic minorities) have felt that services meant to meet need have themselves been a

source of oppression.

Autonomy, however, assumes self-direction. It is the ability to direct ones life in line with one's own choosing. It incorporates a notion of control - the sense that one's life is not in the hands of external forces. However, the communitarian concept of autonomy addresses the context prior to the individual. The stress is therefore not on independence from others but the capacity to act freely with others. Autonomy is a condition of being able to participate in the decisions which affect ones life. This requires the deepening of participative structures in certain aspects of social, political and economic life which have previously been taken as given. Autonomy is not simply the ability to be free from the interference of these aspects of social life (of which we are necessarily a part). Autonomy without a notion of the self-sufficient life is an empty concept, as is self-sufficiency without a notion of autonomy.

One criticism of liberal society is that public life is seen as purely instrumental to the satisfaction of individual's private ambitions. The notion of the "home" therefore gets pushed back further and further into the private spaces, leaving little opportunity to enjoy the value of being with others. For communitarians this has serious implications for our concern to live in a society of self-sufficient and autonomous people. It gives us a misplaced view of what our needs are, creating a society of individuals who are endlessly trying to furnish their private lives with no intrinsic measure of satisfaction. Secondly it gives us a false sense and faith of our own powers,

which places, sometimes, incredible burdens on the individual and leaves her at the mercy of forces and influences beyond her control.

For liberals, however, autonomy and self-sufficiency are not possible where the public life and one's associations are considered to be prior to the individual herself. What liberals often argue is that community life must be the outcome of voluntary decisions, and that it cannot be valued prior to the individuals who chose to value the community (Buchanan, 1989). Nonetheless, the liberal vision cannot provide a framework within which individual choices themselves are made. Communitarianism attempts to argue that such a framework is possible without leaving the door open to totalitarianism. Indeed, only by addressing the framework can certain ends be perceived and pursued.

2.6 Conclusion

In this chapter we have looked at the core belief in communitarianism that some form of community is essential to the good society. Liberals' supposed rejection of community leads them to overlook certain needs such as the need for home and belonging, a framework of authority, participation in our public and political institutions, and "genuine" autonomy and self-sufficiency.

However, since it is difficult to ascertain what kind of society communitarians are actually advocating, it is difficult to make a final assessment of the communitarian claims. The totalitarian consequences of a view which puts the need for a

unifying myth prior to any kind of democratic assent appear, to me and to liberal critics, to make this the least acceptable version of communitarianism.

However a more acceptable version of communitarianism is opposed to the conclusion that we should make choices within an imposed framework. On the contrary, it leads us to conclude that it is being part of the creation of, and having control over, the framework that is necessary. It requires a deepening of democracy, not an abandonment of it.

But even the more "liberal friendly" version of communitarianism is criticised. It is argued that communitarianism is really attacking a "straw man" (Kymlicka, 1988). Community is not devalued in liberal society but is, on the contrary, made possible by it for the people who want it and in the way in which they want it. In the end, therefore, communitarians are criticising liberals for something that they have not done - that is, undermine the value of community and community life. What liberals also do not accept, is the communitarian implication that the concept of community is in some way prior to the individual as the central focus in political philosophy.

In the next chapter we shall examine some of the liberal criticisms of communitarianism and assess to what extent they are justified.

CHAPTER THREE - THE LIBERAL ATTACK

3.1 Introduction

There are a number of criticisms that many liberals levelled against communitarianism and the idea that some form of community is necessary in order to bring about a good society. Firstly, they would argue that liberal institutions provide adequate protection for the conditions of the good life, and that therefore a concept of community is an irrelevance.

Secondly, they argue that liberal institutions are all that is now possible. Since these institutions are an integral part of our tradition, communitarians are simply contradicting themselves by arguing that liberal society should be replaced by something else which addresses the social nature of ourselves. A society of communities, given the kind of society that we actually live in, would be totally alien to us.

Finally, liberals argue that communitarianism is incompatible with freedom, pluralism, and social justice and is destructive of both individuals and communities. It is therefore undesirable.

In this chapter we shall examine these arguments and show how it is possible for communitarianism to defend itself against them. We shall conclude that there is a version of communitarianism which can handle these criticisms but that part of the confusion stems from the tensions which exist within the concept of community itself. If communitarianism is to have any positive value, other than as a corrective to liberalism, then it must provide us with a concept of community which is both desirable and plausible.

3.2 Community as an irrelevance

Communitarians argue that the establishment of community is essential if we are to sustain those values which we require in any good society. Some liberals have argued against this and insisted that the liberal "tradition" is itself sufficient to underpin those values which are necessary to its continued existence. Macedo for instance argues:

> "The uncommon patriotism of Americans focused on our constitutional heritage, suggests that an ongoing historical struggle for the establishment and extension of liberal values can create and support a shared and robust identity, one that leaves room for certain norms of universal respect and critical reflection on more particular attachments." (Macedo, 1988, p131)

This suggests that liberal institutions and values can be seen as sufficient, where they are adhered to, to generate a framework which underpins the shared values of individual liberty and rights. Indeed it is possible to see liberal society, with its emphasis on individual rights, as itself the best starting point for the actual formation of community, since it allows for the voluntary and spontaneous coming together of people with similar interests in a spirit of mutual support and cooperative enterprise. As Buchanan argues, the liberal promotion of freedom of association and expression is important in that they:

> "...allow individuals to partake of the alleged essential human good of community by protecting existing communities from interference from without and by giving individuals the freedom to unite with like minded others to create new communities." (Buchanan, 1989, p858)

A prior concept of community is unnecessary since, where communities are necessary, for instance for the more efficient generation of necessary and valued goods, individuals will still be able to form communities of agreement and cooperation in order to attain them. To accept that individuals are capable of choosing their own life plans is not to deny their capacity to act collectively.

This is not to say that liberal theory cannot endorse the idea of public provision prior to the stated agreements of individuals, since these institutions are themselves based on the principles of fair opportunity for all individuals. A concept of community cannot add anything to this. In fact a prior concept of community may hinder the possibility of the generation of spontaneous communities which arise through the voluntary associations of individuals.

The central argument, however, is that we do not need a prior concept of community either for the formation of communities or the belief that communities can themselves be valuable. Liberal institutions are therefore themselves sufficient.

3.3 Communitarianism as Incoherent

Linked to the above criticism is the argument that communitarianism is incoherent, since liberal institutions are not only all we need, but are all that we have. Communitarians claim not only that community is a necessary good, but that it recaptures the person within the context of her attachments. Liberal society, on the other hand, depends, they claim, on both assumptions about the self and moral principles, such as the

concept of individual rights which are acontextual. Liberal society cannot, therefore, develop an appropriate framework on which to base shared values and common goals.

However, liberals claim that we can put forward a contextualist argument which supports just the kind of society that communitarians claim to be unsustainable. The argument is that liberal society, whatever its limitations might be, is the society in which we actually live. The pervasiveness of rights language is an indication of how entrenched it is within our collective consciousness. To deprive us of this way of thinking would be to detach us from the culture of which we are a part. Kateb (1989) argues that part of the communitarians' objections can be attributed to a misunderstanding as to the nature of the individualism which is inherent in liberalism. Individualism, as understood in liberal society, must not be seen as replacing social bonds but as redefining them. The primacy of rights, in our political and moral vocabulary, can be seen as the most appropriate way of addressing persons given the present nature of our changing world. The post-industrial age in which we live suggests that we are no longer able to base our understanding of others on intimate or face to face relationships. Liberal institutions are, therefore, the most appropriate expression of our collective consciousness of others in this stage of Capitalism.

For Gutmann (1985), liberal society provides a more appropriate foundation for how we can and should live than a communitarian society which is based on some Aristotelian notion of civic virtue which is alien to us. As she says of

MacIntyre's argument concerning the contextual nature of rights:

> "...on a contextualist view it is possible for us to believe in human rights. Many of the most widely accepted practices of our society - equality of educational opportunity, career open to talent, punishment conditional on intent - treat people as relatively autonomous moral agents. Insofar as we are committed to maintaining these practices we are also committed to defending human rights." (Gutmann, 1985, p315)

Given that modern society is fragmented and that most people are strangers to each other, could we not argue that a rights based conception of justice is the most appropriate way in which to deal with society?

Communitarians appear, to liberals, to want it both ways. Sometimes they claim that liberalism misrepresents people. They call it, as we have said above, an acontextualist theory which denies our true, social nature. As Walzer says of this side of the argument:

> "How can any group of people be strangers to one another when each member of the group is born with parents and when these parents have friends, relatives, neighbours, comrades at work, co-religionists, and fellow citizens - connections, in fact, which are not so much chosen as passed on and inherited." (Walzer, 1990, p9)

However, they also appear to argue that liberalism tells the truth about us. It reflects the isolation of people from themselves, from others and from their history. We have become, in effect, the theory. The danger is that we will be left with no common language or culture from which a shared politics or morality can be gleaned. If it does tell the truth, however, then liberalism is the true contextualist theory. We will have to put up with the fact that liberal institutions are all that

is now possible.

If, on the other hand, liberal society and its associative theories and institutions disguise our true social nature, then it appears that communitarianism has been with us all the time. All we need to do is to sweep away the lies that we have been telling ourselves. However, no one really appears to be arguing that we are living in a communitarian society, otherwise what is the problem? Neither does the possibility of living a lie appear to be problematic for communitarians. For MacIntyre (1981), for instance, we need unifying myths in order to see ourselves as a part of a social body at all. If all we are is the stories that we tell about ourselves then we cannot appeal to some deeper ontological truth that lies beneath these narratives (Sher, 1989).

Communitarianism must be able to deal with this contradiction if it to be endorsed as a legitimate critique of liberal institutions and of liberal theory.

3.4 Communitarianism as Undesirable

Finally, liberals accuse communitarians of supporting a theory of community which is undesirable. Buchanan (1989), for instance, argues that there are three ways in which we can argue in support of the community. Firstly, we could argue that community, for many reasons, is an important human good. Secondly, we could argue that participation in the political community is essential for the good life. Thirdly, we could argue that communal participation in the highest political organisation is necessary. He argues that the first two can be

supported by liberals.

Nobody, in the first argument, could deny that for people to form communal attachments and cooperate with each other is something desirable. Liberals do not argue that people should be isolated from each other, just that a desirable community is one which is the outcome of voluntary associations and not one which is forced. Freedom of choice is therefore prior to community. It is a necessary condition for communities to exist.

The second argument simply appeals for more democracy. To be able to have a voice in the political process and in the developments that effect us is inherent in the language of political rights (Turner, 1986). There is therefore no conflict here between communitarianism and liberalism.

The third, however, binds the practical life to that of the state. One of the important features of liberal society is that there is a clear distinction between civil society and the state, which prevents the structures of the state from subsuming social life completely. Where this distinction is blurred the danger that lurks is that of the creation of a totalitarian monster. Where people are not free from the state they are potentially subject to a form of state control which is the antithesis of the liberal freedoms based on civil liberties. For the liberal both political and civil rights need to be protected. That is, citizens must both have a voice <u>in</u> the political process and be able to have a voice <u>against</u> its formal authority which is the state. Buchanan argues that communitarians often slide from arguing for the first two

arguments into arguing for the third. In other words they appear to defend the kind of total communities which, he says, destroy the spontaneous communities based on voluntary associations, which are indeed valuable.

Liberals also criticize the notion of participation which appears to be inherent in communitarian theory. MacIntyre often bemoans the loss of a shared myth which creates the basis for a unifying framework. The modern crisis could, indeed, be seen as stemming from a loss of a locus of truth which was lost once Christianity was no longer central to people's lives (Connolly, 1988). For MacIntyre, in particular, the "myth" which creates the unifying framework is what is important. It is this which creates the basis for our identity and our rationality. Although MacIntyre admits to admiring the Thomist Christian framework above others, it does not appear to matter to him what the framework is so long as it gives us a clear unifying basis from which to base our collective identity and values on. That which might be thought of as participation, therefore, may not be the contribution of the member <u>to</u> the life of the community, but a belief that our participation is inherent in the communal framework itself. In other words we are all participants in our culture whether we believe ourselves to be or not - our social role being the mode of participation. The important thing for MacIntyre is that this myth is a unifying myth and that it is embedded into our social practices. We should see ourselves as embodiments of this myth.

Such a concept, if we apply it to society, cannot allow for any kind of dissent at all. Bradley, for instance, saw dissent

as a denial of one's nature - as a failure to recognise who one is:

> "We should consider what we are, and what the world is. We should learn to see that great moral fact in the world, and to reflect on the likelihood of our private "ideal" being anything more than an abstraction, which because an abstraction is all the better fitted for our heads, and all the worse fitted for actual existence." (Bradley, 1970, p200)

Such an extreme argument is not explicitly put forward by the modern communitarians, but liberals appear to suggest that the Bradley thesis is implicit in many of the communitarian arguments. Communitarianism appears to deny the very possibility of being able to stand back and criticize the predominant views of one's time. As Kateb says:

> "In effect, the communitarians ask us to give up the will to have moments of transcendence in which one tries to see one's society as from a distance or height, or in which one tries to see it as an alien or enemy does or could." (Kateb, 1989, p29)

For liberal theorists, the important thing about participation is that it does assume difference. Individuals bring to the group their individual opinions for consideration and debate by others. Outcomes and decisions are reached through the very process of resolving the individual conflicts of opinions and beliefs. Community, if it is to be at all democratic, must assume the notion of individual freedom as a <u>prior</u> condition of participation. Without this prior condition any action can be justified on the basis that it is based on the common will or good.

A related, but in other ways very different, argument, is that individual freedom presupposes the fact that one might not wish

to participate at all. Whilst the opportunities should be available for people to participate in the broad arenas of decision making that affects everybody's lives, should be available, it might be that some, or even most, people would not wish to get involved at all. Whilst community action or politics may be some people's yen, others may content themselves with other interests. It could be argued that the non-participatory nature of modern life actually releases people to do those things which they find most satisfying. The extension of participation into all areas of social life is therefore not necessarily a good thing. As Crosland argued:

> "Experience shows us that only a small minority of the population wish to participate in this way....the majority prefer to lead a full family life and to cultivate their gardens and a good thing too. We do not necessarily want a busy bustling society in which everyone is politically active and fussing around in an interfering and responsible manner and herding us all into participating groups. The threat to privacy and freedom would be intolerable." (Crosland, quoted in Plant 1974 p70)

Whereas the first argument is intended to show how the interpretation of the concept of participation in some versions of communitarianism really justifies various forms of coercion in the name of the common good, the second argument shows how the emphasis on participation is itself undesirable in that individuals may find all sorts of other activities more satisfying. Both arguments aim to show how communitarianism is, in the end, coercive and authoritarian, and therefore undesirable.

3.5 The Communitarian Rejoinder - Community as a Requirement

Needless to say, communitarians claim to be able to meet these arguments, though, I would argue, with varying degrees of success. Some versions of the communitarian thesis I believe to be subject to the criticisms that liberals outline, but it is possible to envisage a communitarianism which is both plausible and desirable. On top of this defence communitarians argue that, whilst liberals have profound difficulties in articulating a framework which can support the values which are thought to be central to liberal society, communitarianism can deliver.

The first criticism was that liberal institutions are all that is necessary to bring about the conditions which are conducive to the good life. Liberalism not only enables communities to develop but community itself is not a necessary condition for the good life. Community is therefore an irrelevance.

Communitarianism, however, can be seen as offering a more adequate notion of citizenship, which assumes a notion of community. Communitarians often argue that liberals implicitly assume a concept of community which they explicitly deny. Any social vision, and it would be difficult to think of a society which did not have one (Sandel, 1982), requires some form of community in order to sustain it. Community, for the communitarian, is therefore not an irrelevance but the kind of framework which best serves our desire to become members of society. This is not to deny the importance of unimposed communal relationships, but on the contrary to assert that these relationships are impoverished if their central importance within the social and political structures is denied.

A social conception of the self benefits society in that it enables the practical rationality of subgroups to be realisable (O'Hagan, 1990). Whereas liberalism's public debate imposes limitations as to what is relevant to the bargaining process, the placing of value on the community incorporates the deeper concerns of its membership. The practical concerns as to how we want to live are no longer peripheral to political debate, but essential to it. This argument is particularly attractive today when public institutions have been criticized for being over bureaucratic and irrelevant to peoples' lives (Willmott, 1986). There has been an increased interest in grassroots initiatives in relation to housing, health, womens' self organisation, the development of minority interests and so on (New Society, 1988). How people act and organise for themselves, and on behalf of themselves, has developed, in part, against the impersonal nature of both public institutions and the free market. Communitarianism captures a growing concern for people to be able to participate in shaping the way in which their lives are organised. The social conception of the self unites the way in which we identify ourselves as persons of a certain kind with the persons that we would like to be. As Miller says:

> "We see ourselves not merely as the inheritors of traditional ways of doing things, but as shaping our common world in line with our aspirations." (Miller 1989b p235)

Communitarianism is therefore both relevant and beneficial in that it brings into the political sphere those things which are of concern to persons as both inheritors and as active creators of this world. What is more, insofar as these have become less

of a concern in liberal societies this is impoverishing and undermines those collective decision making processes of communities themselves. The way in which health services have been traditionally organised, for instance, has denied the relevance of the collective experiences and expressed needs of communities. Liberal institutions can therefore undermine the significance and powers of existing communities.

In addition, the community does not only create a means by which essential qualities, such as rationality, can be developed and valued, but facilitates a society in which so-called non-essential goods, which nonetheless add greater richness to people's lives, can be sustained and valued. Communitarianism claims to deal with the potentially impoverishing effects that liberal society can have on peoples' lives in which only certain features of their involvement in society are valued. It is concerned with the well-being of the person, but with well-being understood as being all those things which enhance the person's enjoyment of life. As Freeden says, welfare must not only be seen as merely servicing our predominant concern with autonomy:

> "It will certainly do so. But well-being may relate to augmenting one's sense of musical appreciation, or the enjoyment of companionship. Those are important human capacities independent of their contribution to agency and autonomy." (Freeden, 1990, p490)

The problem has been that whilst liberal institutions have dealt with the individual's needs of survival they have not sought to concern themselves with these deeper concerns which communities strive to create. Communities attempt to satisfy the socially valued "needs of the soul", as Simone Weil (1986)

termed them, which liberal institutions are unable to provide and may sometimes hinder.

Community then is both relevant and desirable in that the individual's life is enriched through a socio-political framework in which her practical involvements have both value and significance.

Another defence against the liberal attack is centred on the argument that communitarianism provides firmer foundations upon which liberal values can flourish. In the first chapter I argued that liberal institutions often undermined the realisation of liberal values themselves. Communitarianism, on the other hand suggests ways in which these can become realisable and sustainable.

The communitarian form of the argument, best argued by Walzer (1983) and Taylor (1985), stresses that a society based on communitarian values is attainable, since it is built up from the society that we have already got, and not merely on a Utopian ideal which is itself based on an abstraction, detached from people's actual experience.

Most communitarian philosophers have, at some point, argued that one or more of the values which are said to be central to liberalism are in fact best understood and supported by a communitarian theory. This is because communitarianism concerns itself with the context which is all that sustains any values at all. Even critics of communitarianism have acknowledged that it points the way towards an extending and deepening of liberal values into many areas of public life. It can therefore be seen as adding to liberalism rather than replacing liberal

institutions and values altogether. As Gutmann says:

> "Although the political implications of the communitarian criticisms are conservative the constructive potential of communitarian values are not." (Gutmann, 1985, p321)

Walzer, for instance, argues that a society of equals can be attained as a possibility through our shared understanding of social goods (Walzer, 1983). We cannot begin to understand the appropriate form of the equal distribution of goods without having a prior understanding of, firstly, the social nature and importance of those goods and, secondly, how these can be organised and distributed within some shared and ideal conception of membership. The underlying political concern is therefore with the nature of the membership and the conditions which realise it. Without this contextual understanding of social goods we can never have an adequate account of equality which is not going to create faction and resentment amongst those who feel that they are structurally denied the availability of certain socially recognised goods. Egalitarianism, itself, can be can be seen as the attempt to escape the <u>conditions</u> which produce envy (Walzer 1983).[1] Without a contextual understanding of equality we disguise the

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[1] This provides us with an alternative and contextual insight into rights movements, which can be viewed as movements against shame (Kateb 1989), and the social structures which systematically shame and exclude certain groups of people in society. Such conflicts can be seen as the natural outcome such societies. The aim, therefore, is not for a society of universal human rights, but a consensual society in which certain group interests are not favoured over others. Marxists, for instance, would argue that the class struggle is the means by which such a society can be attained, class conflict being seen as the motor of history.

way in which the desire for equality is an outcome of a collective understanding of the structures of worth in society. The concept of intrinsic individual worth may seem insufficient to the "down and out" under Waterloo Bridge whose lack of worth is a reminder of the hierarchy in a society in which economic individualism is the means of distributing goods that are valued by its membership.

Autonomy too, it is argued by some communitarians, cannot make sense without a prior understanding of the nature of the social context. Marxists, some of whom can be seen as representing a certain form of communitarianism, have argued that autonomy is not something which individuals possess in themselves but something which is a condition of certain kinds of society. There is no such thing as the autonomous individual who cannot live freely with others in society, but as Marcuse argued:

> "...the subject of this autonomy is never the contingent, private individual as that which he actually is or happens to be; it is rather the individual as a human being who is capable of being free with others." (Marcuse, 1969, p85)

Barber, also a communitarian who is by no means a Marxist, argued that before we can begin to speak of autonomy we must address the democratic institutions which create autonomous individuals:

> "Autonomy is not the condition of democracy, democracy is the condition of autonomy." (Barber, 1984, p.xv)

Therefore, liberalism may have much to learn from communitarians about how to defend what could be seen as the triumph of liberal thought - the sovereignty of the individual.

The problem with the range of liberal arguments to defend the autonomous individual is not the value of autonomy itself, but a failure to recognise the institutional foundations which are capable of creating and sustaining these values. In associating autonomy with independence, for instance from other people or institutions, liberalism does not capture the way in which needs are discovered and action becomes possible through the social and interpersonal relationships that we have. For instance, the expressed need for residential care (when that happens) need not be an indication of lack of autonomy, but may be the context where the individual receiving care feels more in control of the life that she has. The Independent Living Movement, for people with disabilities, has been criticised for ignoring those resources which, although they may not help people become independent, allow people to make use of the material and social help that is available to them (Williams 1983).

There are two aspects concerning the relationship between persons and institutions. The first, which was argued by Charles Taylor (1985b), is that institutions exist because they support something which we consider as worthy in modern life. Autonomy is not an empty concept of choice. When we speak of autonomy we are really asserting that we value certain capacities which can only be grounded in the social institutions that support them. We need, therefore, a prior notion of worth as well as of obligation (to belong to society which already provides those institutions which sustain those things that we value in life) to underline those goods which enhance our autonomy. Freedom, argues Taylor, requires an understanding of

the self and the ways in which autonomy is possible:

> "...our identity is always partly defined in conversations with others or through the common understanding which underlies the practices of our society." (Taylor, 1985b, p209)

So:

> "Freedom is no longer just the absence of external obstacles tout court, but the absence of external obstacles to significant action, to what is important to man." (Taylor, 1985e, p218)

The second aspect concerns the structure of institutions and associations themselves. Although we involve ourselves in a multiplicity of given and chosen roles, which do give meaning to our lives, these are often in themselves roles to which we submit ourselves rather than roles in which we fully participate and in which we find intrinsic value. Where these associations are themselves based on the shared values inherent in the concept of community, they can liberate the person within the associations to which she has chosen to commit herself or in which she finds herself. Raymond Plant (1974), for instance, suggests ways in which public housing could be improved by the formation of tenants' associations where people could become involved in the actual running and life of the estates. Autonomy is not, therefore, merely the enactment of choice but what the context provides in terms of acting autonomously.

To conclude, the liberal view is that a concept of community is unnecessary, since liberal institutions already provide the grounds for sustaining both cooperation and those values considered important within liberal society. But we have

already shown, in the first chapter, that only a minimal degree of liberal values themselves can in fact be supported in liberal society. I have argued, in this chapter, that, firstly, a concept of community can be seen as necessary in order that we can ensure the sustaining of any collective values - even liberal ones. This suggests that some form of community is at least implicit in societies of all kinds. Secondly, an explicit concept of community is necessary as a condition of the good life (understood as that form of life which is worthy of choice) if the practical rationalities and hopes of persons in all their associations and commitments are to be incorporated into the fabric of social and political life.

3.6 Communitarianism as Coherent

Perhaps a more serious charge, philosophically speaking, is that communitarianism rests on a contradiction and is therefore incoherent. Liberalism either tells the truth or fabricates the nature of our true selves. Communitarianism appears to want it both ways. Either we are the disjointed, atomised, rootless individuals that liberal theory suggests or our identities are truly grounded in the social relations of which we are a part - a fact that liberal society and liberal theory appears to deny. If liberalism is telling the truth, then liberal forms of political justice and liberal forms of political institutions are probably the best means by which we can deal with modern society. However if liberalism is telling lies then we have to say that the form in which society is today is irrelevant to our true nature. This appears to support, however, a non-

historical and acontextual argument for the self of the kind which communitarianism claims not to endorse.

What liberals have therefore claimed is that liberalism is all that we have. To replace liberal institutions with anything else would not only to be tearing away at a central cultural, political and moral part of our history, but to replace it with something that is totally alien to modern society.

One way in which we can attempt to resolve this is to note two ways in which communitarians claim that we are social beings. The first relates to what communitarians say are our "true selves" the second relates to what is said about the nature of the true self. If communitarianism is to extricate itself from the contradiction the liberal critics level against it, it must show that these are in some way different. It must show that societies can live lies which are somehow destructive of their social nature.

The first way in which we are social is the fact that we do relate to others. We could never be a society of complete strangers because without others we could never have a sense of who we are and our relationship to the world around us. We need others, not only for survival (on our own it is doubtful that we could fulfil all those tasks that are necessary to feed, clothe and shelter ourselves), nor even instrumentally to enable us to fulfil our projects more efficiently. We need others in order to be persons at all.

There is no such thing as a personal identity which is not a social identity. Our identity is also therefore derived from the particular relations that we have. The fact that I am a

parent, a child, a member of a trade union, a resident of a particular town all tell different stories about me which are significant to me and are a part of my history. It is what makes me, me.

The first sense in which we are social, therefore, is that we necessarily relate to others, and our identity is located through our specific interpersonal and social relations.

The second way in which we are social refers to the way in which we relate to the culture of ideas, beliefs and institutions of our day. We rely on these to give shape to our lives. They order the social space around us and indicate the range of meanings that my relations to others can have for me. They indicate ways in which we see ourselves as relating historically. The social institutions are the landmarks of the dominant story or ideology. They express what is common about our history and are the means by which social life is actually organized.

However these dominant cultural institutions and symbols can have very different meanings to different groups of people. There are therefore a range of sub-histories which still, non-the-less are part of the same institutional history.

It is also true to say that there are oppositional histories as well as sub-histories, though these are not necessarily mutually exclusive. They still relate to the dominant story or history, but are stories of oppression rather than freedom. Although liberalism and its capitalist economic expression could be seen as the dominant or ruling ideology (an ideology which secures social relations in such a way that certain forms of

power and privilege are seen as natural), there exist oppositional consciousnesses which, although part of the pre-existing consciousness, fight against its oppressive implications. In a sense it could be seen as the fight to have control over the meaning of institutions, as well as the fight to gain control over modes of production. Working-class consciousness is a history of struggle against the terms of the dominant ideology and, as such, is constantly modifying the latter. However, working class consciousness is also a sub-history, in that it has its own rules, its own stories, its own ways of doing things[2]. To say that one is a part of "society" does not mean to say that it is monolithic or static in it structure. Society embodies many conflicts, struggles and movements of people attempting to change what they see as oppressive features of our social existence.

Of course the two ways of being social are not mutually exclusive. My relations with others at work are very much a part of my social identity, but the way in which I perceive my relations to them are dictated by the kind of society that I live in. The problem with liberalism is that it denies the significance of my relations to my colleagues and therefore demeans my potential relations to them.

What communitarians appear to do is to argue for an ideal

[2] The interesting point here is that the oppositional history exists, in effect, to wipe out the existence of the sub-history. Whereas much good is claimed on behalf of working class culture especially in terms of the solidarity of its members and the ways in which they appear to help each other out, working class consciousness is also the consciousness of its oppression. Class struggle exists as a means of abolishing the nature of its actual existence.

union between the two senses of the term "social". We need to live in a society which realises the full significance of our actual relations with others. We do, in fact need a better story, a better ideology. How this is done, through building on and improving existing institutions or through revolution, is another question which we will tackle in later chapters. The possibility of this is evident because of the tension that does exist between the two. The fact that we do relate to other and constantly fight against sterile explanations which deny our collective experiences, shows how the sub-histories and oppositional histories of experience cannot be totally subsumed.

Perhaps the most dramatic modern symbol of this disparity of the two meanings of social is the non-member, who is the non-citizen in the sense of being a complete outsider.[3] She is social in that she is an expression of our modern economic system and the culture of ideas which legitimates it. Her sets of meaning relate to the actual situation that she is in. However, she has been denied the status of the first meaning of social. She has been denied the benefit of social relationships at all. Her society has robbed her of any vestige of sociability, by denying her membership of that society.

There have always been non-members in this sense. Sometimes this is done explicitly, as a punishment for the individual and

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[3] We should really distinguish between being a non-member and an outsider since, if we follow Raymond Williams' categorization, to be a member is a rare and privileged state. I use "member" here to indicate some kind of relationship to economic and social structures, on the one hand (everyone has some kind of relationship to the social and economic system) and socially acceptable interpersonal relationships, on the other.

as an indication to the rest of society as to what goes beyond the bounds of acceptability. The criminal system consists of rules setting out the terms by which non-membership is allocated. Historically, there have also implicit ways in which there have been non-members. The mad-person, as will be seen in the second part of this thesis, is the archetypal stranger. She is someone who, by definition, has been excluded from being a member of what are considered to be "normal" informal social relationships.

The warning of the communitarians is that the non-member is a social creation, and that we have to find ways of preventing the non-member becoming the norm. They argue they we should avoid becoming a society of strangers.

To sum up, communitarianism can escape the charge of incoherence when it argues that liberal society organizes itself in such a way that it denies or hinders the possibility of the potential richness of social relationships. Liberal society, however has constantly to deal with the creation of its own structures and the expressions of discontent that it produces, not only in the realm of politics but also in the realm of literature and the arts. Liberal theory is therefore lacking. It partly tells the story of what we have become, but liberal society itself is more of a battleground against the structures that have been created by it.

By showing liberal theory and therefore liberal society to be insufficient or lacking, I believe communitarianism can be shown to be consistent. Communitarians can argue that in some senses liberal theory tells the truth about society (its institutions

often systematically alienate people from the social relationships that they could enjoy together) and in some senses tells lies (when it pretends that it is what is left of our common practices which is of central importance to our lives).

3.7 Communitarianism as Desirable

The third argument against communitarianism is that it is undesirable since it is incompatible with freedom, pluralism and social justice. The very conception of the good life assumes that certain ways of life are superior to others, which may conflict with the beliefs that particular individuals hold. What is more, communitarianism is a theory about the good life which applies to the whole of society and not merely to different aspects of it. What would result is not autonomy but tyranny (Buchanan, 1989).

However, for many communitarians, this assumes a theory of the good which is not being defended. In fact, as opposed to being paternalistic and imposing one form of the good society on others, communitarians defend a form of pluralism which is inherent in the understanding of the person.

Walzer, for instance, defends a form of pluralism in which no one person has a monopoly of social goods. Society itself does not create a set number of goods that are valued by all, but a plurality of goods which can be enjoyed for their own sake. The task is to develop a social framework in which these goods can be enjoyed but in which one person cannot benefit from one set of goods by virtue of having another social good which is

unrelated to the first (Walzer, 1983). Bellah et al (1988) similarly defend a communitarian version of pluralism as opposed to the popular individualistic notion of life style which pervades the modern vocabulary of liberal pluralism:

> "Whereas community attempts to be an inclusive whole celebrating the interdependence of public and private life and of the different callings of all, lifestyle is fundamentally segmental and celebrates the narcissism of similarity." (Bellah et al., 1985, p78)

As well as giving grounds for those values which are normally associated with more individualistic forms of liberalism, they often argue that a communitarian framework is essential to supporting those goods which are inherent in welfare liberalism. Without a concept of membership, argues Walzer, we can have no reason to suppose that officials and politicians will be at all concerned with the well-being of society's members. The notion of membership itself produces a sphere of concern which generates structures of the creation and distribution of socially acknowledged goods. Grounded in the conditions of membership is the proviso that goods which are essential for the well-being of the community cannot be distributed at the whim of private choices of individuals, since this is a public matter and therefore a social responsibility.

Liberals, on the other hand, have a problem in reconciling the notion of public welfare with their intrinsic concern for the individual as a being capable of formulating her own life-plans in accordance with her own conception of the good life. We have already said that there is a tension between those liberals who stress that any kind of public provision impedes individual

choice and the welfare liberals who stress that certain goods are needed by individuals in order that they may have an equal opportunity to act in accordance with their with their preferences. With regard to present public policy, particularly in the health and educational services, we are witnessing an emphasis away from a service based on the latter view, to one which is based on the former. Communitarians are critical of both.

Whereas you could say that the public provision of services implies a notion of membership, it is a limited conception since it depends on a notion of actual need which is abstract and unrelated to the experiences of people themselves. Health services, in particular, have been criticised for detaching themselves from the life of the community which could inform them, more adequately, of the needs of their patients (whose histories are tied up with the communities in which they live). There has also been an accusation that health services have been insensitive to peoples' real concerns, as they see them, depriving them of the possibility of participating in the development and nature of their health services.

However, instead of attempting to provide a service which could be more democratic and participative and still available to all, because of the need to reduce costs and the underlying assumption that it is the individual's needs alone that inform our notion of how health and educational services should be organised, the trend is towards a service in which the notion of common goods is virtually lost. The democratic justification is that it is based on the preferences and demands of individuals

and not on some prior notion as to what our health needs are. With that comes the view that health, and what education one wishes one's children to have, are ultimately the responsibility of the individual, and not of the state. If someone smokes, it is they who should take responsibility for the consequences. It is also up to the parents to shop around for the best school for their children, even if it means paying a bit extra for what one wants. Since the welfare state was not grounded in an explicit notion of membership (as opposed to a philosophy of social and economic rights), the natural progression was to consumer-based services.

Consumer-based services will not satisfy the communitarian, however, since they make no concessions to the context through which a relevant concept of need could be ascertained. Where health and welfare services are developed in accordance with consumer demand (which is an indicator of individual preference, or at least the preferences of those who can articulate them), this does not take into account the ignorance and the social and economic inequalities which may be built into the system. Where society already has built in structures of power and privilege which favour some over others, the health and educational services are more likely to reinforce these differences. Ill-health is not itself a guarantee that one's experienced needs will be reflected in the structure of priorities of the health care system. As health itself comes to be seen as more of an individual responsibility rather than a collective one, it is more likely that a collective intolerance will develop against those who require more services. Health could, therefore become

one more commodity which it just so happens that some people will be likely to have more of than do others, and other unfortunate people have to do without. Communitarianism, on the other hand, attempts to foster a collective sense of shared responsibility for the misfortunes that occur in life (Walzer 1983) as well as a shared concept of the ownership of those goods which are available in any given society.

It may be argued that many, if not most, defenders of individual rights would not defend a system such as the one which is portrayed above, and that where the full breadth of social, economic, political and economic rights are in force this would not happen. Liberals do not necessarily defend a society which merely protects self-interest.

However, against this it could be argued that rights can only defend a minimal conception of what is in the public good, since although we recognise that some access to health care is necessary, the extent to which these are common goods which are available to all will also be in conflict with the belief that they are, in fact, individual concerns which have nothing to do with the common life of society as a whole.

Social justice too, said to be a hallmark of liberal society, has been claimed by some communitarians as being primarily protected by them (although there are notable exceptions[4]).

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[4] Sandel (1982), for instance, has argued that a society in which justice is primary is not necessarily a superior form of society to one in which it is not. A family, for instance, displays many features of mutual affection, generosity and love which would be lost through an arrangement where by goods were distributed in full accordance with the demands for fair shares. For Sandel, it is ludicrous to say that the loving family is less moral than a social group in which the principle of justice

Justice, for communitarians, is concerned with generating certain outcomes (Miller, 1989b) grounded in the very terms of the membership of society (Walzer, 1983). For those only concerned with individual rights the notion of social rights is anathema: individuals may claim rights against any notion of the common good. However, a society in which no social goods could be guaranteed to anyone would be a society which systematically excluded certain people from the social and material wealth of that society. A communitarian, on the other hand, can argue that those goods which are created by its being a certain kind of society are the entitlements of that society as a whole (Marshall, 1964 [5]). We must therefore support those public

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predominates. Simone Weil has argued much in the same vein, and believed that when justice, specifically in the form of rights, arises in families, that what we are witnessing is a degeneration of the mutual love that we have come to expect. She wrote:

> "The good is the only source of the sacred. There is nothing sacred except the good and what pertains to it.
>
> This profound and childlike expectation of the good in our heart is not what is involved when we agitate for our rights. The motive which prompts a little boy to watch jealously to see if his brother has a slightly larger piece of cake arises from a much more superficial level of the soul." (Weil, 1986, p.72)

However, against this view it could be argued that while this is true of small intimate groups such as the family, it is not an appropriate condition of society. Where the ties of mutual affection do not exist and yet obvious inequalities and injustices occur, the demand for rights may be the only fitting response.

[5] Marshall, it must be stressed, believed that the demand for social and economic rights must be seen in terms of the development of a concept of citizenship. Social and economic rights grew out of the belief that all citizens were entitled to a share in the social and economic heritage of that society since the goods of such a heritage are not the possession of one person or one group of people. He believed that the demand for

institutions which ensure the creation and protection of those goods (Taylor, 1985b).

Walzer has argued that the notion of membership of a community in itself presupposes certain conditions which ensures equal justice for all citizens. This is because the members themselves have equal control over how those socially valued goods which are produced through its internal life are distributed. He says:

> "...the principle of political justice is this: that the process of self determination through which a democratic state shapes its internal life, must be open, and equally open, to all those men and women who live within its territory, work in the local economy, and are subject to local law." (Walzer, 1983, p60)

So it can be argued that communitarianism can support a principle of justice. The concept of membership does allow it to develop principles of fairness which are disinterested, in that they do not forward the interests of any particular group in society above the interests of any other person or group, but neither are they abstract, in that they are grounded in the actual terms of the membership. The problem with liberal theory

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social and economic rights, based on a conception of common citizenship, would minimise class conflict and the potentially vast social inequalities which could occur in an unfettered capitalist state. However, Marshall underestimated the extent to which social and economic rights could be forfeited when the security of the capitalist system, and the interests of those who benefitted from it most, was threatened (Barbarlet, 1987). For instance, whereas there was an economic interest for western capitalist countries to provide health services and social security systems in order to ensure a healthy and compliant workforce, today the increasing numbers of dependents has meant that the welfare service places a disproportionate burden on the economy. It is the continuance of those social and economic rights, which have been gained, which are more at risk than the capitalist system which is no longer able to grant them.

is that in assuming that absolute and universal principles can be developed without reference to the social context, it has built-in biases which will automatically favour the beneficiaries of that society. In championing the sovereign individual, a liberal theory of justice favours systems which support distinct individuals as opposed to members of society. It cannot challenge (although admittedly Rawls (1985) attempted to deal with this problem) the context which may systematically favour some groups of individuals over others.

Communitarians therefore can answer the charge by liberals that the implications of communitarianism are undesirable in that they dispose of the concepts, and therefore the realisation, of social justice, freedom and pluralism. Communitarians answer that, on the contrary, it is only by looking at the terms of one's attachment to a particular society that we can begin to discern appropriate concepts of freedom, pluralism and justice and ways of obtaining them.

3.8 Conclusion

All that we can conclude from the defence of communitarianism is that there is a legitimate case to be made. We have indicated that some forms of communitarianism are vulnerable to the liberal arguments made against them. This is partly because the communitarian critique is not a single thesis but a body of theories which are united only in so far as they attack liberalism's individualistic assumptions and implications, and hold that the development of some form of adherence to the community in our political and moral language and institutions

would be desirable.

However communitarians are right to argue that a critique of liberalism is necessary because there are certain things that liberalism cannot deliver. At a time when the notion of community has become more central to social policy initiative liberalism fails to deliver a vision of the community which has value in itself. It can perhaps indicate what people might need should services be directed to the spaces in which people live, but it does not have a theory of community which can deal with transforming those spaces into places where people feel they belong. Communities are places where deeper needs are satisfied and it seems to me that much more work has to be done on community life as such if community care is going to be more than either a cost cutting exercise or simply a more small scale version of the institutional and professionally based care that we have been used to.

Communitarianism concerns itself with the practical involvements that people have as well as the significance of people's lived experiences. Communitarianism does have a role to play, therefore, in attempting to find ways in which people's expressed needs are satisfied within the organised structures of community and the wider political arena.

Although we must not dismiss the liberal fears concerning the totalitarian consequences of communitarianism it appears that some version of communitarianism could actually do the opposite and strengthen the powers of people to shape their own lives. Of course we need to find the right form of community that will allow us to do this. One that is authoritative, yet

participative, one that encourages a feeling of belonging yet which does not create outcasts in the process.

The main question now, therefore, is which community? What do we mean by "community" and how do we know when the community in which we live is, in fact, good? One problem with communitarians is that it is unclear which form of community they would actually endorse (Etzioni, 1990). It is often assumed to be an automatic good.

A communitarian critique cannot be sustained without looking at the variety of contradictions that are inherent in the concept of community itself. Sometimes community appears to be conservative, sometimes creative. Sometimes it appears to be exclusive, sometimes stressing the inclusiveness of its nature. Sometime it stresses its authority, sometimes its participative nature. These contradictions have to be answered by attending to the tensions within the concept of community itself.

In the next chapter I will look at these tensions, seeing them not as contradictions but as frustratingly necessary aspects of all community life. What I shall argue is that communities themselves are in danger of destroying themselves when they fail to acknowledge the significance of one side or other of these tensions. It is the interplay of these tensions which make communities necessarily active and dynamic and not the static and absolute constructs that communitarians themselves often criticize.

CHAPTER FOUR - PROBLEMATIC TENSIONS IN THE CONCEPT OF COMMUNITY

Into my heart an air that kills
From yon far country blows:
What are those blue remembered hills,
What spires, what farms are those?

That is the land of lost content,
I see it shining plain,
The happy highways where I went
And cannot come again.
(A.E. Housman)

4.1 Introduction

The intention in this chapter is to look more closely at the concept of community in order to develop a communitarian theory which will go some way to satisfy the critics. One of the problems associated with communitarianism is that its supporters appear to operate with different assumptions about the nature of community, even though they appear united in arguing that a concept of community ought to be incorporated into our moral and political language and institutions.

The project is problematic, not least because the concept appears inherently ideological (Plant, 1974) and, it has been argued, is essentially contested (Gallie, 1956). There appear to be many different ideas as to what the community is. One notion may appear to embody a range of ideas and values which are completely at odds with another. Communitarians on the political left, for example, argue that any plausible concept of community must embody the idea of equality as one of its primary characteristics. However there have been others, such as the philosophers Oakeshott (1966) and Bradley (1970), for whom the functional coherence of the community, which may necessarily be

hierarchical, is primary. If the concept of community is supposed to enable us to understand something about the notion of the good life then we first have to have some kind of agreement as to what we mean by community and what social conditions ought to prevail in order to facilitate its existence.

The traditions of debate on community have also been marked by different approaches. Amongst British philosophers and sociologists, for instance, the emphasis has been on the ideal, rural community which has been lost through urbanisation and industrialisation. It is typified as a looking back and a longing for the values of a bygone era (Plant, 1974). This is also typified in the works of literary critics such as Eliot and Leavis as well as in a vast amount of literature itself.[1]

There has tended to be a different approach in German philosophy. This has been to develop a blue-print for the ideal community, often using the Greek Polis as its theoretical and ideal basis. For philosophers such as Hegel, right through to Ernst Bloch (whose ideas recently enjoyed a resurgence of interest), the ideal community exists as a distinct possibility - as the natural completion of human nature and history. Karl Marx could also be placed in this tradition in that the good life, inherent in communist society, is seen as the completion

[1] Such an approach was also inherent in 19th century sociology, especially in Germany. Where old forms of social organisation appeared to be breaking up completely, sociology concerned itself with the new forms of social solidarity that could develop. Both Tonnies (1955) and Durkheim (1933) are figureheads in the sociological tradition which saw the old forms of community as belonging to a rural age which could not exist any more.

of history.

Apart from the different ways in which the concept of community has been used in Western thought it appears to carry a range of different meanings. The sociologist Hillery (1955), for example, found over 90 different meanings of the term. He concluded that the only thing that was common about them was that they were about people.

The concept of community cannot be seen as purely descriptive. It appears to have normative value too because, despite the cynicism with which it is met in political theory, it expresses something in human relationships which is valuable (A. Cohen, 1987; Plant, 1974; Williams R., 1976). As anthropologists have noted, it is a "hooray" word, rather that a "boo" word such as "totalitarianism" or "dirt", and as Raymond Williams pointed out:

> "**Community** can be the warmly persuasive word to describe an existing set of relationships, or the warmly persuasive word to describe an alternative set of relationships. What is most important, perhaps, is that unlike all other terms of social organization (state, nation, society, etc.) it seems never to be used unfavourably, and never to be given any positive opposing or distinguishing term." (Williams R., 1976, p66)

We know that totalitarianism is an expression of something evil, even if we may disagree as to what state of human affairs could be described as totalitarian. Communitarians are often anxious to distinguish between those political ideas which form the basis of a community and those which form the basis of totalitarianism (e.g. Nisbet, 1970), whilst many liberal critics of communitarianism would argue that once the ideas of community

become the basis of a wider political theory then what we have is not community but totalitarianism (Buchanan, 1989). Plainly "community" and "totalitarianism" mean different things to those who write and talk about them, but they are also used "adjectivally" as referring to states of affairs which are either good or evil. We therefore need to know what it is about community which makes it an expression of something good.

The concept of community, therefore, refers to possible states of affairs. If the term is not purely descriptive, neither is it purely normative. To say that one lives in a community is to say something about the nature of the social relationships and the conditions under which they prevail as well as stating a belief that there is something valuable about such relationships.

Community is a term which at once expresses a relationship and indicates that that relationship is a valued one. It suggests, at the same time, both what "is" and what "ought to be". Its nature is found in the actual striving for (or achievement of) human fulfilment. However, in order to achieve certain goals of fulfilment, it must satisfy certain conditions which are external to it, since there will be some kinds of social organisation in which these internal objectives are unobtainable. A communitarian critique must therefore demonstrate why certain societies diminish the possibilities for common fulfilment.[2] What kind of society fosters community is

[2] However, as we have said before, what concerns the liberal critics of communitarianism is the way in which the "good" is seen as prior to the goods of individual choosing (Buchanan 1989). The arguments concerning this have been documented in

something I try to ascertain throughout this thesis but it is clear that there are certain conditions which have to be met if we can say that we live in a communitarian society.

To begin with there must be some shared notion of the good life. This is not to say that there has to be a fully worked conception of what the good life must look like. It is to say that a community can be said to exist if the individuals within it fully identify with its objectives. If a society can be said to be communitarian, there must be a sense that all individuals are members of that society. I would go on to argue that a concept of membership where the communitarian society is concerned requires that members are both the authors and subjects of the society to which they belong. We shall deal with the question of membership later on.

Secondly, the institutions in a communitarian society will be ones which will promote the ideals of that society. These institutions will be of an essentially public type, promoting and fostering the public goods of that society. An example of a contemporary institution which, until recently, could play this role is the National Health Service (NHS). It both promoted the idea that health was a public good and fostered a belief in a collective responsibility for the welfare of others. A communitarian critique of the NHS (to be disentangled from other criticisms concerning public cost) is that it has been too

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earlier chapters. What it does indicate is the challenge to articulate what we mean by the community which is implied by the communitarian critique.

paternalistic. It has ignored the expressed needs of many client groups, and where it has not ignored them, it has tended to regard them as less important than the views of professionals, especially doctors.

Finally, in a communitarian society the involvement of its members must be voluntary. However this stipulation must be seen in the context of the first condition, that is that members identify with and are able to participate in the objectives of that society. In other words there is already the assumption, which communitarians have to justify, that should such a society exist there will be an inherent commitment of the membership to be involved.

This is one area in which the liberal critics are surely justified in declaring caution. Community suggests a wide range of associations, from the rural community to the black ghetto; from the religious retreat to the trade union. When applied to political systems it also, allegedly, forms the conceptual basis for divergent political philosophies such as Communism and Fascism.

If communitarianism, however, can accept that all these forms of association can be thought of as communities, then many of the liberal criticisms are valid. Surely many of the old feudal forms of community, as well as the later attempts at forming national communities, existed at the expense of the kind of individual freedoms and the creation of the plurality of interests and beliefs that many of us enjoy today. For the communitarian argument to have force, therefore, it must satisfy the concerns for the protection of freedom and pluralism in many

of the senses that we have come to know it. We must therefore defend a concept of community which is clearly different from these oppressive forms of association and organisation.

However, the task is fraught with obstacles, not least because there appear to be a number of tensions within the concept of community which, though necessary, pull the concept in different directions. Many of the problems within communitarian thought have arisen because they have failed to recognise the strain that exists between certain aspects of community. What I shall argue is that these tensions must be embraced.

4.2 Social Order and Social Change

The first problem arises out of the belief that individuals must both be seen in terms of their context and yet as necessarily resistant, because we live in an alienated and often oppressive society, to the contexts in which they are placed. This raises problems as to what we are actually looking at when we encounter a community. In order to understand a community do we look to the institutional structures which exist or to the expressions of the members themselves, who may be resistant to those structures? Which do we look to - the form or structure of that community or the expressed beliefs and actions of the members themselves? It is an important conceptual problem which may have practical implications regarding which social forces communitarians champion. Do they hold the belief that to preserve the structures that exist is the most appropriate means of maintaining a sense of community or do they champion the voices of discontent as the basis for a more authentic basis of

community?

Unger (1987) argues that problems always arise when people attempt to describe their social frameworks, since there are always ways in which people are attempting to challenge and break out of the structures of which they are a part, which suggests that people cannot be fully understood in terms of them. To look only at the structural forms of community as the basis upon which to understand communities means that we are already seeing persons as passive receptors of culture (Cohen, 1987), with no means by which they can actively create new forms of society.

However, if we only look to the internal meanings of community then one is left with the problem of how one can make sense of those meanings. In what interpretative framework can we set them? As Unger noticed, those social theories which deny the determining factor of social frameworks often slip in assumed "givens" about the nature of human societies which, in fact, assume ways in which social "facts" control social behaviour and interpretations.

Etzioni (1989) complains about communitarians, saying that the fact that agents cannot be seen in isolation from the social contexts which give their actors meaning is something that sociologists have been aware of for some time and that philosophers are, in fact, rather late to notice. He refers to the well-worn "human arch" theory first articulated by Talcott Parsons:

> "The human arch theory is thus comprised partly of community and partly of the individuals situated within the arch."

(Etzioni, 1989, p173)

However the "human arch" theory appears inadequate, since human communities are not static states of affairs or objects. Whereas the structure of the arch and the nature of the bricks appear to be in perfect harmony, within communities people throughout history appear to be constantly breaking out of both the material forms and the forms of consciousness which are imposed upon them.

An acceptable concept of community must take into account both the ways in which contexts do create frameworks for actions and beliefs and the way in which frameworks are constantly challenged, interpreted and transformed. It is possible to understand this process if one accepts that frameworks embrace conflicts within themselves. For Marxists, for instance, capitalism must inevitably be challenged because it does of itself create class conflict. The women's movement too, can be seen as emerging from the realisation that women had systematically been excluded from practically all the civil and political rights that men had enjoyed.

A communitarian analysis of social change must also accept that there are various kinds of conflict which have different implications for the relationship between the form of that society or community and the actions and beliefs of its members. Some conflicts arise in ways which reinforce the pre-existing framework. In order that a community or any social system can maintain its structural coherence it may concede changes in order that it can adapt to changing circumstances. Communitarians do not necessarily argue that change as such is

destructive of community. On the contrary change and a degree of conflict are often necessary in order for that community to survive at all.

Other conflicts could be seen as arising from the desire to reform the community without actually changing its essential nature. The acceptance of women as having equal rights as citizens could be seen as such a change. It challenges the boundaries of membership and accepts new categories of people to be fully included as members, but it does not threaten to radically alter the cohesiveness of the community itself.

Revolution, on the other hand, threatens to challenge the existing framework of the community at its core. It appears to demand a complete break from the past, and a transformation into something else. On the face of it it would appear that whilst communitarians can allow for the first two kinds of conflicts as part and parcel of a community's survival they can never endorse a theory of revolution as a means to protect or create a sense of community. However, not only is it a matter of interpretation as to whether one sees certain social changes as contained, reforming or revolutionary, but communitarians have different ideas concerning the worthiness of different forms of conflict and change.

In some ways the concept of community appears to be intrinsically conservative, since it emphasises identity as being historically rooted. Social identity is discovered through the order that the established community gives us. There are many communitarians who affirm this view. The sociologist Robert Nisbet (1970), for example, argued that one

must be cautious with arguments for social change in that our sense of self, and therefore our autonomy, is deeply embedded in our past. Revolutions are therefore the worst kind of changes possible since they require a complete obliteration of the past and therefore any source of cultural identity. It is in recovering a sense of social order, rather than in social change, that we restore a sense of purpose within the functional whole of our associations.

However, for Nisbet the kind of order that is necessary is also important. He argued that political philosophers such as Locke and Hobbes, were concerned with the establishment of order in a world which had been thrown into a state of intellectual, social and political turmoil (also Shapiro, 1986), but in such a way that it did away with the informal structures of association which are central to our sense of belonging and purpose. Hence the institutions of the modern state have replaced the forms of association which could see us as members of society. He says of the Leviathan:

> "However extreme the Leviathan may be, however savage its rejection of pluralism, localism, sectionalism, what Hobbes always had in mind is the creation of an impersonal environment or law within which individuals may pursue rationally, their proper interests." (Nisbet, 1970, p138)

For Bradley too, the 19th century Hegelian philosopher, revolt is a form of suicide, since all that the person is is her function within the social organism. In this sense Bradley is at odds with Nisbet in that whereas Nisbet sees the modern state as misrepresenting the "real" person, Bradley saw the state as the true expression of the person's social role and therefore

identity. Individuals who refuse to recognise their station in life, whether or not they believe that they are justified in doing so, are in danger of destroying themselves:

> "The soul within him is saturated, is filled, is qualified by, it has assimilated, has got its substance, has built itself up from, it is one and the same life with the universal life, and if he turns against himself, if he thrusts it from him, he tears his own vitals, if he attacks it, he sets his own weapon against his own heart." (Bradley, 1970, p172)

Society for Bradley is marked with change and conflict, but it is a conflict which is worked out by society itself. Social actors, therefore, do not have the creative ability to influence the course of history that other communitarians would like to say is possible. What the individual must not do is detach herself from meaningful relationships within society; but she should accept her function within the dynamics of change itself. Change, for Bradley, is viewed conservatively in that it is worked out according to some dynamic of necessity. Its fate appears to be predetermined. Social actors are acting in accordance with their true social nature when they recognise their roles as particular expressions of a particular social order. The State itself, for Bradley, was the moral authority through which common aspirations could be met. Persons, therefore, have a duty to themselves and the good of society to conform with social and, in particular, state expectations.

There are other communitarians, on the other hand, who have a very different view of the relationship between social change and social order. It is possible to view social agents as, at one and the same time, agents of social change and as belonging

to a social life of culture and production (Touraine, 1985). Raymond Williams (1961), for instance rejected the argument that rebellion represented total dislocation from the past. The rebel represents one of a number of possible relationships to society and its predominant set of values. Through her positive identification with an opposing set of values the rebel is engaged in a struggle for a new way of life which is, nonetheless, historically rooted. In this sense social change can only be understood with reference to a past. The desire for change can be seen as a social tendency inherent in the dominant material and ideological structure itself (Bloch, 1986), but it is a tendency which springs from the social agents themselves and their hostility to the pre-existing social order.

Another possible communitarian argument is the teleological one, in which social change could be seen as a natural process of ideal self-fulfilment. Such an argument sees social change as fundamental to a community's disposition to be a kind of catalyst for its members' desires and aspirations. This process of improvement can be viewed with or without reference to social agents. But a view that the good life can be attained without the affirmation of the membership or of citizens is a view which liberal critics find abhorrent. It depends on an idea that there is a blue-print of the good society. It is not to be chosen but to be discovered.

However, a better argument which goes some way to satisfy the liberal critics is one which argues that the good life is created from the aspirations of the membership to create a society which can best provide for the aspirations and desires

for all its members. To call a community good, one must agree with its conception. This may include a desire to organise its public institutions in such a way that it generates greater equality. It may also involve the inclusion of new classes of people into full membership. The good community therefore is founded on the desires of its members to create the good life for all. Such a belief makes demands on our public institutions to be democratic so that social change is steered in accordance with these wishes and not monopolised or dominated on behalf of the interests of one particular class or group. After all, public institutions and attitudes form the basis of the good life.

However, such a view of how society ought to be appears by may to be utopian and unrealistic. Most communitarians, for different reasons, are highly critical of the kind of society that we live in today. Given then that we live in an imperfect society what do communitarians expect us to do?

4.3 Preservation or Transformation?

Perhaps we should first look back to Aristotle, whom communitarians claim to be one of their own. Apart from outlining his view that a person's good and the self-sufficient life are to be found in the "polis" or good society, he also gave hints as to what statesmen ought to do in an imperfect society. For Aristotle, the best way appears to be the pragmatic approach, and he gives suggestions to statesmen, including tyrants, as to how they may prevent their overthrow (since in perverted forms of society the threats of overthrow

will always be there). This is quite surprising, given Aristotle's argument that the good life is something which is natural for persons in society. One wonders how much his work was constrained by the uncertain political regime that he was living under at that time, or if, as is suggested by Sinclair (Aristotle, 1981) in his introduction to the Politics, he really feared the threat that non-citizens posed to the established order, whatever form it may take. However, he may merely have been sarcastic in these sections and at the same time trying to demonstrate how rotten states are able to preserve their power structures. Furthermore, it is a valid extension of Aristotle's own argument to maintain that persons may naturally and legitimately rebel against the prevailing system in order to create a better way of life, (whatever Aristotle himself may have thought).

We need some more helpful suggestions as to what can to be done because the idea that citizens can, or want to challenge the system is problematic. If we are constituted by our histories and are expressions of particular social contexts, then surely we are expressions of our liberal history and therefore our liberal institutions. For some communitarians this suggests either the conservative strategy of obligation to the existing state system or the ultra-conservative approach of reinforcing the so-called foundations of civil society, such as the family and the ethic of hard work and philanthropy. Where states appear too liberal and too open to new changes which threaten these foundations, then the ultra-conservative can only defend the ethic of conservativism and criticise change as it

occurs. However, this view can only be defended against a view which sees social agents themselves as playing no significant role in the creation of a future order.

It is the view that perceives social change as springing from breakdowns and conflicts within the existing order that is more plausible. It accounts for the fact that many of the impulses for social change come from the experiences of hardship of social agents within particular social frameworks. To silence these voices of discontent would be to stifle the expressions of significant voices within the framework itself. The voices of "membership" however can be defensive at times. For instance, changes in economic and social development can raise the voices of many who see that their identities are being eroded by insensitive gestures towards change and innovation. Defending existing social needs can be seen as resistances to forms of social change. It is often argued that people have to adapt to social change as though change was taking place without reference to the interplay of powers, privileges and interests of social agents themselves.

Communitarians must therefore, I argue, recognise the significance of both order and change in their criticisms of liberal society. However they must see both order and change not as abstract entities but as forms of expression of the members of communities within certain frameworks. When communitarians advocate the silencing of liberal ideas, or indeed any ideas, which are offensive to the rest of the community, they ignore the dynamic of order and change and impose the idea of the good which is so abhorrent to liberal

commentators.

Charles Taylor argues that the revolutionary critic of injustice is in a dilemma:

> "... should he break altogether with the regnant standards of distributive justice, in order to bring people up to a higher type of association, more in line with the good or absolute justice but then risk the dangers of deracination, the breakdown of civility, the destabilising effect of whatever vanguard tutelage is necessary, and the like: or should he respect the dominant culture, even at the cost of renouncing the higher good." (Taylor, 1985f, p302)

It seems to me that he should do neither but could do either. The good life is the expression is the good of its membership, and not a single or abstract "idea". There should not be the expectation that people should either put up with what exists or impose what they think is good on others.

What the communitarian can do is take one of three critical stances with regard to the good life and how it can be attained. The first is to argue that the good life has not been realised and that there is therefore an inherent right to civil disobedience. Given that the present society has not got it right with regard to the good life then we do not have a total duty to respect the strictures of the dominant culture. The right to civil disobedience is a recognition that we have not attained the good life. This is surely a stand which liberals would accept, except that they would disagree that such disobedience can be called for in the name of the attainment of the good life. Change can therefore be advocated as a way of improving society.

Secondly, it can be argued that the good life has not been

realised for all. The existence of out-groups can be pointed to as a means of indicating the systematic lack of social membership for some people in society. Change can therefore be advocated in order to broaden the membership to include certain groups in order that they may participate in, and enjoy the goods of, the good life.

Thirdly, the notion of the good life can be seen as something that requires constant modification. This view acknowledges that we live with some shared conception of the good life in mind but that we are in the constant process of modifying what that is. Change can therefore be advocated on the basis that it is needed as a part of the process of bringing about the good life.

To conclude, communitarians, if they accept that the notion of membership is central to the concept of community, must accept both the ideas of order and of change. A knowledge of where one comes from is what creates a sense of identity but it also gives rise to discontent and a collective sense of how one ought to be able to live.

4.4 Discovery, Interpretation and Invention

The first problem that we outlined as arising from the definition of community was really a cluster of issues relating to social order and social change. A second problem is the crucial one of identity and its relationship to time. When we talk about "our community" do we discover something about our relationships with others? Do we interpret what we believe to be true about the nature of our relationships? Or are we merely

inventing an ideal set of relationships which we hope will be true in the future? All can be seen as elements of what could be termed the past, present and future elements of a narrative. It could apply to the understanding of communities as well as of individual selves. I would argue, that we cannot exclude any of these elements, and that to emphasis one against another creates problems of specific kinds.

Nisbet's conservative perspective leads him to emphasise the importance of roots, and the discovery of one's identity through one's history. He warns us against totalitarian movements which offer a blue-print of a better society and the possibility of belonging to a great new world. These movements are most persuasive at times when society itself offers little in terms of belonging, which includes modern liberal societies in which the significance of the past and of tradition is undermined:

> "Such groups, in time, come to seem the very difference between membership and isolation, between hope and despair, between existence and non-existence." (Nisbet, 1970, p207)

Both MacIntyre and Sandel also appear to emphasize the importance of self-discovery through one's constituted past, rather than the re-creative capacities of the person, which they appear to associate with the tradition-denigrating trends of modern liberal individualism rather than with communitarianism. What one values and one's sense of virtue depend on who one is and where one comes from. Morality is therefore, essentially, a quest into one's past or roots, which may challenge the present common wisdom. The present and the future must, therefore, be seen in terms of what the past makes accessible to

us:

> "...an adequate sense of tradition manifests itself in a grasp of those future possibilities which the past made available to the present." (MacIntyre, 1981, p207)

However an emphasis on discovery cannot deal with the changing nature of both persons and communities. Communities, as well as persons, change according to new situations, new needs and new hopes for the future. Our understanding of the concept of community will necessarily be fixed and static if we see the self-understanding of communities as centring entirely on discovery and the protection an historically constituted identity. We need, therefore something other than the notion of discovery to grasp the nature of the community's self understanding.

For Walzer (1983) and Taylor (1985) the primary notion appears to be interpretation (Etzioni, 1990). Our moral positions cannot simply be fished out of an historical pool. Our understanding of the significance of our values as well as our past will change just as social goods change their meaning and value. The social value of goods and the moral life of the community will depend on the changing meanings and interpretations of the membership itself. We cannot discover our nature or our moral positions. We can only interpret them in the light of the range of internal meanings which are available to us.

This provides us with a different kind of task. Whereas for MacIntyre and Sandel we have been loosening the foundations and frameworks which create a sense of community, and we must now

rediscover them, for Walzer and Taylor the task is to recognise the potential in new situations. We must reinterpret new forms of association. MacIntyre and Sandal ask us to go back, whilst Walzer and Taylor appear to ask us to stay here, to reinterpret and indeed, discover the potential of, the present.

Walzer and Taylor improve on MacIntyre and Sandel in that they appear to add an extra dimension to the self-understanding of communities. They do not reject discovery, but see interpretation as enabling us to understand the changing nature of community. They see community as possible for the modern identity, and indeed only possible with the modern identity in which choice is central to our assumptive worlds, whereas MacIntyre and Sandel appear only to see communities as forms of association which have been lost, but can be recovered. For Taylor (1985b), we must purge our key normative notions of their atomistic assumptions, and reinterpret them within a common historical framework. We must recognise, for instance, that in asserting a right we are committed to a particular way of life.

David Miller (1989) appears to take a similar view. Whereas for MacIntyre the market could be seen as the antithesis of community with its emphasis on impersonal forces, Miller sees it as being, potentially, a new context for community. Whereas the market may have broken up old forms of community, it could be seen as forming new kinds of association which create new forms of social good and moral value which are collectively acknowledged. Like Taylor and Walzer, he assumes the modern identity:

"We are complex creatures needing both to

> differentiate ourselves from others and live a private life, and to align ourselves with our fellows in the public realm." (Miller, 1989b, p17)

However, both the notions of discovery and interpretation, although necessary, are not sufficient for our grasp of the self understanding or identity of communities. As we have seen in the last section the impulse of many groups of people is not just to preserve but to change the nature of their material and ideological existence. All forms of association have the desire become what is ideal for them, to become what they are not yet. The desire to invent the future is as powerful in ruling or privileged social groups as well as in oppressed groups, although the type and degree of invention will be different. For many oppressed groups, in the past as well as today, the urge is to invent new forms of society rather than to make the best of a situation which already exists. Problems arise when those forms of invention are conceived of in ways which bear no reference to the past. A community's urge to change is essentially rooted in the memory of the past. Bellah et al succinctly sum up the way in which discovery of the past (mediated, I would add, through the interpretation of the present) informs people's aspirations for the future, though I would argue that the desire for a better future pulls us, just as the memory of the past propels us:

> "The communities of memory that tie us to the past also turn us towards the future as communities of hope. They carry a context of meaning that can allow us to connect our aspirations for ourselves and those closest to us with the aspirations of a larger whole and see our efforts as being, in part,

contributions to a common good." (Bellah et al., 1985, p153)

Indeed the idea of hope (a notion which shall be looked in closer detail later) as a driving force toward a collective ideal is what allows us to become critical, and to assess the purposes of the society to which we belong. It becomes the source for the need for change itself. For Aristotle, the source of change, or the efficient cause, was desire for a particular end, but the idea of hope, as a collective political desire, has been used more recently (Bloch, 1986; Dauenhauer, 1986), to express the collective desire for common ends. For Ernst Bloch, hope exists as an essential human faculty, as an expression of the Not Yet Conscious (Levitas, 1989, p27).

In a communitarian society this desire to invent the future would not simply disappear, for this ignores the way in which the membership changes as well as the way in which needs change with the material changes in technological innovation. The identity of communities, as well as the communitarian understanding of individuals must encompass the ideas of discovery, interpretation and invention and their associative past, present and future orientations, if we are to have an adequate concept which will counter the critics.

4.5 Identity and Time

The question as to whether we discover, interpret or invent the community raises the question of the relationship between identity and time. It raises the question whether communities are nostalgic forms of association which have been lost or

utopian dreams which, for the critics at any rate, can never be achieved. Communitarians appear to value both. They appeal both to the lost good times and the good life which appears as a vision of a possible future. Other communitarians appear to see these polar time dimensions merely as aspects of our self understanding and hold that we should be more pragmatic in looking for forms of community life in the present modern world. I will argue that Eden and Utopia are both aspect of the communitarian critique and necessary aspects of community life itself.

Longings and hopes can become intertwined when the past itself appears as the blue print for the better society. William Morris (1979) is the prime example of someone who presents the ideal future in terms of a lost and pleasant past. Indeed the occasional trends towards communal living and alterative set-ups are often an attempt to recreate a community which has been denied to people by the rapid changes in industrialised life. The idea that community is something which has passed is common in western society as well as western thought. This view of the community and the nostalgic sentiments that accompany it are expressed in one of the case studies, Joe, presented by Bellah et al. Joe, an active member of the local community where he lives in Massachussets, reminisces:

> "I would like to see Suffolk get back to that type of atmosphere where people could get together, form a baseball team, go down to the park, don't need a uniform or anything like that, play ball and just have a good time. Nowadays to do that sort of thing, people demand uniforms and leagues and regulations and so forth. They don't trust each other. But this older kind of spirit is what you

need." (Bellah, et al., 1985, p10)

The way in which community is seen as a life that has been lost to us has been criticised not only because that life probably never existed, in the cosy form that it is presented (Kateb, 1989), but also because it ignores the features of community that are not fixed to a pre-modern rural form of life. Norbet Elias complains that the concept of community is tied up with old concepts of how life used to be:

> "An example of this is the pertinacity with which the community concept is associated with the folk pole of a folk-urban continuum. In terms of our own time this implies that communities are a form of group life which can only be found in "traditional" as distinct from "modern" and in agrarian as distinct from urban societies." (Elias, 1974, p.x)

The idea of this form of community is expressed in the poem by A.E. Housman at the beginning of his chapter. It is like the memories of childhood that appear happy and content, but which can never come back again.

Another problem with purely nostalgic forms of community is that they incorporate no theory of action. The idea of the person incorporates, as in those ideas which emphasis the priority of discovery as a means to self understanding, a notion of the self which is uncomplicated and passive, incapable of recreating a new future. The nostalgic communitarian, today, cannot do anything but either exist as a reluctant subject (to use Raymond Williams'terms) of modern society or as an exile, trying to recreate alternative patterns of living within the dominant culture, whilst battling against the political and economic realities within which such communities exist.

Pure communitarian utopianism appears equally impossible in that it encompasses visions of society which bear little resemblance to the forms of life which exist today. However, it differs also from religious utopias which go beyond all possible forms of earthly, human life altogether. Religious utopias go beyond history (Ricoeur, 1986), whereas communitarian utopias as well as other utopias stress a possible future.[3] As Krishan Kumar writes:

> "Religion typically has an other worldly concern; utopias interest is in the world." (Kumar, 1987, p10)

However, as many communitarians have suggested, all social theories encompass visions of an ideal future and liberalism is just the same. All social theory is to a certain extent an exaggeration of certain features of human life to present an actual world which is flawed and an ideal world which is possible (Kumar 1990). The difference with the communitarian utopia is that it represents a possible world which is concerned with the good life for all. In this sense communitarian utopias resemble socialist visions in that they are liberational visions of overcoming social structures which are systematically divisive and alienating. In a sense then, some form of utopia is necessary to inspire action. The conjunction of hope with utopia suggests the creative possibilities of a better world.

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[3] Not all religious groups simply stress the need to look beyond earthly existence. Religious movements, especially in Latin America and in Eastern Europe, have often been at the forefront in demanding, and in organising action to bring about, social and political change. Liberation Theology explicitly calls for political action in order to end oppression and to bring about a better world.

Indeed without the hope for a better world there would be no point in liberation struggles at all (Doyal and Gough, 1984).

Nonetheless what is valued by communitarians is also the significance of memory, of one's rootedness in the past, of people's lived experiences. Utopias or visions of the good life are themselves rooted in memory and experience. For utopias to be at all possible, they must be connected with what is actual. As Bloch says:

> "They obey a certain mandate, a suppressed or only just evolving tendency at the immanent social level." (Bloch, 1986, p478)

The communitarian vision, in a sense, must also be the most desirable vision and most possible social vision since it encapsulates what is most essential to the person - that is, her desire and need to live a life which is essentially free <u>with</u> others, and in which nothing is lacking. For the communitarian this can only be possible in a future world in which the community is an essential feature.

4.6 Narrative and Purpose

The above tensions in the concept of community raise another problem within communitarian theory. Do terms such as "the good life" and the "necessity of hope" suggest that we can attribute some purposive mind or mechanism at work in society, which is also inherent in our natural longing for community? Community, after all, suggests some ideal union between our individual purposes and the purposes of the wider society within which we form our attachments. This indicates that we can make sense of an individual's purposes partly by looking at the social forces

which envelop her. Does this mean that society itself has a purposive nature in which "community" represents an ideal harmony between individual and social purposes?

It appears, however, that to attribute to society a purposive nature is to apply the concept of mind where it is inappropriate. In other words, there is no such thing as "the good" which actually structures the way in which people act, think and believe. Such capacities can only be attributed to individuals.

The common response to the idea that society is an abstract phenomenon is to argue that the idea of the individual is also an abstraction (Lukes, 1971). In other words we cannot begin to make sense of the individual apart from the context in which she is embedded (Sandel, 1982). From this perspective individuals can be seen as moral expressions of a particular culture and not as individuals who are detachable from their ends, which are themselves social.

In what sense, however, can we speak of society? Can we attribute to it a mind or nature of its own and make sense of it without referring to persons at all?

Earlier in the chapter I argued that we cannot understand the concept of community exclusively in terms of its structure, or just in terms of the actors who are both created from and are creators of that framework. The mistake has often been to over-stress either the external framework or the internal meanings expressed by the agents (Cohen, 1987).

I would like to argue two things. Firstly, we cannot make sense of a distinct social mind without reference to actual

persons, as participants in its creation. But, secondly, the projects that people have cannot be separated from the wider purposes of the society in which they participate. Both a person's beliefs about their own purposes and their beliefs about the good society are connected with and are conditioned by their attachments to a vision of the good society inherent in the moral and institutional framework.

This has echoes of Wittgenstein's theory of "language games", except that it is not simply the form of the game itself which shapes our actions and beliefs, but an idea of the ideal game (MacIntyre, 1981) - ideal in its form of the "complete" or the "good". There would not be much sense in insisting on a particular way of life without there being an idea of its ideal form. We have an idea of the ideal self participating in an ideal social world in which these values have their fullest expression. It is the collective vision of the good life which shapes our beliefs and which give us a sense of moral purpose.

It is evident, however, that society is also marked with conflict about what is good as well as what is just. Some people find that the social institutions, which are largely manifestations of the ruling or dominant ideology, are sources of oppression rather than examples of the good life. The institutional framework can be seen as constraining their visions of the good life or even subverting them. For many clients of the mental health system, for instance, the asylum has been seen as a means of degradation rather than as a source of care. Similarly for many economically deprived people the entire economic and institutional framework can be seen as

systematically denying them the means to obtain the good life. This demonstrates the fragility of people's commitments to social ideals and to any dominant ideology in which its members cannot identify with, or are excluded from, socially valued goods.

However, the power of dominant ideologies to condition even those beliefs which appear to contradict them must not be underestimated. There is a sense in which the dominant institutions regulate what is perceived to be "real life". For Marx what is considered to be "real life" springs from the person's material economic existence and in her social relations:

> "Does it require deep intuition to comprehend that man's ideas, views and conceptions, in one word man's consciousness, changes with every change in the condition of his material existence, in his social relations, and his social life?' (Marx, The Communist Manifesto Quoted from McLellan, 1971, p236)

What we must do is to find a means by which we can relate individual and social purposes without reducing one to the other entirely.

A popular term which exemplifies a concern for the sovereignty of individuals is "life-plan". Life-plans are considered plans or strategies for the future which get revised and modified according to one's changing beliefs and circumstances. Although this is preferable to the view that the person is a static, non-contingent being, the idea of the purely strategic person (Taylor, 1985c) is also unsuitable.

The notion of the life-plan appears to assume that individuals

can oversee their total existence, and examine the value of their beliefs and commitments in that light. It assumes that such a distancing is possible and that there is a voluntary association between the person and her actual beliefs and social activities. These beliefs and activities are in no way constitutive of the person herself. Rawls himself, Sandel argues, maintained a notion of "thin" being, one that is not embedded entirely within the specific social context in which a person acts (1971).

Against this Sandel argued that the language that we use when we make and when we assess our projects is "thick" with social beliefs and ideals (Sandel, 1982). This is not to say that rational principles are never invoked, but that these principles are themselves context bound and imply the priority of certain final ends. Communitarians need a term which captures our personal sense of purpose with social and historical practices.

One term that has been used is that of "narrative". Unfortunately, it is a term which has been used in many different ways. Like "community" it can appear intrinsically conservative since it is a device which binds us to a tradition. An individual's own account of herself has to be seen, as it were, in the context of the "story so far". However, like community, it also has a forward thrust: an inherent need to resolve the contradictions within itself.

The advantage of "narrative" for communitarians is that it does set the person within a wider social picture. MacIntyre sees individual narrative in terms of authorship in which the person is the subject of her own history, and her narrative is

an interlocking narrative with others. Authorship is therefore always co-authorship:

> "Now I must emphasise that what the agent is able to do and say intelligibly as an actor is deeply affected by the fact that we are never more (and sometimes less) that the co-authors of our own narratives. Only in fantasy do we live what story we please." (MacIntyre, 1981, p199)

So, like community, what we include in the relevant existential terrain of an individual is problematic. What we include as belonging to a persons narrative is as hard as delineating what the bounds of a community are. However, the advantage of the device of narrative is that it ties in the notion of the life-plan with the broader purposes of society as such.

To take an example of an individual narrative. My coming to university was a purposeful act. Some would say that this was a part of my life-plan, since it fitted in with my beliefs about myself and my aspirations. I had a distinct goal in mind - to get a degree and enjoy the personal satisfaction and the social advantages which are attached to such an achievement. Thus I had some idea of the kind of person that I wanted to be once that goal was achieved. It would fit in with an ideal image that I had of myself and would therefore be a coherent act of fulfilment.

However, there are other threads to the construction of my beliefs about my ideal self. I also strive to be a fulfilment of the kind of person that I think I am. What I think I am conditions the idea of the person that I could be. These beliefs are derived from the kind of life that I have lived and

what others lead me to believe about myself. That is, I am what I believe I am as a daughter of those parents, as a member of a particular class, as a product of a particular school, as a resident of a particular locality and so on. I see myself through my attachments to others, as a member of a group. As Raymond Williams argued:

> "We have at our command now a number of ways of defining our existence in terms of nationality, class occupations and so on, in which we in fact offer a personal description in terms of membership of a group." (Williams, 1961, p93)

My going to university is both a personal fulfilment and an expected scenario for all the significant others in my life. My ideals made a personal aim possible, but so did the institutional structure which both generates a sense of the social importance of further education and provides the apparatus in order to do it.

Coming to university itself provided me with a new context and my definitions of myself in it were both guided by who I believed that I was and what I believed I was going to achieve. However some experiences threatened to alter my beliefs radically. New political perspectives may not simply change the way I reason but also the very way in which I interpret my life. But people cannot, as it were, swop and old identity for a new one. This is why new life-plans, life events and beliefs require a renegotiation of self (G.H. Williams, 1984). Some new beliefs may appear to be an insight into myself, and make my past clearer than it was before. This may be a recognition, for instance, that God really loves me, or that the roots of my

oppression are in my relationship to the means of production. So when I came to university I was not merely presented with new choices but with different ways of interpreting who I am.

However, all these processes of renegotiation occurred within a context (or narrative), of what I believe society itself should look like and where I fit in this wider vision. In other words, my personal aims must be seen in the context of my personal ideal of society. My ideas about myself cannot be detached from the ideal society that I believe I should be participating in. Even the most "individualistic" of people has an idea of the world in which individuals, such as her ideal self, should exist. Such a person could be said to be more in tune with the dominant vision which itself caters primarily for those who hold certain individualistic ideas and goals. All visions, even revolutionary ones, must, in the final resort, be seen in terms of the dominant one, since it is this in which is reflected the actual institutions and organisation of social, economic and political life. My personal ideal of society is shaped again by actual society in terms of both its institutions and its own collective goals.

So my projects are not individually determined, but are an attempt to make sense of the conflicting attachments and ideals which engulf me. I cannot scrutinise my life without reflecting on the kind of society that I am living in.

To say that society is purposeful is not to assert that society is an abstract thing-in-itself with some closed mind-of-its-own. However we can think of society as purposive if we think of it as a dramatic historical narrative which entails a

concern both to create a certain kind of society and to attain meaning and coherence.[4] Societies do, to a certain extent, have a self-consciousness of their nature and moral character.

The difference between society and community as regards "narrative" is that individuals, partly because society contains conflict and struggle, cannot identify fully with society's aims. Within a community, however, if one is a member, the identification between one's personal goals and the goals of the community would be harmonised. That is why community is often seen as an ideal set of relationships only possible in the future, since society itself often militates against the possibility of community.

4.7 Reason, Belief and Desire

Another problem that arises from the definition of community is that of reason on the one hand and belief and desire on the other. Communitarians stress the importance of common wisdom and the shared values and practices of communities themselves. Does this mean, however, that the notion of the good life is purely subjective or can we allow any objective justifications? The problem we are confronted with is whether there are some shared notions which can be criticised. Are there some conditions which must exist in order for that community to be good?

We have already argued that desire or hope is a source of

[4] This does not mean to say that there are equal powers in every vision. In capitalist society, for instance, the mould is such that it systematically bestows powers and privileges to some at the expense of others.

change in social and political relations. However, desire must be distinguished from reason. Communitarians appear to be eager to point out that where the good of the community is the object of political activity and enquiry then that pursuit cannot be purely subjective (Barber, 1984). Irwin (1988) argues that Aristotle was concerned with the pursuit of the good life as a rational good and not as one which is based purely on the desires and common sense of communities themselves. Where the common "good" is at stake, then the discipline of thought is required, since not all activity and not all desires are necessarily for the common good. This, argues Irwin, contrasts with the conative approach in which the apparent good for oneself includes no rational plan for the good of others. Desire without reason is mere appetite, which conflicts with reason because it cannot foresee the future.

Conversations within communities, too are voices of argument, of difference. They attempt to iron out contradictions in the experiences which confront the people within them. A politics based on public debate does not mean that it will be either non-rational or that it will not generate agreed upon principles (Mulhall and Swift, 1993). Indeed, for any kind of participative democracy to exist there must be some governing principles in order for it to take place.

Walzer was concerned about the way in which certain groups in many societies have a monopoly over the creation and the distribution of socially valued goods (Walzer, 1983). In such societies the command over rationality is likely to be loaded as well. Therefore it appears that some principal of equality over

the control and distribution of socially valued goods is necessary in order to prevent the good life from being merely that which exists for the sake of those who exert the most power.

It is important that communitarians, in their criticisms of liberal theory, do not understate the importance of reason and therefore of the provision for opportunities in which people can be critical. The failure to do this has led critics like Buchanan (1989) to associate communitarianism with non-rational political ideologies such as Fascism. On the other hand Levitas (1989), in her review of utopian Marxism (I will argue that utopianism represents a significant strand of communitarianism) underlines the importance of the union of knowledge and desire as the reasoned pursuits for better worlds:

> "It is this reason why Utopia is not simply about the expression and pursuit of desire, but about education, and why feeling and experience must constantly be subject to the discipline of thought." (Levitas, 1989, p34)

However, the good life is also about the experiences, feelings and hopes of people in the community. The good community does not simply involve rational ways in which people can live together, but also ways of ensuring that they can live together well. In this, communitarians disagree with the philosophers of the enlightenment, who in their political theories were keen to distinguish between desire and reason. For both Hume and Hobbes, for different reasons, passion needed to be constrained (Miller, 1976). Whereas individuals were subject to beliefs and desires which were non-rational, political institutions themselves had to be based on universal principles of reason.

The State came to be seen, ideally, as a means of constraining illegitimate desires and allowing the individual pursuit of desires and beliefs within the framework of the law itself. Political institutions are ideally, under this way of thinking, value free in that they do not promote the interests of a particular idea of the good over any other.

The communitarian objection to this is that even liberal institutions embrace an idea of the good, but an unacceptable one because they deny the practical rationality of their members themselves. Citizens are subject to an idea of liberal or capitalist individualism rather then participating in a vision of the common good. Politics has become distorted into the pursuit of technical solutions to problems rather than the pursuit of the good life (Habermas, 1971).

Another argument is that these political institutions, whilst proclaiming neutrality, are not neutral, since they systematically favour the interests of certain groups of people and a certain idea of the good. Powers and privileges are therefore rigidified, and their existence taken to be the natural state of affairs.[5]

So, in conclusion, it must be argued that the political life of communities must embrace reason, desire and belief. Liberals often accuse communitarians of appealing to a notion of

[5] It should be noted that many communitarians are not against the notion of hierarchy. Simone Weil (1986), believed it to be an essential need of the soul to belong to a society which was in some sense hierarchical. However, they do so on the basis that they believe hierarchy to be in the best interests of, and the most desirable state of affairs for, all the members themselves. All members in such a society contribute to and partake of the good of the community as a whole.

community which is non-rational and based purely on either common sense or on the untutored desires of the community. Such an idea is intrinsically conservative, where it is based on belief, and dangerously iconoclastic, where it is based on desire. However, what communitarians actually argue is that reason cannot be totally abstracted from either the beliefs or the desires of the community and that political rationality is, in the end, a practical rationality.

4.8 Exclusiveness and Inclusiveness

The concept of community raises the problem of the boundary. If the concept of community embraces the notion of membership, then that suggests that there are features which are held in common, which in turn suggests that it is those features which distinguishes them from other groups (Cohen, 1987). It embraces similarity, of those who belong to the community, and difference, those who are excluded from the community. Boundaries are what give communities their distinctive nature.

What is more, these boundaries demonstrate the community's exclusivity both internally and externally. Internal boundaries mark out certain individuals or categories of individuals as not being full members of society. This may be expressed through the way in which "the members" treat the "non-members" by ignoring or abusing them, or it might express itself in terms of the denial of job opportunities or the means to acquire socially valued goods. External boundaries are those which deny admittance at all. Nations do this by either refusing to admit people into their territory or by denying them full citizenship

rights. The wars in the former Eastern Bloc are, to a large extent, an assertion of national identity in a situation where the previous boundaries are felt to be invalid. Groups within society feel themselves to be apart from others and form boundaries which express what it is that separates them from others. Admittance into such groups would negate the groups' very reason for existence.

Non-admittance to some groups is entirely understandable. There are various groups of people in society who feel themselves to be under threat or oppressed. The assertion that there is, for instance, a "gay community", makes it possible for gay people to demonstrate the way in which they as gay people, and not as individuals, are discriminated against. The assertion of a community appears to function partly as a means of demonstrating that certain people live or are forced to live a different kind of life than others.

Non-admittance, when it applies to citizenship or when it shows itself in communities where certain categories of people are not accepted, demonstrates the more sinister aspects of the boundary and how it can operate on behalf of preserving a way of life which it is felt that others cannot or should not enjoy.

For Aristotle, to whom many of the modern communitarians turn, the Polis ought to have strict rules of membership. The boundaries of that membership are identity-expressive, as well as exclusive. This, for Aristotle, is for two reasons. The first relates to size. A community relies on ties of mutual recognition and identification which cannot possibly embrace huge numbers of people. Secondly, it can only accommodate those

people who identify and contribute to the good life of the community. For Aristotle, although slaves were necessary to the lives of the citizens, they were incapable of contributing to the good of the community itself. Their attachment was purely instrumental, as tools for the citizens to make the good life possible. They were therefore excluded from taking office and of becoming citizens of the Polis. Indeed what we know of the most democratic Ancient Greek State is that it excluded women, slaves, foreigners and those under 30!

Aristotle's arguments relating to slaves depended on his belief that they were inherently incapable of having a sense of the good life. They were not, in a real sense, moral beings, and therefore not fully human. A more acceptable account, however, of membership in relation to citizenship is to argue that communities must provide opportunities for membership (Walzer, 1983). Education, for instance could be seen as creating the possibilities for membership as an aspect of the well-being of the community itself, rather than as a qualification for entry into a community. This contrasts with Van Gunstern's (1988) view that admissions to citizenship can only be permitted to those people who display certain capacities. The more acceptable view of community would argue that it is concerned with those conditions under which newcomers could become members rather than excluding those who could not demonstrate immediate affinity and a capacity to comply with the way of life of the community.

The liberal critic could respond here by arguing that the rights based tradition of liberalism is more appropriate here

since it dispenses with the problem of boundaries altogether. It is better, in fact, to get rid of the entire notion of membership and judge people as equally valuable distinct individuals rather than as members or non-members of a particular form of association. Under such a system no distinction is made between categories of persons, and in terms of justice one can expect to receive the same treatment as ones enemies.

This indicates that the boundary, instead of being drawn around social groups, is drawn around individuals and their lives, liberties, and estates. It could also be argued, however, that this view merely disguises the way in which social boundaries are nonetheless created, because persons are naturally social beings with context bound narratives, and that the view which makes the liberty of the individual primary has itself legitimated a system in which people see their allegiances as being created in certain ways. Liberalism may not recognise boundaries; but it is clear that within liberal societies boundaries are created in ways which can be destructive (such as by interracial violence).

Aristotle also suggests that the well-being found in the polis is that which creates the complete and self-sufficient life. Therefore there appears to be no reason why, firstly, slaves should not have been thought of as either contributing to the good life or having an interest in living the good life already, or, secondly, why they should be incapable of ideas concerning the good life and of holding office.

What this demonstrates is the difficulty in maintaining

boundaries and in having good reasons for excluding people. This is because of the very interdependent nature of society itself and the belief that anyone subject to the law of the state should be entitled to participate within it. As Walzer says:

> "...the principle of political justice is this: that the processes of self determination through which a democratic state shapes its internal life must be open, and equally open to all those men and women who live with its territory, work in the local economy and are subject to local law." (Walzer, 1983, p60)

This raises two questions? Firstly, why should all people be included? Is it possible that the good society is not reliant on the contribution of all its members? An important feature of the good society, for instance, is that it will cater for the welfare of its members (Sumner, 1992). The idea of the welfare state was dependent on the idea that the welfare needs of people could be worked out and therefore planned for. In such a system the welfare needs of an entire population could be catered for. Today many people believe, for very different reasons, that the welfare state has failed. However, if one accepts that an aspect of the good life is the welfare of its members then one can hardly maintain that one should dispense with the notion of universal welfare. I also find it difficult to believe, for reasons of efficiency, that one should dispense with the notion of planning. What is being questioned however is the question of who is involved in the processes of planning. Many groups of health service users, for instance, have complained that their needs have not been met simply because they have not been asked what these needs are (Croft and Beresford, 1992). It is the

users of services, it is now often argued, who are often best qualified to identify where services are lacking (Davis, 1989). The challenge must be how one can combine universal welfare with public involvement.

Surely, the argument goes on, there must be people who cannot contribute fully. They may not be competent to do so. In such a society the most vulnerable could be persuaded to act against their own interests. However, although there may be certain occasions where decisions need to be taken on behalf of particular people in particular situations (for, instance there has to be an age under which children could not be judged as competent to participate fully in various arenas of the political process) this is not to say that their interests should not be taken into consideration. Of course there will always be problems as to when decisions on behalf of people judged as non-competent are made on the basis of their wishes or their welfare.[6] There are also problems as to how we decide who and in what circumstances a person is to be judged as not competent, but it appears to me that there are very few situations in which a person, child or adult, can be seen as not

[6] The incident in January 1993 in which a diagnosed schizophrenic was badly mauled by a lion after he went into the enclosure to feed it, has sparked off renewed interest in Community Treatment Orders in which doctors would have the right to force medication on non compliant clients. Debate centres on whether people thought to be mentally ill should be allowed to make such decisions on their own behalf or whether doctors should be able to override the person's wishes in order to safeguard that person's welfare. It is also right to point out that many users of mental health services have claimed that certain drugs have had an adverse effect on their health and general welfare so many might wish to argue that users of services should be invited to participate in discussion around whether such legislation ought to be passed.

competent to participate in any of the spheres of activity which affect her life.

The second question relates to geography and size. How big should the community be? If society is now so interdependent then how can we make workable territorial, or any other kind of, boundaries. On the other hand wouldn't the idea of just one national or even world community be nonsensical?

Modern transport and communications systems have greatly changed the way in which people can relate to each other. Even close family ties can be maintained over huge distances. The resultant mobility of persons has meant that people have become attached to many more people in different ways - through their jobs, their trade unions, their neighbours, their political activities and so on. If community is concerned with the self-sufficient life, then the social spheres of what is relevant have obviously expanded in peoples' lives. This suggests that space is no longer so pivotal to the concept of community, since space no longer plays such a central role in the nature of people's attachments to each other.

What a communitarian perspective must do is to is to find ways in which the self-sufficient life can accommodate the plurality of ways in which peoples lives are constituted, and how these spheres of relevance can interrelate with each other.

However this still does not resolve the problem of size. Surely a notion of community must extend to the political framework under which one lives and is conditioned. I would argue that the idea of the distinct local community is a delusion if it is believed that it can live in total abstraction

from the political and economic context in which it is set. This abstract way of theorising community is what has plagued much of the work done on it. As Plant says:

> "Communities are often taken in a metaphysical sense and are credited with a life, history and ethos of their own." (Plant, 1974, p57)

In a communitarian society, the economic and political situation which is in place has important effects on the way in which communities of both interest and localities interrelate. Communitarianism is inclusive in that it stresses all aspects of life which are essential to the constitution of the person. A community must therefore be able to see itself as featuring in the political life of the state and the state must be able to recognise, and allow for the participation of, the various forms of practices and forms of belonging that adhere to different groups of people and spheres of activity. In other words a satisfactory communitarian structure would be one in which the significant spheres of activity, such as the work-place and the neighbourhood, have some kind of role to play in the wider political process. Communitarians could also argue that other institutions that affect our lives should become more democratic, such as in education and in health, and that they too should be at the centre of the more public political processes.

To conclude, the community in some respects has to be both exclusive, in that it recognises the significance attached to particular forms of association, and inclusive, in that it recognises the interdependent nature of aspects of peoples' lives. The problem, I would argue, for the communitarian, is

how one can have a society which recognises its exclusive and inclusive aspects such that all citizens are admitted into her political and social setting both physically and politically.

4.9 Conclusion

In this chapter I have argued that the concept of community embraces tensions which it is necessary to encompass if the creation of a community is to be both coherent in theory and desirable in practice. An emphasis on one side of the tension or a failure to recognise the significance of one aspect of the relationship ignores fundamental features of community life and of the nature of social organisation itself. In previous chapters we also noted that authority and participation represented another problematic dimension but that both were necessary in a community which was to be acceptable to persons who are both free and rational and nonetheless rooted in the context of their social and historical relations.

CHAPTER FIVE - VISIONS OF COMMUNITY

5.1 Introduction

In the last chapter I looked at some of the tensions which frustrate the development of an acceptable concept of community.

In the light of this I now wish to look at various candidate concepts of community as well as looking at some existing examples. I will try to examine whether any of these models are adequate examples of the kinds of communities that communitarians wish to endorse. Communitarian philosophers have often been accused of being unclear about the concept of community that they support (Etzioni 1989), and it does seem that different ideas about the good community are being put forward.

Which kind of community is supported not only gives us a means of judging its suitability but also indicates the ways in which such communities can be facilitated. I will conclude that the concept must be one which accounts for the kind of society that we live in now, since any possible community must build and improve on its past.

5.2 The Nostalgic Community

The nostalgic community is the archetypal British vision of the community. It encapsulates an image of a society that has been lost through the industrial changes which have occurred within the last 150 years or so. Nostalgia, as expressed in the poem by A.E. Housman at the beginning of chapter four, is about the longing to return to where one is "at home" (Hollander,

1991). For nostalgic communitarians from the nineteenth century, the years of the industrial revolution and the social and intellectual upheavals which accompanied it deprived us of the possibility of finding our place in the community. We were either thought to be sovereign individuals, responsible for our own destinies, or one of the faceless masses to be utilized by the needs of capital. For nostalgic communitarians being critical of modern liberal society, therefore, meant and means, rejecting the values of an individualist and post-industrial age in order to salvage something from the alienated modern identity which has become its by-product.

The nostalgic community therefore looks to sets of beliefs and practices which have been lost to us and have deprived us of the possibility of being at home in the world. Peter Berger et al (1977), have argued that the modern person is continually looking for that sense of place and belonging which the individualism in the modern world can no longer provide. Nostalgic communitarians stress the importance of rootedness, tradition, belonging, integration, place, role, status and function (Nisbet 1970). They see the community's authority as arising from the conservative features of the communal life (Plant 1974). They are critical of the stress on mobility, the individual and on competition and condemn the creation of the mass society through which people's primary relationships are undervalued, and in which individuals associate as strangers rather than as friends or neighbours. The nostalgic community is therefore consciously conservative. Its advocates are wary of change and critical of those political ideas and institutions

which do not attempt to harness the central importance of people's primary associations through their churches, neighbourhoods, families and so on, to the wider political arena.

From this perspective the large anonymous bureaucracies such as that of the Welfare State can be seen as starving the primary groups of people in society of their own authority and responsibility, leaving their needs to be catered for by an alien and remote public body. Thus the concerns that really matter to people are neglected. Resurgence of the interest in community has largely been, in fact, a reaction against the post-war bureaucratic structures and a call for more citizen-based forms of public service (Willmott 1984). While people are treated as distinct individuals they are denied the social significance of the groups to which they actually belong. This creates a society in which people either become hopelessly detached from any possible meaningful context or else form rebellious groups of individuals who would seek to destroy the fragile social forms which do exist.

For Nisbet (1970) revolutionary groups are a product of alienating societies. Their success in gaining power and the support of the citizens can be explained by the fact that they can manufacture a vision of belonging and hope where none existed before. Perhaps this can partly explain the revival of interest in nationalism in the former Eastern Bloc, now that the mantle of communism has been thrown off and capitalism has failed to deliver either the economic goods or the social contentment that were hoped for.

The vision of the nostalgic community appears to be one-sided and unrealistic in that it denies the importance of movements for change at the outset. It could be argued, in contrast, that some forms of rebellion are the attempt to forge new forms of membership and that these actions are a creative response to existing conditions.

The criticism of mobility also misses the point. Not all forms of mobility are destructive of community. Geographical mobility, for example, may mean that certain forms of community are more difficult to sustain, but, on the other hand, it may make other forms of community easier. People with special needs or interests are better able to communicate and organise. Modern communication and transport systems have made contact possible between people who feel themselves to be part of a group. The trade union movement depends, for its success, on national bargaining strategies which enable there to be a great deal of movement between workplaces. Communities of action and interest are not necessarily static. On the other hand it may be true that certain kinds of mobility would no longer be required if there was more emphasis placed on the expressed needs of people in the situations in which they find themselves. If there were internal satisfactions and rewards in the occupations in which people were actually employed, they might be satisfied to stay where they are. However, to put a halt on mobility itself would be to advocate state intervention to an extent that few people today would tolerate (Walzer, 1990).

The emphases in the nostalgic community are conservative. It stresses social order over social change, it stresses role or

function over criticism and the creation of meaning, it is backward looking rather than forward-seeking, and its ideas of authority appear to rest on a particular idea of community rather than in and through the active participation of its members. At the same time it appears to deny the recreative capacities of people and their desire to bring their collective aspirations into being. It also sees the modern life-style and sense of identity as incompatible with living in a community, and the need to return to a form of living in which the community is possible.

Such a notion of community would be unacceptable to the modern liberal world, because it advocates a way of life which is alien to us. Such a world would not be recognisable and would therefore not resolve the problems that we may have in our interrelations with others. A call to return to a form of community which existed in the past would be to interfere with our present social relationships, which are established upon a recent history of high social and geographical mobility. To the extent that we have a sense of community which is based on modes of communication which were not available in the past it is unlikely that people would find acceptable the static form of community that has been advocated.

It is also doubtful whether the pre-enlightenment communities were in fact the paradigm of the good life that they are somtimes claimed to be. The challenge to the authority of the feudal lords gives us an indication that the majority of people themselves found such an existence undesirable. Life in such "communities" was often extremely authoritarian and what may be

referred by some as the good life was really a regime which was imposed by an elite over the majority. Simply because life was necessarily more communal and static does not mean that it was in any sense desirable for the majority of people who lived such a life.

Many people today would find such a life undesirable. Such a "lifestyle" would actually deny certain forms of activity which many people enjoy. Such a life, simply because our demands and expectations have changed in line with the globalisation of our economic and social existence, could only bring in a range of constraints which would severely restrict the extent to which the membership could freely express its demands. If we accept that people are beings who look to their future, as well as understanding them as expressions of their past, then a vision of the good life which is identified purely with tradition and the preservation of particular groups can only be oppressive.

In any case a call to return to forms of communal living that have been lost to us would be historically unsound. Whatever we think of "modern" life we cannot simply eradicate history from our consciousness. We are different kinds of social being to those of the pre-industrial age. We would not cease to be those kinds of social being simply by attempting to extract those parts of history which have been perceived to be destructive of the kinds of community which existed in the past. Even Marxism, which has probably provided us with the most succinct and certainly the most influential critique of capitalism to date, does not argue for pre-capitalist forms of living but sees communism as arising from the failings and contradictions within

capitalism itself.

The nostalgic community rejects certain features of the modern age that are good. The development of civil, political and social rights has been part and parcel of the liberal age of which communitarians are so critical. The emphasis on creating the grounds which allow people the liberty of criticising the features of modern life with which they disagree is an undoubted good which is lacking in the nostalgic communitarians' critique of liberalism. Whilst there are undoubtedly many difficulties with the concept of rights which communitarians have brought to the fore, unless the freedoms that liberalism has brought are part and parcel of a conception of community the concept will not be seen as a desirable feature of our political future.

The nostalgic community is for the above reasons an unsuitable candidate for a vision of the good life. However there are elements of the nostalgic community in modern attempts to form some kind of communal life. Since such experiments are not an attempt to replace the form of political life that we have today we cannot see them as the denial of the right to live the life one chooses, since they still have the option of not living in such communities. The examples that I shall give represent an attempt to retreat from modern life in some form or other. It is important, therefore to see what possibilities and problems these raise for people who wish to live the good life today.

5.3 Alternative and Therapeutic Communities

The first example is the "alternative community". The

alternative community is popular in the U.S.A. as well as having sporadic outbursts of popularity in Britain. These communities do not seek to change the world but to find an alternative way of life with others who share a common view of life. They are similar to Raymond Williams' rebels (1961) in that they positively identify with a way of life in opposition to the predominant one, except that, like Williams' exile, they retreat from it rather than confronting and trying to change it. Unlike the exile, however, they are not passively awaiting new and better times, but are actively creating a form of society for themselves. Some seek to offer a blue-print for others as a possible way of way of life. A famous example of this is Robert Owen's model community in New Lanark. Some are simply attempts to sustain or create a way of life which is in accordance with their religious or political beliefs, out of view from the rest of society. The Amish communities of Maryland and Pennsylvannia are examples of these.

The alternative community is necessarily exclusive, because it strives to maintain its distinctiveness against the dominant culture. In order to participate in the life of the community one must accept the terms of the association and be united in the will to fulfil its aims. Membership is therefore strictly defined. One is a member because one holds certain ideas and beliefs about how the good life ought to be lived. It is associated with a commitment to a particular ideal.

The alternative community is closer to what has been called a "life-style" enclave, in which the group is formed in relation to particular similar beliefs or attitudes:

> "Whereas a community attempts to be an inclusive whole celebrating the interdependence of public and private life and of the private callings of all, life-style is fundamentally segmental and celebrates the narcissism of similarity." (Bellah et al., 1988, p185)

Alternative communities are segmental in that they sustain a fragment of the variety of human life itself. These communities can demand either total or part-time involvement. People can be born into them or make a decisive commitment to join them. Total communities protect a fragment of existence and segregate their members, as far as possible, from the possibility of relating with others outside. Relationships with the outside world constitute a threat. Where people join out of choice they approach each other with different histories. To varying extents the members must be seen as rejecting certain elements of their past in order to minimise the threat of their old and corrupted ideas to the life of the community itself. They also therefore celebrate certain aspects of themselves as well as keeping the stranger at arms length. Even the part-time community must protect its exclusivity in order to sustain the ideal life. Bellah et al (1985), for instance, give an example of a community in California where a group of well-off Americans go to when they need a break from work. It has all the intimacy of a close-knit community, but it is also entirely upper middle class, white and hostile to intruders.

In order to preserve the existence of the alternative community it is often necessary to see the outside world as deviant and, as an extreme measure, to transform the outside world into something that is evil and potentially dangerous. Such measures may be used in order to reinforce internal commitments to the idea of the good

and to protect it from pre-existing ideas and beliefs which exist in the outside world. Although I am sure that many alternative communities do not police their boundaries in such an extreme form it is clear that full commitment to a way of life that is separate from the rest of society does require certain measures to distinguish between the "we" and the "strangers" who exist outside.

One of the main problems with the alternative community, however, is the impossibility of living an independent existence from the rest of society. Economically, these communities may depend, to various degrees, on buying and selling goods or on donations or trusts. Even if they are relatively "self-sufficient", the land upon which they exist will depend on contracts of ownership. They will be subject to the laws of the land. An alternative community also depends on the existence of peacetime, during which their allegiances are not called into question, and it depends on shutting one's eyes and closing one's ears to a world which is there at all times. Their continued existence will always be vulnerable to other economic and social factors which lie beyond their immediate control.

MacIntyre (1981) appears to advocate a retreat to those communities which offer the shared way of life, but this does not exist as a viable alternative for those for whom such a retreat would demand huge sacrifices. Most people could not afford the risk to their economic security needed to become a member of an alterative community. People's lives today are interrelated in highly complex ways. They are bound by ties to their family, their workplace, their trade union, their neighbours and so on. Joining an alternative community would mean cutting oneself off from many

if not all of these attachments, so it is not surprising that few people decide that their well being is to be found in such a way of life.

It would, in any case be impossible for everyone to live under such conditions unless there was a major breakdown of the social and economic basis of our society. Moreover we have already argued that such a model of communal living as a political ideal for everyone would be undesirable for the very reasons we outlined in the last section.

A related form of community is the "therapeutic" community (Bloor and McKeganey, 1988). These have emerged as alternative approaches to certain forms of "illness", such as mental illness, where the roots are thought to be social rather than purely medical. It is often seen as an alternative to the institution or hospital, which these communitarians quite rightly in most cases, believe to reinforce and even create the impairments that people have. The therapeutic community can offer a way of life which satisfies the need for communal well-being which may well be all the "treatment" that the mentally distressed person requires. The emphasis is not on cure, however, but on living well in an environment where the contributions of its members are valued. However, therapeutic communities depend on a particular view of the good-life, and may well, like the Rudolf Steiner communities, depend on well developed moral or religious ideals. Like the alternative community, therefore, they rely on the ability of persons to accept the particular ideas of fulfilment upon which the community bases itself. Since the inhabitants are very likely to have entered the community with attitudes and values picked up from

the outside world, compliance and conformity become a constant source of anxiety to the community as a whole. The members may have family and friends elsewhere, they may have lived in a different part of the country, had other interests, watched a lot of television, danced at nightclubs, been drinking in pubs - and so on. Perhaps none of these, previously valued, activities will offer acceptable hints as to how one ought to live with others in a therapeutic community.

Again, it is necessarily exclusive. It can only hope to sustain itself on the basis that members will be able to accept the way of life that it offers. It requires a restricted membership. Since it offers little chance of help for those who are considered too difficult, it requires the category of the "unsuitable" or "undesirable". The therapeutic community therefore also accepts the wider society's categories of deviants and undesirables and so it does not offer an alternative way of life to everyone who may be thought to need it.

Not only is the therapeutic community selective in terms of its members, but it is required to select as significant those aspects of the inhabitants' lives which are relevant to its conception of the good-life, and will interpret each person's history in terms of a selective narrative. This is not to say that these narratives will necessarily be understood from only one particular point of view; but they will always be narratives which are articulated in terms of the values of the community itself.

As an ideal model of care this has serious drawbacks. Firstly, the community into which they enter very often does not reflect the experiences and the attachments that they have created in the past.

Very often this can create a conflict of obligation and allegiance, between the community and, for instance, their families.[1] Secondly, since it requires a certain degree of selectivity, it is doubtful whether this communitarian ideal can offer a total solution to mental health care, since so many candidates may prove to be unsuitable or too difficult. Thirdly, although this is an option for some, it is doubtful whether many governments under a capitalist system would like to be seen as providing such care for more than a small section of the population. In order to minimise demand for such care it is likely that measures would be used to deter people from seeking such treatment.

Very often, however, the therapy itself is viewed instrumentally, the entire communal experience being intended to equip people for the outside world. Members of New York's Fountain House, for instance, were to be prepared for "independent living" (Open Mind 31, pp14-15). One member had indeed felt that Fountain House had prepared him for independent life in the city, although he said that he would never forget the feeling of being at home in the community itself. One suspects that it was the nature of the attachments within the community itself which made him feel adequate. Although he may have felt that, because of this, he was able to cope with city life, those communal attachments are not things which one can gather up and take away. The therapeutic community is therefore itself often viewed in instrumental and individualistic terms, as a tool which individuals can make use of

[1] This is not to deny that many people who do live in therapeutic communities find life quite satisfactory here.

for their own ends.

The nostalgic community and the alternative community share a belief that modern life itself is undesirable, and/or unable to deal with the real needs or desires of people. They share a desire for a shared way of life and a commitment to an ideal which is unobtainable in the modern world. Yet it is precisely because they do not relate to the modern identity and because they commit themselves to an ideal which exists beyond the actual varied experiences of the members themselves that neither the nostalgic community nor the alternative community is an adequate expression of what communitarians are seeking. The therapeutic community offers more, but only for some people, for part of the time, and usually for only some of their needs.

5.4 Functional and Symbolic Communities

The above forms of community are related in that they aim at recapturing a form of community which has been lost to the modern world. In order for people to experience community they must be, as it were, taken out of modern society. This inevitably entails an emphasis on the preservation of internal values and a surveillance of the boundaries which prevent it being engulfed by the outside world.

Not all forms and notions of community are exclusive in this way. In looking at what could be termed "pragmatic communities" I wish to look at ideas of community which attempt to locate it within modern society and a modern form of discourse. Such conceptions accept the way that society is, but see community as both possible and valuable. It is seen as existing in and through the

multiplicity of peoples' roles.

The first notion of community is that of the symbolic community (Cohen, 1987). For Cohen, the symbolic community helps us to understand the nature of primitive communities as well as community as it can exist today. Cohen sees community as a boundary-expressing symbol. The boundary gives the community a sense of its own distinctiveness, both in terms of a collective sense of belonging as well as in being different from others. As such it embodies both aspects of similarity and difference. The reality of this distinctiveness lies in the subjective expressions of its boundaries:

> "...the distinctiveness of communities and thus the reality of their boundaries..., lies in the mind, in the meanings which attach to them, not in their structural forms." (Cohen, 1985, p75)

The boundary as an expression of meaning looks different from the inside (i.e. for the members of that community), than from the outside (i.e. how others perceive it). Since the reality of community is through the internal meanings attached to it the public perception of its form is somewhat artificial:

> "The boundary represents the mask presented by the community to the outside world; it is the community's public face." (Cohen, 1987, p75)

The public perception of the community is usually simple and unitary, its meaning derived from a stereotype or caricature of it. However, the public perception of its structure, even if that is the image the community wishes to present, is essentially a distortion. The necessity of the boundary arises from the significance that it has for the members themselves, while the public presentation of the community's face may at least serve the

purpose of identifying it as a community which is distinct from the rest of society. Cohen argues that boundaries create the capacity for its members to create meaning, but do not inform the content of its meaning. Meanings, for Cohen, are created from within. They are "ours" - we create them. They are not simply slotted into us. Although communities share a common allegiance to a boundary, the symbols fit the individual rather than the other way around:

> "They can thus provide the media through which individuals can experience and express their attachment to a society without compromising their individuality " (Cohen, 1987, p18)

Cohen rejects the Durkheimian and Marxist views that structure determines behaviour (p71), and that forms of consciousness can be attributed to a dominant structure of society. Cohen therefore urges us to focus on "people's accounts of themselves". The structures themselves tell us very little about the communities since the same structural forms may be used to express very different kinds of relatedness. Cohen focuses on the way in which people make sense of their lives, both as individuals and as bearers of a particular social identity (p27). For him community hinges on consciousness and its boundaries. It is a matter of feeling.

Let us try to see what bearing Cohen's theory has on identifying communities. For him, to say that cities are necessarily destructive of the possibility of community neglects the way in which people, nonetheless, have a variety of attachments which are not fragmented, but build up a picture of a whole way of life. Commentators such as Robert Park have argued that the city is intrinsically fragmentary. However, Cohen believes that this

underestimates the resources of individuals to create meaningful wholes around themselves:

> "The individual reconciles the multiplicity of the roles he plays; for example, a woman's experience as a mother will also inform her performance as a teacher or as a doctor. and both would be part of her persona as friend. The various aspects of her behaviour are thus constituents of a greater whole, rather than mere discrete compartments of her ego." (Cohen, 1987, p27)

Community is therefore not determined by the kind of society that we live in, but on the kind of people that we are - as beings who are capable of creating communities of meaning wherever they form associations with others. Community is meaning fully constructed by its members.

Cohen's account is useful in that it suggests the intersubjective character of community. It stresses that community involves having a "sense" of community or community feeling. This provides us with a basis for seeing community as going beyond people's immediate face to face attachments. We can see that people's sense of themselves as belonging with others through their own accounts of themselves embody a wide network of people which extends beyond clearly identifiable boundaries of locality. People are attached to others, as he says Geertz puts it, through "webs of significance". It is also clear that people do see themselves as belonging to a wide variety of communities. This is also useful as a reply to the criticisms of liberals who object to the purely static notion of community which would be imposed on an willing individualistic population. Cohen suggests, quite rightly, the complex nature of community and the sense in which we are all expressions of

communities of meaning and action.

The problem is that Cohen more or less sees communities as existing wherever people exist, and does not recognise the various ways in which certain structures of social relations can be destructive of community. The problem lies, I think, in his account of structure or form itself. He dismisses the idea of structural, "public" explanations, since they are external, artificial, simple and mechanistic:

> "In the public face, internal variety disappears or coalesces into a simple statement. In its private mode differentiation, variety and complexity proliferate." (Cohen, 1987, p74)

For him, form must be seen from the perspective of social agents, as a capacity which enables people to express themselves as having a group identity. Structures themselves do not determine the content of meaning at all. It is something quite separate. However, in seeing structure and meaning as separate, he "mystifies" both.

I argued, in the last chapter, that the notion of the narrative enables us to see individual practices as expressions of social practices and frameworks. Such a device helps us to understand the interplay of people's actions and beliefs and their formative frameworks. To understand, for instance, a working-class community in Hackney, it is not enough to look at people's accounts of themselves, since those accounts only make sense if one understands both the nature of the material conditions in which they live and the way in which social class itself has an impact on the nature of that community. Social institutions, too, limit the forms of interpretation that make sense and can be seen as part of the life

of the community itself.

Cohen also fails to understand the teleological or purposive nature of community, which leads him to see the possibility of community everywhere and to see all communities as equally good. It is difficult to see, sometimes, how he would distinguish between "community" and "social network", in which case we may as well abandon the communitarian criticism that we live in a society which systematically neglects community.

Also, some "communities" only exist out of adversity - they may be the victims of violence or prejudice - and they therefore exist, to a certain extent, in order to make the nature of their union unnecessary. Failure to recognise the structural reasons why communities have to exist, prevents us from distinguishing those forms of community which exist out of necessity and those which communitarians need to advocate. That is, communities which are capable of existing in harmony within the social, political and economic structures in which they are set.

Raymond Plant's notion of the "functional community" also presents a number of problems. Like Cohen he sees community as that which is encountered through the multiplicity of roles that people choose to commit themselves to, but unlike Cohen he does not see community as a construct of the mind. The important thing to achieve, for Plant, is a harmonisation of functional interests which we discover through our attachments to a plurality of roles each of which exerts its own authoritative modes and rules:

> "To define community functionally is to recognise a plurality of communities, thus a plurality of roles and functions, hence a wide range of rules and authorities." (Plant, 1974, p55)

Plant argued that the concept of community is inherently ideological, and that in a pluralist society we are faced with competing commitments. Modern society as a whole does not offer us any clues as to which kind of commitments we should be bound. Therefore, the ultimate authority behind these commitments is one of choice:

> "The very existence of competing ideological outlooks and the conceptual conflict which they engender entails that one has to choose which one wishes to be morally bound." (Plant, 1974, p83)

For community workers, therefore, the task is to find ways in which a client, within the role that he inhabits, can participate

> "...freely, actively and with self direction in his social roles and to realise his own capacities and powers within these roles and functions." (Plant, 1974, p86)

For Plant the notion of community is just one of the relationships between the individual and society and hinges, essentially, on the notion of membership. However he rejects the idea that there can be an ideal notion of a communitarian society. That community is connected with the idea of a healthy society, to be contrasted with our own liberal, individualist capitalist one, is to import inappropriate medical concepts. There is no such thing as a healthy or sick society. For Plant community can be found in a variety of settings, including our own. It does not require us to conceive of single notion of community which can be used as a special blueprint. A legitimate concept of community can be developed within liberal, pluralist culture itself. It is simply a question of managing

to find "self direction" within the many forms of commitments, each of which have their own sets of norms and expectations built into them, which are on offer to us.

Plant argues that there is no impersonal standard by which we can account for the authority of different versions of society, but in the end he himself opts for the highly partisan option of individual preference. For Plant, authority appears to emerge through the rule-bound nature of the functions or roles that we inhabit. As persons living in a liberal society we are free to choose which roles we wish to commit ourselves to.

This still begs the communitarian question as to what we are to make of our choices when there is no overarching common framework through which we can identify our choices as being worthwhile. For instance, whilst there is now a greater emphasis on "people power" in many areas of life, for example on housing estates and in schools, such participation is greatly deficient if such groups are unable to develop a good and safe neighbourhood or a well resourced and educationally satisfactory school. Such a retreat by the state appears to be a denial that there can be a social responsibility to distribute what are considered to be socially valued goods. It does not answer the structural problems as to why certain societies create semi-members who have this status because they are denied the socially valued goods that the rest of society enjoys and because power is dependent on certain occupations which can only be maintained for the few.

Both Plant and Cohen usefully show how the person in society is, through the very fact that she is social, in some sense a

part of different types of group identity, and Plant suggests ways in which people's existing commitments can be made more participatory for those who are members. However, both Cohen and Plant neglect the way in which constituted selves actually interrelate within a wider social system upon which these constituted selves nevertheless depend. Neither question the effects of liberal capitalist society upon the constitution of the self or recognise any wider social vision of the good that societies themselves assume. Both see community through the eyes of the individual and do not acknowledge that the ideological and social basis of liberal capitalism itself has any causal significance.

In contrast to the nostalgic communities, these notions of community are agent-orientated rather than form-oriented. I have argued that we need a systematic account of both in order to make sense of either.

5.5 Local and National Communities

There are other ways in which we can approach the problem of community as a phenomenon which exists now. If we are to make use of the concept of community we must be able to point to it as something which meaningfully unites people today. Another way in which we can make pragmatic use of the concept is to look at it in terms of geographical identity, since the spaces that we occupy are still significant in terms of how we make sense of group identities. Also, if we were to have a form of communitarian politics we would need to use the geographical community in order to begin to make sense of the structures of

democracy and the organisation of public services.

The problem is whether we start from a perspective of the local community or of the national community. This is important since one's conception of the one alters one's conception of the other, and therefore has effects on the other. For instance an emphasis on the interests and purposes of the nation can easily lead me to dismiss the importance of local or tribal communities. In some countries, notably in Nazi Germany, entire national and religious groups were obliterated for the sake of the national purposes of the Fatherland. On the other hand an emphasis on the local community can overlook the way in which certain political and economic issues are nonetheless determined by the nation-state (which is itself a captive of global economic ad political forces) thus furnishing the community with a mistaken sense of its autonomy. Nonetheless we shall look at some of the advantages of conceiving of community in terms of its local and national expressions.

An example of the modern local community is the neighbourhood. It is held up as an example of community which exists in spite of the various attachments that the people living within it may form. It borrows from the nostalgic community an emphasis on there being a small number of people who live in close proximity to each other. They usually know each other, and share a common sense of each other as neighbours. Physical determinants, such as the main road on one side and the park on the other, may all act as both felt and objective boundaries within which the neighbourhood is said to exist. These boundaries are ultimately set, however, by the people themselves (Abrams, 1986). This is

complicated by the fact that many people may, nonetheless, identify the neighbourhood in different ways. For some, for instance, it may simply include a few houses on either side, yet for others it might encompass a whole block or more.

The nature of the relationships within a neighbourhood is also complicated. They are usually understood by the quality of "neighbourliness", reinforced through actions of "neighbouring". This suggests a certain kind of relationship which lies deeper than one would expect from people who just happen to live near each other. The closeness of the relationship is one which may be expected in any "community". Neighbourliness is therefore common to that which one might expect from a sense of community. As Abrams noticed, what is conceived of as being a neighbourly act, or what qualities are expressive of neighbourliness, differs as much between neighbourhoods as the definition of neighbourhood itself. Like community, again, the sense of its good depends on the nature of the membership itself. What is significant about the neighbourhood, above and beyond its spatial determinants, is a common sense of obligation to each other and a common sense of purpose.

Neighbourliness may be apparent in different ways. It may be manifest in the day to day relationships that people have with each other or it may be latent, only manifesting itself in times of crisis, revealing shared identity through a common difficulty or triumph. For example, the villages affected by the pit closures in 1992/3 felt themselves, and were perceived by others, as being attacked as a community. Similarly neighbours often come together to offer mutual aid when there is, for

example a particularly bad snow storm. As Abrams says:

> "A caring environment, for example, may be felt to exist but not revealed until a particular situation of need calls it into play and neighbourly help is mobilised." (Abrams, 1986, p22)

It is often through the neighbourhood that states have attempted to "tap into" the lives of the people that they wish to focus on. It is often felt that neighbourhoods themselves are the best sources from which certain problems can be identified and sorted out. Where there is cooperation from "the neighbourhood", such as crime control through "neighbourhood watch" schemes, the chances of success are thought to be greater.

But the problems with the neighbourhood as a model of community are manifold. Although it is seen as a pragmatic way of reaching people <u>as a community</u> it relies on the belief that space is still the essential form through which community can be articulated. Of course, since people tend to live in a defined space and therefore interrelate with others who share that space as well as sharing the problems which are relevant to those people, they are likely to identify with each other in many ways. However it is doubtful, especially in a society which predominantly defines its members in terms of their occupational roles and where there is no unifying strand underlying occupation and residence, whether people identify with their neighbourhoods to that extent. This is particularly the case in areas which attract the upwardly mobile, where people are more likely to see their homes as temporary investments, as commodities to be bought and sold, than as a place of belonging.

In these cases it is quite possible that people may unite in order to protect the value of their properties, but the neighbourhood is not necessarily in itself seen as a resource within which to find the good life.

Neighbourliness has often been seen as a phenomenon of working class areas (Willmott and Young, 1962), but in these neighbourhoods community feeling is a shared response to need; a means of coping with poverty. Their significance as a community is an outcome of their "disenfranchisement" from society as a whole. The solidarity of any oppressed group should not be seen as a good in itself. To do so is to misunderstand its nature, and to obscure that fact that solidarity is dependent on wider structures which perpetuate oppression in the form of poverty and prejudice.

The neighbourhood can be a source of belonging, but it can also be a source of conflict within peoples' lives. For instance, a person may identify with some political cause or belong to a particular religious group and may feel that these beliefs separate her from the values and beliefs which predominate in the neighbourhood. Where these involvements are central to the person's life, but she cannot identify herself as a person in terms of them, then her neighbourhood cannot be seen as a source of the good which encompasses her as a full member. In any case it will probably be true that most people's sense of obligation and belonging will not be to the neighbourhood.

Since the neighbourhood cannot encompass a whole way of life within modern liberal society, neighbourhoods can, at best, protect certain common interests or safeguard certain shared

concerns. Sometimes these beliefs and interests can be beneficial to the neighbourhood - such as sharing tasks like shopping, babysitting, odd jobs and so on. These may sometimes take an altruistic form, as when certain groups of people, for instance those who are elderly or sick, are the recipients of these deeds and are not expected to return the deeds in kind. Sometimes they may be of a reciprocal nature, in that good deeds are performed with the understanding that such deeds would be returned given the appropriate circumstances. However sometimes the protection of common interests or beliefs can be used in order to exclude others thought not to belong. One is reminded, for instance of the often explicit attempts to exclude Blacks from living or participating in predominately White neighbourhoods.

Another problem with isolating the neighbourhood as a form of community is that neighbourhoods themselves depend on economic systems of ownership and exchange which control the property market. In a society where property is such a valuable commodity and such a conspicuous symbol of one's wealth, class and social status, the protection of property is one of the main ways in which wider economic interests themselves impinge on the self consciousness of neighbourhoods. The economic realities of the property market also mean that neighbourhoods will differ in terms of the material well-being of the members themselves. In many areas the value of property is preserved by ensuring that certain factors do not make the property less attractive to buy. Therefore mutual interests in protecting property and its market value can reinforce deep rooted prejudices. This is why, for

instance, there is often hostility against efforts to house the "mentally ill" within the community. Instead of rallying around to include the newcomers to the area there is often collective hostility and suspicion, which is sometimes reinforced by diminishing property prices. [2]

The problem with using the neighbourhood as the central form of community (or in seeing a society of neighbourhoods as a model for the communitarian society) is not that it cannot be a source of communal attachment or a potential for developing flourishing forms of local participation. The problem is that the nature of the community is dependent on wider economic, cultural and political factors, and to ignore these is to ignore more deep-seated reasons as to why certain groups of people seem to be systematically excluded from socially valued forms of membership. This is not to say that neighbourhoods cannot be used at all as a means of facilitating or reaching people who see themselves as a community. Nor is it to say that one should expect neighbours all to have the same interests and views - ideally a neighbourhood should display an attitude of tolerance for all the differences that its inhabitants display. However one ignores the wider economic and social forces, which play an important part in conditioning people to see each other as threats to their well-being, at one's peril.

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[2] An attempt by a property association to sue their local Health Authority in Bath for buying two houses in their new estate without informing them that the houses were to be used as community dwellings for people with a mental illness (Phillips 1990) is an example of this. However in this case the action was taken by the property association itself and not by those people who has already moved into the estate.

An alternative way of conceiving of community, therefore, is to identify that form of organisation which best encompasses our history and the material structures which actually govern our lives. This way of looking at the notion of community does appear to ask the question as to what makes up, or could make up, the self-sufficient life. Today, with sophisticated forms of communication and information technology, a multinational-based economy and the development of the United Nations as a potential form of world administrative body, we could say that it now makes sense to talk about the global community. However, once we refer to the community as that which embraces the whole of the human race, then the very concept of community becomes meaningless. An alternative to the local and the global community is therefore the national community. A reformulation of the national community is what David Miller advocates, as a "socialist" communitarian (1989,1989b).

Miller acknowledges that socialists normally reject the idea of the national community (1989), but thinks that this is mainly due to nationalist movements which have been experienced in Germany, Italy and Spain. Within these nationalistic movements, however, the community's members were united in terms of race or blood for the purpose of fulfilling a single idea. The "wills" of the many were transformed into the will of the one, into which all other forms of association were subsumed (Nisbet, 1970). In Germany, in the name of the nation, many forms of living, as well as many people considered not to be members, were destroyed. It was a vision which refused to acknowledge the membership of a great many of the people who actually lived

there, and sacrificed those people in the name of one single social vision.

For Miller, however, the concept of the nation need not assume much, but the nation can actually serve as a useful means of distributing socially valued goods throughout the population. He sees the idea of citizenship as being the practical means of shaping the community (1989b). The nation is a concept which includes the various kinds of groups that citizens create and which the state often neglects. It counteracts the problem of the universal community which, he argues, neglects the particular ways of life which are different from others (1989). For socialists it generates a means by which citizens can regain control over their lives, and as the needs of the citizens change and develop so the distribution mechanisms and institutions that the nation has at its disposal can change and develop. He sees some system of rights as necessary to ensure that no group of people is oppressed in the way in which nationalist movements have oppressed groups existing within them. Miller makes no assumptions as to how nations ought to behave towards each other, and he clearly does not think that it need be a relationship of hostility.

The national community does appear to improve on the idea of the neighbourhood in that it does suggest mechanisms which could attempt to accommodate the totality of lives in all their expressions. It tries to deal with the problem of finding systems of public provision which are clearly different from the empty, bureaucratic institutions of the welfare state. As such it suggests ways in which the local community may find

expression through the wider national structures which are created.

However, I would argue, even though people clearly feel that they belong to a particular nation, or at least could belong if the appropriate political structures existed, the nation is itself an expression of structures which exist beyond itself. The nation, through the state, can no longer really control the way in which multinational markets exist. The market economy is such that it is beyond the control of any nation or state:

> "As a matter of fact the "ruling class" of modern society, with its internal hierarchies, is multilingual, multicultural and migratory. It studies at Harvard, works in the airplane or with transnational data banks, and spends its vacations between Morocco and the Seychelles." (Balibar, 1988, p729)

The internal structures of the nation cannot be divorced from these ruling structures, and it is these ruling structures which manifest themselves at the level of the individual. It is not, for instance, simply a problem of the national culture which means that the migrant worker is excluded from society, but of the fluctuating needs of capital which demand a disposable pool of labour. The migrant worker is one phenomenon which the notion of the national community cannot easily deal with without addressing transnational economic demands.

The idea of the nation merely disguises the way in which structural inequalities construct the character of the citizen body itself. Although clearly the nation is in one sense a means through which people relate to each other he appears to think that a national community would overcome the non-communitarian aspects of economic markets which underlie the

nation state. Where people see themselves as belonging to communities of action against the state, it is not obvious that a national community can address the underlying problems that they see themselves as facing.

Could we be sure, for instance, that a miners' strike, such as the one which occurred in 1984 could not, or would not need to, happen within a national community? The miners' strike was clearly about different concepts of economic and political ownership which were mutually exclusive. It was a clash between different answers to the question: "for the sake of what and whom are people united?"

Nonetheless Miller does attempt to deal with a practical means by which the communitarian society could be attained. After all there are many ways in which the state itself could become more responsive to the needs of the nation. In effect, that is exactly what is being done through social policy developments, such as community care initiatives, and though recognition of the significance of various voluntary organisations which are funded but not controlled by the state apparatus. But, if it fails to address some of the underlying economic and political questions as to how communities will actually be empowered and sustained, the community itself will be no more than an instrument for sabotaging public welfare.

5.6 Utopia and Communities of Hope

The final type of community is characterised by looking towards the future, the shaping of a desirable set of relations that do not yet exist. This notion of community is helpful in

that it does not commit us to showing that the ideal community exists today or has existed in the past. Neither need it, I shall argue, commit us to outlining a blueprint of the ideal community to which we ought to be aspiring. The utopian community exists, ideally, as a tendency which is expressed in our beliefs and practices. Hope can be seen as the immanent desire for a future which is not yet apparent. Seen from this perspective, community can be seen as both real, in that it has effects on our actual practices, and ideal, in that constantly projects alternative visions of how society ought to be and how our common aspirations can be met.

We have already argued that utopianism exists to a certain extent in all theories about society, in that any worked-out theory about persons and society contains some vision about the moral universe in which people ideally exist (Sandel, 1982). As Kumar argues:

> "If we look for Utopia now we find it not in the narratives of fiction but in theories of society: positivism, socialism, scientific humanism, even liberalism." (Kumar, 1990, p6)

I have also argued that common beliefs about the social world also imply visions of the future and that these beliefs are embedded in our practices. All beliefs about society are, to an extent social theories, even though they are incomplete accounts and not fully developed, total, accounts. In a sense actual social theories are more utopian in that they present a vision of the world as though it were the only possible life (Kumar, 1990).

However, there are two opposing intellectual tendencies that

communitarians must steer away from. These are relativism (all societies contain some vision of the good life and the common good, therefore all societies are equally good), and absolutism (there can only be one ideal society that can be called the good life, we must therefore present it as a moral blueprint for how societies ought to be).

Absolute theories of Utopia include religious utopias, in which the vision of the good life is thought to exist above and beyond society itself. What distinguishes religious utopias is that they are "other worldly" (Kumar, 1987), they do not relate to people's actual hopes in the world. They are articulated as distinct from any possible future which may be bought about within the world, and are therefore not connected with actual movements for social change. This must be distinguished, however from social movements which are championed for religious reasons, in which there is some notion of God's kingdom as it should exist on earth.

Religious utopias are absolute utopias when they are presented as ideals which are unrelated to actual social change and to actual strivings and social movements which exist in the world. Absolute Utopias in general are of two sorts - those which call themselves utopias, and those which hide their utopian nature behind the factual talk - they say that this is the way the world is, without admitting that it is a vision of the way they believe the world ought to be.

Absolute Utopias are dangerous in that they attempt to spell out what the good life should be in such a way that the vision itself overrides any concern for what citizens themselves may

want. They give the impression that there is only one form of the good life and impose it as an ideal. Of the explicit Utopias, the socialist visions of, for instance William Morris (Morris 1981) of the 19th century are an obvious example. Marx himself criticised these theorists for projecting an actual image of society for a future which is not actually known. In effect, they were projecting their own bourgeois hopes (McLellan, 1971). Marx was scornful of the rural and nostalgic nature of these visions, which did not account for the position in which working class people found themselves or for the material realities which actually confronted them. For Marx the socialist or communist future superseded capitalism (Fine 1984); it was not a retreat from capitalism to some ideal rural past. Absolute Utopias are thus also unrelated to existing conditions in that they do not play their part in the existing struggles in which people find themselves. They exist in the form of ideas; and their champions abstract a vision of the world as it ought to be from the world as they believe it to be.

However, just as absolutist are those theories which see society as naturally progressing towards some future point, but without referring to the hopes and ideas of citizens who want to live in a better future. They too appeal to an idea of how society is without referring to the creative capacities of citizens collectively to create their own future. The danger is that people are deceived into thinking that history is made <u>for</u> them rather than <u>by</u> them. As Ernst Bloch argued:

> "Purely technological images of progress thus always made progress appear too cheap, too linear, just as today, presented in isolation

> and with social change left out, they are delusions or means of deception." (Bloch, 1986, p477)

Such accusations have been levelled both at certain versions of Marxism and at positivism, in which social reality and progress is seen in purely technical terms, and human consciousness and creativity are thought to be a separate category from social reality itself. However Bloch believed, as a Marxist, that the passionate sides of Marxism were necessary, as real expressions of hope for a better world (Levitas, 1989).

Absolute Utopias are incomplete as an ideal simply because they cannot address the complexities of the conflicts and hopes of a social world which moves in time. Even though today's Absolute Utopia may express something of the anxieties of the world in which we live, who is to say that it will be relevant to the world of tomorrow?

An accusation levelled at communitarians that is almost an exact contradiction of that of trying to impose a blue-print of the ideal society (that is, of trying to present us with an absolute utopia) is the charge of relativism. If, as some communitarians seem to hold, all our beliefs and social theories contain some vision of how people should ideally relate to each other, then we have no reason to say that one vision is better than another. In a sense society could be seen as a battle of visions which are contested within different arenas of discourse. What is significant is not whether one vision is better than another but that these battles for utopia are the stuff of our social conversations.

Many communitarians tend towards forms of utopian relativism.

This sees the person as the ultimate creation of her own sociability, and makes no concession to a concept of the real which exists beyond these expressions. Rorty (1980) is perhaps the clearest exemplar of this school, although both Taylor and Walzer come close to seeing our expressions of the world as all that we have.

MacIntyre attempts to escape the charge of relativism by grounding beliefs and forms of rationality within traditions of thought. We are therefore products of our past as well as creators of our future. What made MacIntyre despair was the fact that being products of our liberal past our conversations have become so diverse that we have lost the our grasp over a unifying narrative. Nonetheless MacIntyre's quest for a unifying myth does not suggest a possible common good that arises through our present practices. He appears neutral over which unifying myth would be desirable and what conditions it might need to meet. MacIntyre's theory is therefore self-contradictory in that he believes that narratives (which include our aspirations for the future) are rooted in our past in our actual social relations, but does not belief there could be any mechanism by which we can <u>create</u> a common future from the actual situation that faces us now. In fact he appears to prefer a Thomist form of community which, although rooted in our past, bears little relationship to our present concerns (MacIntyre 1988).

I would argue that the concept of hope is what links tradition with both our situation as we find it and with some social vision which exists in the future. The liberal capitalist

vision is the predominant one, but in itself does not satisfy the conditions for a good life in which people participate equally as members in the sharing of social valued goods. The experiences of those who are systematically deprived of full membership will always create a dynamic of change. This does not mean that the future is a necessary progression towards a particular kind of society (I doubt that anyone could say what the good society actually looks like), but that where perceived inequalities of power and of social valued goods exist the predominant structures, and the vision that they encapsulate, are always at risk. For those who participate in movements for change there is always the danger that their hopes for the future will be lost (Bloch, 1986), but that there is hope makes the risks that are involved all the more bearable (Dauenhauer, 1986).

The strand of utopianism which is most acceptable in communitarian theory is the dynamic one, in the form of hope, of a belief in human activity to create the good life for all. Hope is the collective belief that a better society is possible and that the social conditions which allow people at least to act on this belief already exist. As a tendency, this form of utopianism does look to the future; but the ends, although they act as a spur to action, are not allowed to swamp immediate concerns.

Such a way of looking at community also has it uses in that it reveals need. Rather than looking at communities at face value, if we look at them as striving for particular needs which are not forthcoming in society as it is then we are forced to assess

critically the reasons as to why this is so. In the second part of this thesis I will be looking at mental health groups who see themselves as belonging to different forms of community. These different forms of community reveal different kinds of need which are experienced by different groups of service-users. The fact that they disagree with each other need not be a problem so long as we understand them as experiencing very different kinds of difficulty, something which itself indicates ways in which we need to improve various aspects of social and health policy.

The utopian notion of community sees it as an ideal possibility. It sees the need for shared goods as a natural desire - as the best means of human fulfilment. If one takes this view, then liberal society is not a bad society from which to create the good life. Whatever the faults of western liberal capitalism, it does incorporate a range of freedoms, in the form of civil liberties, which are surely the starting point for collective action. Freedom of association allows people to come together to identify each other as people with a common grievance or need, and freedoms of expression allow people to externalise their beliefs about their conditions. Surely this is a starting point for, firstly, allowing people with common beliefs to come together and secondly for ensuring that the tendency to create a society in which community is a possibility for all, exists. The desire for community could act against the predominant individualising ideology of liberal capitalism so long as the freedoms to do so are in place. Where the freedoms do not exist the will may still be there, but the result may be a more bloody conflict.

5.7 Conclusion

Visions of community have various forms - they look to our past, they attempt to make sense of the present and they try to project hopes for the future. The tendency is often to concentrate on just one form of these. However, in understanding the best form of community we ignore the conditioning of our past, the reality of our present and the creative possibilities of our future at our peril.

For this reason I believe that communitarianism is useful as a critique of liberal society, both as a means of suggesting changes to the way we think about public life and as a way of thinking about how we can respond to people's needs through the institutional structures that are available to us. Communitarianism cannot be an outright rejection of liberal society. This is for two main reasons.

Firstly, liberal society, for all its faults, and even though there are aspects of it which dehumanise us, is what has made us the kind of people that we are. Even though we may struggle against the conditions in which we find ourselves, the very expression of the struggle and the very hope for the better future which is being fought for, is shaped by the liberal life and the institutions in which we find ourselves. We cannot begin to understand the possibility of our community with others unless we understand the form of the relationships that we have now.

Secondly, there is much in liberal society which is essential to the good community as I have depicted it. If the good society is to be based on the aspirations and the judgements of

the members of society, and the communities in which they participate, themselves, then certain conditions must prevail. Central to liberal society has been the institution of certain freedoms and rights which have made it possible for people to articulate their beliefs without fear of sanction. Such freedoms must be part and parcel of community life if community is to be valued, and identified with, by its members at all. Surely a society which allows, for instance, freedom of expression, however unbalanced the power to express is, is preferable to a society where freedom of expression is suppressed under the guise of the common good.

Relative utopianism is therefore ruled out, since there are obviously some conditions which must prevail for the good life to be worthwhile and absolute utopianism is also ruled out because the good life must be flexible to the desires and concerns of people as they perceive them at the time.

I do not, therefore, set out in this thesis to suggest ways in which we can create a communitarian society as an alternative to liberal society. Such a project would be impossible. What is possible is to find ways in which we can "communitize" the structures that we already have and in which people can feel themselves to be members of society through the collective forms of activity that they already experience. What needs to be done is to instill some of those values, that we find in morally acceptable forms of community, and find ways in which they can transform those spheres of public life, that to a large extent appear distant, into forums through which our collective membership is revealed.

Such a project must focus on our need to feel that we have some ownership, as members, over those processes which govern our lives. This means that we must look, both to the more local forms of community in which we involve ourselves, and the wider political structures in which communities are themselves realised. The quest for community cannot be divorced from the need that we have to be treated as citizens. This cannot be done well without concerning ourselves with liberal concerns for democracy and rights, but the communitarian emphasis is based on our membership to communities rather than our sovereignty as individuals.

Should this happen, society may well change, but then the future really would be in the hands of the members of the communities who shape it.

In the next chapter I shall look at some of the problems that such a process faces and suggest ways in which we must approach the structures of, and attitudes to, community.

CHAPTER SIX - COMMUNITARIAN VALUES

6.1 Introduction

I have shown that there are difficulites with both many of the theoretical arguments for communitarianism, and their practical implications. As an alternative to liberal society a communitarian society would be undesirable if it advocated a replacement of liberal institutions and values, and impossible to realize without completely destroying ourselves as inheritors of a liberal identity. A retreat into a society run on communitarian principles is also an impractical proposition, since most people are enmeshed in everyday practical interactions and struggles from which it would be unrealistic to advocate escape.

However, communitarianism does offer a useful critique of liberalism in exposing some of its unintended, undemocratic and dehumanising consequences. If communitarianism cannot demand that we reject liberal society it can show how a furthering of communitarian values in our public institutions can "resurrect" individuals as participators in the processes which affect them.

Communitarian values centre on the importance of people's attachments to each other and on the value of a public sphere which can encompass a multiplicity of private callings. The idea that we need community is not only intended to show that there are certain communal activities which are valuable in themselves, but also that to fail to recognise community is to fail to acknowledge that we are, in fact, products of community. If we are products of various forms of community we should therefore be attempting to harness the structures which will

empower us as members of a community. As individuals we act under an illusion that we have sovereign control over the direction of our lives. Communitarianism is useful in demonstrating the degree to which we have lost this self-direction and aims to show how we can restore it through recognising our inherent involvement with others.

The "good" values of community that we may usefully employ in liberal society are ones which emphasize our powers and needs as participants in society. These are the values of membership, of certain rights which defend our attachment to community, of citizenship, and of democracy. Communitarianism can advocate ways of strengthening and deepening these values in a way that liberalism can not.

Such a view allows us to search for ways in which we can build or transform the institutions that we have so that we are recognised as members of the communities that involve us. Of course should such a process be set in motion society may well need to change fundamentally, but we cannot say to what extent, or how this would happen.

In this chapter I wish to look critically at the opportunities for and obstacles to establishing the values of community within in this society. This will also require us to look at the plausible interrelationships of communities, especially the way in which small communities of both locality and interest can relate to the state.

This means that we cannot ignore the political context of community which affects the nature and meaning of the communities themselves. Governments often use the term

"community" in a manipulative way as a means of promoting a social policy, but this does not mean that the state is committed to the survival of any particular community as such. The rhetoric of community is often used uncritically to create the illusion of coherence and common purpose where none exists (Butchart and Seedat, 1990). This may suit wider dominant political objectives to mask social problems with which it is unwilling to deal (Banton, et al., 1985). In areas where there has been intense violence, "the community" has often been called upon to deal with the problems that it faces.

However, it can be argued that such areas become ghettos of crime because of the lack of social goods and opportunities available to the people living there. What I argue is that the "good" values of community, can be used to unmask the more oppressive use of community when it is used to deny us the essential goods arising from our membership to society. The task is to "communitize" our existing social and public institutions and not to wipe the slate clean and start again.

6.2 Community and Membership

I have argued that the nature of community is characterised by the notion of membership, through which the people identify strongly with the purposes of the community in which they live. Thus the degree to which individuals can become members of society and how this can be achieved through the communities to which they belong is an important question for communitarians.

The concept of membership can also be used as a means by which we can assess the value of different forms of community. As

Etzioni argues, the importance of developing a concept of community is that we are in a position to distinguish between good and bad communities:

> "One important criterion for assessing them can be derived from the concept of community: the more equally responsive the community is to all its members, the more genuine or authentic a community it is." (Etzioni, 1990, p174)

However, the notion of membership itself can be used in ways which are oppressive. In the first place, although I may intend to see the concept of membership as signifying the need to <u>include</u> people in community life, it can be used, and is used, in such a way that it <u>excludes</u> people. Rather like a club to which admittance is restricted, one enjoys the valued goods of the community if, and only if, one is considered to be a member. This presents us with the problem that society may well choose to define certain people as non-members. The centrality of individual rights in liberal theory has an advantage in that they are universal in scope. One need only be a person in order to have the rights due to persons (Vlastos, 1963). This creates obligations, on states as well as individuals, to ensure the rightful provision of goods and liberties to all people regardless of what we actually think about their qualities or their worth as persons. The charge levelled against communitarians is that membership of a community, seen in this way, can never extend to all through its very nature, since encompassed in the definition of membership is the definition of non-membership (Barbarlet, 1988).

Another problem with the so-called value of membership is that

even where communities are said to exist, membership does not always imply that there are equal powers or equal access to valued goods. For instance, it is probably the case that people do not enjoy equal powers within most local communities. Communities can create semi-members out of those categories of people who they feel "just don't fit in". They may be in the community but they will not be of it. The centrality of membership in communitarian theory therefore threatens the dignity of such people who in liberal theory should primarily regard themselves as equal to others as essentially rights bearing individuals.

However, in response, communitarians can argue that the concept of membership should be used critically to point to an ideal in which there can be a society of full members - one which systematically <u>includes</u> people equally in the share of socially valued goods. Communitarians can use this egalitarian understanding of membership to point to features of liberal society in which it is denied. If we accept that all societies are comprised of economic and social structures which generate patterns of membership, then they all provide criteria by which we judge ourselves and others to be full, semi- or non-members. In liberal (and non-liberal) Capitalist countries, for instance, there is a difference in status between those who are able to be contributors to the economic system and those who do not or who are not able to (Stone, 1989). There is an important sense in which someone who has a well-paid job, and enjoys the privileges and status which comes with being economically well off, identifies with and feels attached to the society in which she

lives in a way that someone who was unemployed or low paid could not. Marshall (1964) reminds us how the Poor Law of the 19th Century was an example of the boundaries created to separate members from non-members:

> "The stigma which clung to poor relief expressed the deep feeling that people who accepted relief must cross the road that separated the community of citizens from the outcast company of the destitute." (T.H. Marshall, 1964,)[1]

The ways in which goods and resources are distributed is therefore significant to the concept of membership since to be deprived of socially valued goods is to be deprived of the goods of membership. In his Spheres of Justice, Walzer (1983), who sees this as a concern for social justice, attempts to offer a communitarian method to the problem of the unjust distribution of goods. Different goods, he argues, ought to be distributed according to the social meaning of the goods themselves. These goods, further, must be seen as autonomous spheres of distribution, so that the distribution of one good could not act as a means of attaining other goods. What he objects to is the way in which some goods in society become dominant, so that if people have them then they can command a range of other goods.

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[1] J.S. Mill (Mill 1946 pp212-214) argued that, although no form of suffrage would be satisfactory "in which the electoral privilege is not open to all persons of full age who desire to obtain it", there are certain people who ought to be excluded and that such exclusions were not in conflict with the general principle of universal suffrage. Such people include those who cannot "read, write, and, I will add, perform the common operations of arithmetic" and paupers who were in receipt of parish relief. Such exclusions, even though we have a state education system, would exclude thousands, if not millions, if we include those obtaining income support or unemployment benefits, of people from the vote today.

It would be unfair, for instance, if someone with good A, say health, was thereby entitled by virtue of that good to obtain good B, for instance political power. The rules which govern the distribution for good health will be quite different and will be separate to those rules which govern the dispensation of the offices of power. He argues that the injustice of capitalist society stems from the fact that money can be used to bring the owner a range of other goods, such as decent health care and education, while those who are without money are unable to obtain these goods to a just degree. Money has become a bargaining mechanism which has insinuated itself throughout all spheres of life.[2] Thus, the lack of money has become a means by which people become excluded from membership to society.

Although I believe that there are some problems with Walzer's theory (see footnote), what it does demonstrate is the way in which an ideal concept of membership must deal with those structures which deprive people of the very goods of membership.

If the concept of membership can be used to highlight and criticize the inadequacies of liberal society then perhaps we

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[2] The problem that I see with Walzer's argument is that he appears to regard money as, potentially, another good amongst others. That is, if it were to be deprived of its role as a dominant good then it would be possible to distribute it in such a way that it would be fair. The problem is that should money loose its dominant role then there would be very little point in having money at all. Walzer backs off from such a conclusion.

The other related point is that goods cannot be separated very easily, simply because money, in this society, is the unifying principle. Even if health care, for instance, was entirely distributed according to health needs (and special private health care could not be bought), good health can be obtained indirectly in all sorts of other ways through buying good food, suitable clothing, holidays, fresh country air, and so on. Money, in other words, is not a good, it is a medium of exchange for goods.

should use it to look at some areas of social and political life to which it can be applied.

The first problem that the idea of membership raises is that of entry. When it comes to admissions policies some notion of the worthy citizen is usually invoked, and responsibility is placed on the individual herself to prove that she lives up to the standards required. In order to obtain naturalisation in the U.S.A., for instance, you must be able to convince the authorities that not only are you a person whose history demonstrates that you would be a desirable citizen (a history of mental illness, of left-wing political involvement, and of crime all count against being a desirable citizen), but that you would be prepared to die for your new country of residence in the event of a war. Recent metaphorical references to which cricket team one backs indicate the way in which membership of a state is considered to be an individual obligation. Membership, as it is used here appears as the sort of club that we mentioned before, to which one must commit oneself if one wishes to belong, and for which one must prove one's individual credentials.

Van Gunstern (1988) appears to advocate even stricter terms of membership. Although he recognises that true membership as citizens involves identifying with the culture of the country to which one requests entry and to have the access to the means of life and autonomy within it, he appears to argue that applicant individuals should be judged on their capacities for membership.

However, I would argue that it is wrong to apply the idea of the "club" as a means of thinking about entry to citizenship.

Since societies themselves create the terms of membership, the strangers at the door are by definition non-members. They cannot be expected to arrive at the immigration office intact with the accoutrements of membership. A person cannot become a member of the society until she is received within its bounds, and it is unlikely that she ever will become a member, in the proper sense, until she has been offered the resources for membership (Walzer, 1983). This means making the most fundamental institutions, those that deal with our health and economic and social welfare and those which give us admission to the political processes, accessible in every possible way. Rather too much attention has been paid to the problem of "foreigners" entering into our national territories, and very little attention has been paid to resolving the problems that new citizens face in becoming full contributors and beneficiaries of their new country of abode. This perpetuation of alienation is a disadvantage to both the new settlers and the country, which is deprived of the full benefit of the human resources that they have to offer.[3]

Moreover the problem of entry does not just apply to those who seek legal citizenship of a nation state. We must look at those

[3] It could be said, of course, that there are practical reasons as to why there ought to be restrictions on immigration. It is not my intention to comment to any great extent on this since it does not seem to me that we have reached this point, in Britain at any rate. I would only make the comment that the principles underlying the freedom of movement between nation states must be tackled at an international level. At a time when markets, and those people who deal with them at the top level, move relatively easily across the globe it appears somewhat obscene that most people face such difficulty - especially when their reasons for moving are to escape either oppression or extreme hardship.

significant areas of activity in which people participate as members of society. Within the state there are various forms of activity that are necessary for living within any society and yet the fact that people's lives are also bound up with those activities is often disregarded. They are not made to feel that such involvements enhance their membership to the body politic.

The first of these activities is work. It is doubtful whether any society could flourish without some kind of work. Work, especially that which is in the form of paid labour, is often thought of as an instrumental activity, but it could become a form of community if those who participated within the activity had control over both the products that they created and the internal life of the workplace itself. Workers' control in the work-place is obviously a contentious issue since this extends democracy into the economic sphere which directly challenges the way in which the economic system functions. In public sector work it also challenges the extent to which governments can control the implementation of new policies. How far workers' control could be accepted is the subject for a separate thesis in itself and I do not intend to pursue it here in great detail. However, I argue that much could be done to enhance people's sense of membership through the workplace to the "political community", and that the value and significance of people's work to society at large is much undervalued.

Neighbourhoods are also potential forums for enhancing membership to society. This could be done if we viewed them not merely as formal spaces with cartographical boundaries, but as functional spaces (Moon, 1990) which have the resources for

activity of their own. Just as one must always live within a particular nation-state one must also live within a neighbourhood. However, unlike states, which can have enforceable rules for the provision of the resources for membership, neighbourhoods have many informal means of using their boundaries as a way of not admitting "undesirables" and ensuring that those who live within their boundaries are socially excluded. For this reason the flourishing of democratic and open neighbourhoods must be seen as a concern for national economic and social policy.

This brings us on to a further sphere of activity and experience which could be seen as a community and therefore feature within the institutional life of liberal society. An important feature of groups of people, as opposed to individuals, who feel that they are discriminated against is that they often feel that they form communities themselves. In this way the disabled, Blacks and gay people, to name but three, are considered communities through some shared need, preference or interest. I would argue that the recognition of such groups is important since their community is an expression of some essential sphere of experience and activity which is central to their experience <u>as</u> neighbours, workers and citizens as a whole. There may be many ways in which social policy initiatives could acknowledge the significance of such communities by giving them a voice in the planning of policies which affect them. [4]

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[4] In the second half of this thesis I shall look, as an example, at the so-called British mental health users movement and see how it is possible to make use of users, as a community, as an integral aspect of community care policy.

To conclude, membership is a central feature of a society which recognises community. In the process of making our own society more sensitive to the need that people have to be recognised as members of society we must look at the different ways in which people wish to enter society as members. This does not only refer to the way in which we admit newcomers who wish to become citizens, but also to the way in which people encounter society as members of different forms of association - as workers, as neighbours and as members of a particular community of interest.

However, it seems to me that if we are to live in a society in which one's membership of the community is central then there will need to be some safeguards, in the form of rights, to guarantee both every person's voice in that community and their entitlement to goods which are valued by the community. Without a system of rights which confirm our membership we have no means of ensuring that the goods of membership are not delivered fairly. Rights, in the communitarian sense, can be seen as a means of ensuring that no-one is denied the goods of membership, both as a participants in the development of, and as a recipients, of socially valued goods.

6.3 Community and Rights

Communitarians, especially MacIntyre and perhaps Sandel, have often seen the individualistic and acontextual nature of rights as problematic. Rights, in liberal theory are thought to be applicable to persons irrespective of the context in which that person lives. Their origin is claimed to be tied in with the

meaning of what it is to be a person and not what it is to be a member of a particular society. Rights restrict the language of belonging stressing, instead, those goods which are exclusive to the individual.

However, although the language of rights is reliant on an individualistic conception of personhood, rights are necessary to affirm the political significance of the forms of community that we have outlined. They are also necessary to establish "good" forms of membership in which all participants are guaranteed a voice and a share of the goods in that community.

Civil rights, although fundamental to the capitalist system which creates other forms of power and powerlessness, are central to everyone living in a liberal nation state a well as a society which recognises the collective authority of communities. For instance, workers need them (Barbarlet, 1988) in order to express their collective grievances against their employer or the wider society in which they exist. Without a system of workers' rights, especially under a capitalist system, the interests of the state would, and do, act to undermine the powers of workers to act collectively.

The freedoms of opinion, of expression and of assembly allow people to affirm their commitments to an alternative vision of society and to generate collective self-consciousness of their group identity. As Unger writes:

> "Whatever its origins in conflict and coercion, a stable system of powers and rights must also work as the expression of a certain way of imagining society: of conceiving what the relationship among people can and should be like in different areas of existence." (Unger, 1987, p19)

So although liberals reject the idea that any just society requires a vision of a particular society which ought to exist, and often hold that having a right grants individuals "trump cards" against any particular notion of the good society (Dworkin, 1977; Gewirth, 1984), the right to express oneself and the right to congregate are conditions of being able to present an imagined world. Rights themselves are therefore necessary in order to facilitate the creative expression necessary both for the community and the possibility of a more communitarian society.

Rights also allow us to give voluntary affirmation to those associations to which we feel we belong (Etzioni, 1990). In a communitarian society they would be necessary in order to ensure that people were, to borrow a term from MacIntyre (1981), "co-authors" and not simply subjects of the community. It is only as authoritative participants that we can become critically aware and apply our rational capacities without fearing the censure of the group.

A significant feature of civil rights movements has been the collective awareness of a shared identity and of shared purposes within a certain spheres of experience. While such rights do not constitute the good community they can facilitate it and are a condition of its possibility. Thus many groups considered by society to be "out-groups" will need rights in order to assert their rights to their community as well as asserting their right to have a voice as a community within the institutional processes which affect them.

Communitarians must be critical but not dismissive of the

importance of rights in any worthwhile society. Although rights themselves do not constitute community and are subject to the criticisms made in earlier chapters, they cannot be counterpoised to communitarianism. Any society will make use of sets of rights, and a communitarian society will need rights as rules which consolidate the nature of its form. If the nature of the community is such that it is founded on the authority of the participation of its members, rights will be needed to ensure that authority is dispersed in this way. Rights, in this case must be seen as forming the possibility of imagining and projecting alternative futures. They release the creative capacities that members have as co-authors of their future.

We need some further value, however, as a means of relating our rights as members of a community to our rights to belong and have a voice in the body politic. If communities are to be supported then they must be seen to be an essential aspect of our public life. It has been argued that citizenship is the practical means of shaping community (Miller, 1989b) and it could be seen as a kind of bridging value which articulates our need to be valued as individuals, as members of a community and as members of society.

6.4 Community and Citizenship

Like "community" the use of the term "citizenship" appears both worthy and woolly. Everyone supports it but it appears to mean very different things to different groups of people. In Britain, for example, whilst the Conservative Party stresses the notion of obligation, charity and the virtues of voluntary work,

the Labour Party stresses the values of equity, rights and justice (Phillips, 1990b). Before we attempt to find a satisfactory account of citizenship as a communitarian value, let us look at some of the criticisms of citizenship.

First of all the notion of citizenship is said to be an abstract notion which has little to do with the actual powers that people have to influence the private and public spaces of their lives. Where rights of citizenship exist they rarely have any influence over the conditions in which people live (Barbarlet, 1988). Coit (1978) argues that where there is an emphasis on citizen participation, the decision-making processes tend to be dominated by those who already posses power and occupy positions of influence.

The call for citizenship is often deeply conservative in that it merely reinforces and legitimates the differentials in economic and political power that already exist.

The need for citizenship can therefore, in some circumstances, justify the reduction of certain freedoms and rights in order that individuals carry out the obligations due to the state as members of the State. The notion of citizenship is utilised most strongly at times of war, when the expectation is that members of a nation state sacrifice their freedoms as individuals in order to preserve the existing form of life which the State is in place to protect (Barbarlet, 1988).

Barbarlet further argues that although many citizenship rights reveal the impact of the conflicting demands of the lower classes, the provision of such rights is in the end a means by which the dominant class can protect its own security. The

bounds of citizenship are strictly controlled by the State, and the state alone has the power to grant such freedoms as it considers safe to offer.

However, for Balibar citizenship is used by both oppressors and the oppressed in order to give legitimacy to different forms of social relations:

> "It has always been at stake in struggles and the object of transformations. Not only because, as Aristotle has already shown, each political regime builds the distribution of powers into a particular definition of citizenship, but also because in juridically (or quasi-juridically) delimiting a certain type of human being and a certain model of rights and duties, this definition crystallizes the constitutive social relations of a society at the level of the individual." (Balibar, 1988 p723)

Citizenship can therefore have a more subversive role for those who are ruled. In particular, for those who perceive themselves to be oppressed, the demands for citizenship may involve activity which seeks to challenge existing social relationships presently protected by the State. Barbarlet (1988) outlines two different ways in which demands for citizenship function, stressing different relationships that people have to the state:

> "For persons to <u>act</u> as citizens there must be freedoms the state cannot invade and therefore actions which the state cannot provide; for persons to <u>consume</u> as citizens the state must provide and is therefore obliged to perform specific actions." (Barbarlet, 1988, p20)

Citizenship, therefore, can be used to challenge existing states of affairs in two different ways. The first emphasises

our role as actors. The second, our role as consumers.

When people demand to be able to act as citizens they are really emphasizing the need for some social space which is not determined by the state. However, Offe has shown how both neo-conservatives and what we think of as the New Social Movements have become involved in the project of revitalising that sphere of life, civil society, which is thought to exist beyond the State, and in which citizens are perceived as actors. The difference comes in the political meaning of that revitalised civic life:

> "Whereas the neo-conservative project seeks to restore the non-political, non-contingent, and uncontestable foundations of civil society (such as property, the market, the work ethic, the family, and scientific truth) in order to safeguard a more restricted - and therefore more solid - sphere of state authority and no longer 'overloaded' political institutions, the politics of the new social movements, by contrast, seeks to politicize the institutions of civil society in ways that are not constrained by the channels of representative-bureaucratic political institutions, and thereby to reconstitute a civil society that is no longer dependent upon ever more regulation, control and intervention." (Offe, 1985, p820)

New Social Movements often attack the state bureaucracies and institutions for their over-regulation of human life, treating them as passive subjects of the state machinery whilst the neo-conservative governments of recent years have attempted to roll back the frontiers of the state in order to enable citizens to become self responsible actors rather than the recipients of "state charity". For the New Social Movements active citizenship is political, whereas for the neo-conservatives civic life is strictly non-political.

However, our concern for membership has not been to force a separation between civil society and the state (although as I have argued, especially in a society such as our where there powers and privileges are so unequally distributed, rights are needed to preserve the integrity of communities), but to find ways of recasting the relationship between civil society and the state. Citizenship, therefore, must also encompass those features which emphasize our relationship to the state both as political actors (as opposed to just social actors) and as consumers of the goods of citizenship.

The person's role as a consumer of socially established goods needs to be reinforced though the state's powers to confer social and economic rights. Such entitlements enhance the belief that one is a member of the economic and social life of the society to which one belongs. The person's role as a political actor must be captured through the extension of powers to those significant spheres of activity, which we mentioned before, which capture the person as a member of various communities.

The communitarian call for citizenship is therefore subversive in that it calls for the goods of citizenship to be deepened and extended in ways which potentially threaten the established powers of the state, but acceptable to a liberal society in that it hinges on liberal concerns for rights which devolve established powers, which act against individuals, to those communities in which individuals themselves participate.

Citizenship does have some practical use for communitarians, because it demands that we look at what kind of institutions and political organisations actually facilitate our membership of,

and ultimately, therefore, our allegiance to, the state. If it is used to challenge systems which deny people the ownership of public life rather than a means to align people to the status quo then it can be used constructively as a means to point to social change in the name of citizenship. After all citizenship suggests an arrangement dictated by the people themselves and not one that is handed down by the state. Citizenship can therefore be a useful vehicle to point out the failure of systems to deliver the goods of citizenship to all.

Our concern for the person as a participator in political life, however, points to a further value which can be seen as strengthening the idea of citizenship that we have outlined. As members of communities and as citizens with rights we are also concerned with democracy as a means of facilitating communitarian structures of participation.

6.5 Community and Democracy

It could be alleged that communitarianism poses a threat to democracy in that it attempts to sacrifice the choices and beliefs of individuals in favour of needs of the "community". MacIntyre, in particular, appears to emphasize the need for a unifying myth that can bind us as members of a community in such a way that it is difficult to believe that democracy could have any role to play.

However, I believe a more coherent reading of communitarianism actually argues for an extension of democracy. Democracy, as a communitarian value, hinges on the "practical" and "critical" involvements that people have in their communities and the

society to which they belong. In respecting people's practical involvements, democracy acknowledges the authority of communities as positive contributors to the political institutions which govern, and make decisions on behalf of, people's lives. In acknowledging people's critical involvements democracy directly concerns itself, internally, with "the opinions of mankind" (Walzer, 1993).

Membership lacks democracy when it excludes people from participating practically in the decision making processes which affect people's lives. Having an effective voice is a fundamental good of open communities. It strengthens the sense in which people can be said to have "ownership" over these processes, and decreases the possibilities of exclusion.

Nonetheless we must refer back to an earlier chapter and remind ourselves of the problem regarding the status of those who, many believe, cannot participate or make sound decisions. I argued that there are actually very few situations in which people cannot make a genuine contribution of some kind. Users, in addition to workers, of many forms of "institution" or services, such as the health or educational services, are often best placed to make judgements as to how service arrangements could be improved. For those people who cannot contribute as equals, the liberal apparatus of rights is another means by which their social membership can be reinforced by ensuring that their interests, as recipients of socially valued goods, are not denied to them.

Of course, there may be people who do not want to get involved in any public sphere, at any level. Forced participation would

be an infringement of civil liberties which most people would regard as unjustified. However, the important point to be made is that all spheres of public activity are such that all members should have the right not to be excluded. It could also be argued that in a society which encourages public participation the willingness to be involved, because it is a valued activity, is increased.

Recognizing people's practical involvements also requires an extension of democracy to, for instance, the local neighbourhood, the tenants association, the local disability self-help group, the work-place, the women's group, and so on. The "communities" themselves could have representation at the relevant levels of decision making in, for instance, Local and Health Authority departments. I also think that there is a good communitarian argument, to back up the socialist argument, for a strong alliance between workplace representatives, through their trade unions, and government on the level of economic planning.

Immediately we can spot problems deriving from conflicts of interest. For instance, there may be a conflict of interest between users and workers, or between workers and business owners or managers. The nature of the conflict in these two instances are very different. It may be argued that there need not be an incompatibility of interests in the first whereas there certainly is in the second.

I will not dwell on this problem here. So far as the first kind of conflict is concerned, further work will be needed to sort out a fair system of representation. In some areas of

health, such as mental health, users and workers are already invited to participate on some aspects of planning. Some work will need to be done to ensure that user representation is not merely tokenistic. So far as the second conflict is concerned one may argue that, if workers are already engaged in the planning and decision making process, why have managers at all? Indeed why could not all areas of work be workers' controlled without the need for individual ownership. This, however is an unrealistic option for the present moment since it would immediately question our fundamental economic base, but a strengthening of Trade Union rights would certainly be a realistic step towards recognising people's significance and worth in the workplace.

The extension of democracy to communities presents us with another probm concerning representation. Who are the representatives of the community? Who speaks for community? This is particularly difficult with regard to communities of interest since many different kinds of groups have evolved and, even where there is a shared characteristic (for instance being gay), they see the issues as different and see themselves as having, often contradictory, needs and demands. This problem of representation is a difficult one, but it is one that I shall deal with in some detail in chapter 10 with reference to mental health activist groups. What I think is important to recognise is that once the structures of participation are set up then the many voices that express the experiences of these groups will be allowed to reach out and be tested amongst those they claim to represent.

A communitarian notion of democracy also recognises our critical involvement with society. Community must essentially be a facilitator of criticism. It is important to make this point since, as we have noted in earlier chapters, some communitarians emphasise those features of community which see people as functions of that community.

Communitarianism has been criticised for cultural specificity. For looking for clues to the good life through the traditions and values of the particular society in which we live. Kymlicka (1989) points out the oppressive implications, which he sees as particularly evident in Sandel's views, of a view which argues that certain social rules (such as those which result in the oppression of women), are good because "that is the way things are done around here". These criticisms have also been levelled at MacIntyre and Walzer. However, as Walzer himself argues (1983), I believe that the reverse is so. Instead of criticism being set from the point of view of some ideal speech situation or original position as Habermas and Rawls attempt to do (Mulhall and Swift, 1992), criticism is seen as stemming from the experiences of the social agents themselves. This internal criticism must be the fuel of the democratic process and in the exercise of distributing socially valued goods.

Moreover the experience of oppression is itself an experience internal to living in a community. To stifle the voices of criticism is to stifle the voices of community itself. Criticism is not "against " the community, but the externalisation of one's experiences of it. This point is important since it demonstrates that there is a very important

rational basis for critical democracy within the strands of communitarian thought which I am advocating.

So democracy is another value that can be used by communitarians to suggest ways in which we can "communitize" existing structures. However, it could be argued that if liberals would have little argument with the values of community as we have outlined them, then what is it about liberal society needs to be changed? Is not liberal society the best form of society that we can have in order to further community?

6.6 Community and Liberal Society

Communitarianism, as a critique of liberal society, appears contradictory. On the one hand it appears to advocate a complete break with liberal society - its values and its institutions. However, to do that would contradict the ontological belief that people are creatures of their context and history and that to break from the past would be to destroy the person. On the other hand, to argue that we must stay as we are, because we are after all products of a liberal history and context, would be to subject persons to the destructive effects of fragmentation and alienation that liberal society puts us through, and deny a "good" aspect of liberalism which is its democratic ethos. It surrenders us to the belief that we have lost the capacity to enjoy the goods of community, and that a state of alienation is our inherited misfortune.

I have tried to argue that the need for change as well as the need to recognise the importance and the significance of one's communal attachments are essential to a constructive

communitarian critique. One way, I have argued, of reconciling the need for the attachments that one has and the desire to live in a society that values community for all, is to find ways of "communitizing" the institutions and the central spheres of activity that already influence people's lives. In that way the dynamic for change and the possibilities for the common ownership of public life would come from within the form of political and social life that we already have.

What is more, I have tried to show that there is much that is to be valued in liberal society itself which communitarians would need to preserve in the pursuit of the good life. The good life, if it is to be acceptable to some liberal critics at least, must be based on the opinions of the people themselves (Walzer, 1983). It must be flexible and challengeable at all times. Such an ideal is not the possession of the communitarians alone since it relies heavily on the liberal values of tolerance, freedom of expression, freedom of opinion and freedom of association.

The essential difference is the purposes for which these freedoms are employed. For the liberal they encapsulate the value of distance (Kateb, 1991) and of the possibility of exit from painful obligations (Kymlicka, 1988). For the communitarian, they can do just the opposite. They can give expression to our lived experiences and affirm our attachments to others, and they be used to reinforce the belief that we all have a stake in the institutions that condition our public life. Without these rights and without acknowledging the values that these rights protect we would be subjects of a system and not

co-authors of our future.

The values that liberal society promote are necessary, but not sufficient to enshrine a commitment to community. Liberal rights are more often used to champion the value of the individual pitted against the value of the community. Moreover, although the individual may indeed need some protection from the potentially oppressive commands of the community, to portray individuals in terms which exclude their communal attachments would be firstly to misdescribe the goods that are enjoyed as "non-social", and secondly to undervalue those beliefs and activities which depend upon the existence of the community itself.

Although I have indicated in chapters four and five that the concept of community is sometimes dominated by utopian dreams of a future which is not yet grasped, elements of utopia - the hope for a good society - will always be apparent in communitarian writings. Communitarianism is an attempt to recount the desire that people have to feel at one within the social terrain in which they are set. Communitarian theory argues that this at-oneness, this sense of self-sufficiency is not possible without a commitment to community in which selves are situated. It is this connectedness of selves that communitarianism attempts to come to terms with (Walzer, 1990).

However, utopia must not suggest much more than this hope, and tendency to strive for (Bloch, 1986), the good life, since it has to deal with the actual society in which we live now. The task for communitarians, therefore, must be to show how we can replenish existing structures with the principles of community

life so that we are not merely subjects of the state but full members of society.

6.7 What Should be Done?

The problem that we have faced is this: given the structures that we have how can we succeed in recognising the worth of community without diminishing the important gains in rights and liberties that are the hallmark of liberalism's achievement?

One problem is the community's relationship to the state. Whether the state can act as a container for community or not (and in many ways it cannot since a) the state itself is conditioned by underlying economic and political relations which transcend national boundaries and b) many people feel that national boundaries are irrelevant to their feelings of community with others), the state does have significant powers over economic distribution and political organisation which affects the nature of community.

States have the capacity to provide structures within which the purposes for community may exist. This entails the provision of resources for community values and action. We have argued that this can be done in two ways. Firstly, communities can only survive as open communities if the state concerns itself with the material context of community. We cannot rely on "communities" in themselves to be the independent providers of communal self-sufficiency that they would ideally be.

Neighbourhoods, for example, cannot simply be seen as a means of dealing with problems, such as crime and the management of resources, since such problems often stem from underlying social

and economic problems which lie beyond the scope of neighbourhoods themselves. Walzer (1983) argues that a country which was composed of smaller communities would not be a society of open communities but of closed rival communities unless they were themselves set within a context which paid attention to the overall standards of welfare, democracy and the structures of economic and political power.

If the openness of neighbourhoods is dependent on how they are treated on a political and economic level, some attention must be paid to the different kinds of needs that different neighbourhoods have. This may, for instance, include the need to create special opportunities for employment and recreation in some neighbourhoods, in order to give access to those valued forms of activity which are already accessible to those people who live in more wealthy neighbourhoods.

Again, neighbourhoods themselves require a supportive context in order to transform them into open and welcoming communities for all. The state could do much to minimize the conditions of exclusion of people considered by many to be "out-groups". The mentally ill, the disabled, Blacks, gays and so on, often argue that they are excluded because of wider social conditions as well as socially perceived attitudes which see such people as 'abnormal'. On top of education to challenge discriminatory social attitudes, housing policies which ensured good and affordable housing for all could hinder the "siege mentality" of some better-off neighbourhoods, and their wish to hive off those people and conditions which would make them so-called "bad" neighbourhoods.

However, the counter-danger is that we rely too much on the state itself to resolve the problems of community. If we simply see the state as the sole architect of communities then we may deny the significance of smaller purposive associations which express certain forms of identity and experience that have meaning for people.[5]

Some way of connecting people's more immediate spheres of activity with the wider political and economic forces which determine the powers and goods which are available to us must therefore be found if our communal attachments are to carry any weight in public life. Our membership to those central, but local and immediate, spheres of activity must have significance for us as members of a wider political community, and the state in return must deepen the possibilities of democracy to people as members of those communities.

6.8 Conclusion

In this chapter I have argued for an emphasis on certain communitarian values as a means of "communitizing" existing structures, rather than advocating a retreat to a life of community or establishing a "Brave New World" which may seem ideal, but is certainly not realistic at this time. These values stem from our connectedness as members of communities and indicate goods which arise from our involvements with others.

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[5] My involvement, for instance, in an asthma self-help group, may help me to cope with many of the interpersonal needs that I have arising from my chronic impairment, which may be lost if there was an emphasis on direct state provision for my needs.

Such an emphasis, captures what is important to us as social beings in a way that liberalism, with its emphasis on us as individuals with rights, cannot. The task of communitizing such structures consists in restoring a sense of membership which is not exclusive but which recognises the worth of the practical associations that people make through their workplace, their neighbourhood and their community of interest. These significant spheres of activity should be related in some structural way, based on democratic principles, to the political community. Should this be done then our sense of membership would be extended to us as citizens, restoring, as far as it is possible in global economy, a measure of involvement over those processes which govern our lives as well as becoming beneficiaries of socially valued goods.

Such changes are unlikely to happen in the near future to such a large degree, since it may upset certain balances in power that would not be relinquished lightly. This does not mean, however, that the ideas behind such changes have no use. On the contrary, there are changes taking place in health and social policy which (perhaps for the wrong reasons), place great emphasis on the role of the "community". Such changes give us the opportunity to stress communitarian values and argue for the implementation of structures which will realize them. At the very least such changes, place at the centre of public debate, what we mean be community, what it can mean to be a member of a community and what role governments and public institutions play in the sustaining of communities.

In the second part of this thesis I shall look at the

opportunities that the proposals for community care offer to provide a flourishing service for people with mental health needs. What is interesting here is not only the fact that these policy changes, which purport to see the "community" as playing a central part appear, to imply the need for some kind of communitarian perspective, but also that the archetypical "outsider" has often been portrayed as mentally ill or "mad". This presents communitarianism with a real challenge to counter the liberal rights view which could claim that the mentally ill are better protected as rights bearing individuals than as members of a community.

Unfortunately, the present policy of community care appears to see communities as self-sufficient containers of care whilst at the same time pursuing economic and social policies which drain communities of the material and psychological resources for caring. Nonetheless I argue that some form of communitarian argument can be presented which would satisfy those who wish to develop a flourishing community care service as well as satisfying those users who fear either total political and social neglect or further forms of oppression from new or reconstructed agencies of control. A satisfactory communitarian model of mental health must, as I have argued in this chapter, concern local forms of community in which users find themselves, the relevant Local Authority departments who are concerned with the planning and (in today's market system of health and social care) the purchasing of care, and, at the national level concerning the distribution of resources and economic planning.

PART TWO

COMMUNITY CARE AND MENTAL HEALTH

INTRODUCTION

After a delayed start the community care component of the N.H.S and Community Care Act (1990) was finally put into operation on 1st April 1993. The legislation affected four main groups of people, the elderly, people with physical disabilities, people with learning difficulties and people with mental health problems.

The intention of the Act is to make local authorities, through their social services departments, responsible for the organisation of care and the purchasing of services. Providers are to be acquired from a mixed economy of care - the public sector, voluntary agencies, the private sector and carers at home.

The aim is for care to be provided, as much as possible, within the users' own home or community setting and to provide enough support to allow the person to live as independent a life as possible. For many people with mental health problems this Act represents a welcome escape from the threat of being incarcerated in an institution, and marks a new respect for their status as ordinary citizens and as rightful members of the community.

However, the Act has been met with a certain amount of apprehension, not least because many argue that there simply have not been enough resources provided in order to do the job properly (Chapman et al., 1992). For his reason many believe that, at best, the burden will be placed upon families, and at worst the mentally ill will be left to fend for themselves on

the streets along with, and indistinguishable from, the mounting ranks of the homeless.

However, there are deeper philosophical problems that I would like to explore, since I believe that they will influence the way in which a community care system is perceived. These perceptions, in turn, affect the lives of those who are considered to be mentally ill as well as societies' attitudes toward them. The problems stem from both our conceptions of community and of mental illness. The "mad" person symbolizes, and has historically been treated as, someone who goes beyond the boundary of what is considered acceptable in society. Evidence of our reluctance to receive people who we have systematically expelled from the community back as members suggests that new forms of exclusion may well be found, so that the mentally ill will remain effectively outside the community.

I have also indicated, in the first part of the thesis, that in any case we live in a society which fails to sustain communities. However, the new legislation suggests that localities should start to act like communities. It implies an ideal of community life which is unavailable to many "ordinary" citizens, let alone the supposedly mentally ill. Nonetheless, community care legislation puts the idea of community on to the political agenda and creates the opportunity for an inquiry into what conditions need to prevail in order that people are able to live as members of a community.

In this section of the thesis I shall explore the historical and ideological reasons for the move from institutional care to community care for the mentally ill and explore the conceptual

and practical difficulties which arise from the idea of caring for the mentally ill in the community at this time. I shall then look at ways of tackling some of the problems and argue that a progressive communitarian approach, which stress the communitarian values of membership and citizenship as well as the rights to socially valued goods and a democratic framework to establish the need for people to participate in the structural arrangements which affect them, would be the best means to resolve some of the problems that community care presents.

Since I have argued that one requirement of community is the need to participate I explore the problem of seeking the views of the "mentally ill" themselves. Consultation with users about their needs is also recommended in the Act. Many groups of mental health care users exist, and there are many apparently conflicting views about what the needs of users are. Yet whose voice is representative? Many see themselves as belonging to a community with distinctive interests born out of their experience of distress and/or of the mental health system. I argue that we cannot see them as belonging to one homogeneous community, but we can discern four ideal types of community which arise from different experiences of difficulty. An understanding of these differences may help in the process of consultation, that Local Authorities are supposed to undertake, as well as a means of understanding and therefore meeting the needs that users have.

Finally, it is interesting to note that while the implementation of the community care component of the Act

displays little understanding of "community", there have been some commentators who have picked up on the "communitarian" debate in political philosophy and have used it both to understand the predicament of those with real or perceived mental health problems and as a way of pointing to a better community care system. Chris Heginbotham (1990) explicitly refers to the "communitarians" (although he includes Rawls and Dworkin amongst these), whose arguments, he believes, suggest a revitalized role for the voluntary sector, whilst Barham and Hayward (1992) use Charles Taylor's work to try to understand the predicament of the "schizophrenic" to come to terms with living in the community. Whilst there may be much that is disagreeable in the political implications of some communitarian ideas, a renewed focus on "community" and what people ought to expect as members of a community, is certainly to be welcomed.

CHAPTER SEVEN - OUT OF THE INSTITUTION INTO THE COMMUNITY

7.1 Introduction

The move to a system of treatment for mental illness which is centred in the community and away from one which treats its "patients" in a mental hospital or "institution" is heralded as the latest stage in a series of reforms in the history of mental health (Rothman, 1983). Indeed it is often taken as self-evident that the community is a more humane setting than the institution. In the first paragraph of his book, A Human Condition (1975), Larry Gostin refers to the consensus of opinion amongst health care professionals that "care" in the community is preferable to "confinement" in the institution. Put in that way, who could disagree?

In this chapter I want to look at the move to community care within the context of historical changes which had their effects both on the emerging belief that the community and not the institution was the appropriate context of care, and on professional and popular conceptions of mental health and illness.

For critics of the hospital system the institutional approach was essentially dehumanising since it was a means by which people were taken out of the ordinary setting of human life which citizens were entitled to enjoy. The mental asylum was usually placed outside of urban centres, marking its place as being "beyond the community" and "out of society".

Some of the criticisms retained the belief that the institution was a cruel and inhuman place in which people were

literally confined, often for decades. For some the very use of the label "mental illness" involved judgements about suitable and unsuitable forms of behaviour in society itself (Ingleby, 1981). It was therefore not just the asylum that was considered to be problematic, but the very concepts of health and illness as they applied to mental health.

Some historical factors are said to point to the inevitability of community care. The introduction of psychotropic drugs in the 1950's showed that symptoms could be controlled without the need to take the patient out of her own environment (Jones, 1988). However, some commentators also point to changes in other forms of social support (Kingsley, 1986) which enabled people, in Britain at any rate, to take care of themselves in the "community".

Commentators on the changes of mental health provision read the significance of historical changes differently. They divide between the reformists, who see changes as being the outcome of a greater sensitivity to human need since the second world war, and the revisionists, who see the changes in terms of the adaptation of the state to protect its own interests and the interests of capital against the effects of demographic change (Goodwin, 1990).[1]

I shall give a summary of the historical changes said to be

[1] However, reformists, such as Kathleen Jones, tend to be more sceptical about the move to community care, seeing it as a threat to the availability of psychiatric services to people who are mentally distressed, whilst revisionists appear to be split over the change, either seeing it as a civil rights victory or as the adaptation of the dominant powers to reinforce their ability to control difficult people and social problems.

significant but go on to look at the ideological motivations which are to a great extent based on the economic and political conditions which prevail.

I shall then examine the difficulties that community care itself presents, both in terms of citizenship, since to be allowed to be cared for in the community is thought to mean that one is being regarded as a full citizen, and in terms of community life itself, since there are various assumptions made about the nature of the community in which mental health care is to be situated. Although I am in favour of a system of community care, I shall argue that the ideological control of the meaning of "community" will itself have a profound effect on how we view both mental health itself and our collective responsibilities towards people who are thought to be "mentally ill".

7.2 Arguments for Change

Community care initially appears attractive because of its inherently humanitarian appeal. The community came to be seen as the right locus of care, in contrast to the institution which came to be seen as inherently dehumanising. This inhumanity came to be perceived in different ways; so before we look at some of the historical changes which preceded and accompanied the demise of the mental asylum's legitimacy, we should look at the different reasons given as to why this should be so.

Firstly, mental asylums came to be see as centres of cruelty. Some were exposed as running heartless and ruthless regimes in which individuals were picked out as the objects of blatant

violence. In 1967 a book entitled Sans Everything: a Case to Answer (Robb, 1967) sparked off a series of newspaper exposes of the conditions which existed within mental health institutions (Jones, 1988). This was followed by an abundance of bad publicity and exposes of individual hospitals which continued into the 1970's, and brought into focus the general lack of comfort, dignity and rights which residents of mental health care suffered. In 1975 the D.H.S.S., under a Labour government, published Better Services for the Mentally Ill, which stressed the belief that the mental health institution could no longer be considered a humane locus of care for mental health problems. The fact that it pointed out that in 1974 24,000 patients did not have full personal clothing of their own indicates a recognition of the connection between institutional approaches and the loss of privacy, identity and dignity.

However the legitimacy of the institution as the appropriate way of dealing with mental health problems had already begun to be questioned on different grounds.

The association that was made between the mentally ill and the deviant by sociologists in the 1960's influenced many historians who came to associate the history of the asylum with that of other total institutions such as the prison, the union workhouse and the monitorial system (Cohen and Scull, 1983). Critics of the mental health system, such as Goffman, Laing, Foucault and Szasz, collectively (despite considerable differences between them) known as the anti-psychiatrists, also questioned the role of psychiatry and highlighted its social control functions. For many, getting rid of the institution was the first necessary

step in liberating victims of the mental health system.

The arguments used against the institution were part and parcel of a wider critique of the "disease model" of mental illness. The idea that "mental illness" was not a medical disease like some forms of physical illness challenged attitudes to insanity. If people were not really mentally ill, what was wrong with them?

For many critics, therefore, the need to move to a system of community care had less to do with the causes of mental illness than with the model of mental illness itself. Mental illness was not so much to do with social "causes" as with its social "construction". The critique of psychiatry here must be seen in the context of both a critique of positivism and its proclivity to view people as "things" (Ingleby, 1981), and a general challenge to forms of political and social authority. In the 1960s psychiatry was seen by many radicals as being part and parcel of western capitalism and imperialism; an attempt by capitalist societies to gain control over psychological processes within their respective state boundaries (Kovel, 1981). Psychiatry was one of a number of the state's tools to control problem populations, and was one target out of many in a cultural atmosphere of anti-establishmentarianism.

Szasz, from the opposite side of the political spectrum, was to see this kind of social control as more suited to the purposes of Communism or to the "welfarist" attitudes he saw as stemming from an anti-individualistic ideological perspective (Szasz, 1972). Anti-psychiatry therefore fitted in with both arguments, from the right against central planning and public

provision, and from the left against the tendency of capitalism to use psychiatry to punish or disenfranchise those who could or would not contribute to the production of capital. Both sides appeared to see mental health professionals as colluding with the state to create "outsiders" who could not threaten the legitimacy of the political system as a whole.

Since much of the, so-called, "anti-psychiatry" analyses were popularised, and did not remain within exclusive academic circles, it is quite likely that these debates concerning the legitimacy of incarceration had already, to some extent, set the scene for a public scandal to be perceived. Whilst the hospital's role as a source of treatment for the benefit of the recipient could be maintained (Scull, 1984), there appeared to be little reason to question the internal affairs of the institution. However once the role of the institution and of the mental health profession itself began to be questioned the "out of sight, out of mind" stance which had insulated the mental health industry from reproach could no longer be justified.

The fact that the mental hospital came to be popularly connected with incarceration forced critics and activists to demand that mental health professionals "come out" and acknowledge the social control aspects of the system. This affected legislation on procedures for involuntary admission. After 1969 many States in the U.S.A. made the significant step of changing the conditions for involuntary commitment from that of being "in need of care" to having to show that the person was either a danger to herself or society (Hoge et al., 1989).

Similar changes were seen in Britain, especially after the Mental Health Act of 1983. For civil liberties campaigners this expressed the explicit social control functions of the mental health system, since the therapeutic implications of involuntary confinement, i.e. the claim that confinement was necessary in order to respond to the health care needs of the individual, were dropped. That those who were involuntarily confined were defined in terms of dangerousness highlighted the similarities between perceptions of mental illness and of deviancy.

The institution also revealed other unpalatable sides to its nature. Not only was it seen as an inhumane source of "treatment" and an instrument of social control, but it was seen to be a source of a particular form of illness itself - that of "institutionalisation." Far from being a in place where one obtained care, one was likely to develop further symptoms which would evolve from the institution itself (Gostin, 1975). Prolonged containment was shown to curtail intellectual development and, in schizophrenics, cause further clinical deterioration:

> "The depressed surroundings, the enforced idleness, the loss of ordinary privileges, and the isolation from family, friends and developments in the outside world, all of which may be attendant features of institutional life, often result in loss of motivation, withdrawal, apathy, submissiveness and an inability to make decisions. Ultimately, the patient may conform to institutional life, which precludes his participation in the community." (Gostin, 1975, p13)

Average lengths of stay were about 10 years in the 1950's, but after a certain amount of time within the institution the

capacity to adapt to "ordinary life" outside appeared to atrophy. Institutionalisation itself came to be seen as a condition which required some form of assistance. Even if one subscribed to the medical aims of cure and rehabilitation the institution appeared to be a nonsense.

To sum up, various arguments have been given within the last few decades as to why the institution is wrong and why the community is a more humane locus of care for people with mental health difficulties. In the first place it was argued that the institution was cruel. It deprived people of their dignity and rights as well as allowing acts of physical cruelty to take place against the patients in such a way that they could be hidden from the public view. Secondly, it was argued that incarceration could be used as a form of social control, as, indeed, it is used against various kinds of deviant who pose problems for the state. Finally it was argued that the institution itself caused ill-health, producing symptoms which would make it difficult to adjust to life outside the asylum.

However, the popularity of community care provision cannot be understood simply in terms of the moral and intellectual arguments against the institution. After all, as Scull shows (1984), there were a number of loud and articulate voices putting forward arguments for some form of community provision during the last century, many of which were similar to the arguments that have been put forward in the last 30 years. We must therefore look beneath these arguments, to the historical and ideological changes that have taken place over recent years which have shaped recent endorsements of community care.

7.3 Historical Factors and Mental Health Care

The are a number of factors thought to lead up to inevitability of community care. One historical factor thought to be responsible for the decline of the institution, and mentioned already, was the development of psychotropic drugs, which became readily available in the 1950's. When psychotropic drugs were developed it appeared that there was a means of controlling symptoms which did not depend on the use of physical containment. By the end of the decade the drugs were being used widely. Admission rates, although they had begun to fall as early as 1947 (Ramon, 1988a), were reduced significantly. Commentators such Kathleen Jones (1988) argue that the appearance of these drugs made a significant contribution to a growing disbelief in the institution as a just and an effective part of the mental health system. For the first time sufferers were able to turn to their G.P. for assistance rather than the psychiatrist for asylum. So long as they "kept taking the pills" and displayed no visible sign of disruption, many people with mental health problems could be relied upon to get on with their own lives.

However, other commentators (Murphy, 1992; Scull, 1982; Goodwin, 1990) argue that the drugs revolution theory obscures other, more important, social and economic changes which made it less likely for people to depend on the mental institution. There are various arguments to support the view that the new drugs cannot be seen as the original cause of declining mental hospital populations (though they may have well hastened the decline). To begin with, the drugs were introduced at a time

when hospital admissions were already declining; had the decline been caused by the drugs, it would have taken some time before this was reflected in rates of admission (Goodwin, 1990). Moreover, psychotropic drugs need not have been prescribed for use in the "community" but could instead have been used as a means of internal management within the institution itself (Scull, 1984), as they often are. This has led revisionist historians and sociologists of mental health to look to reject the reformist theory which sees mental health provision as a outcome of the improvement of its own techniques. Su Kingsley writes:

> "The apparent success of the new drug therapies provided strong support for a model of mental distress, with biomedical rather than psychological and economic roots." (Kingsley, 1986, p29)

A completely different approach to welfare was being developed. Commentators point to both the successes of the welfare state and the problems that it caused as being significant factors in the development of a community care approach. The development of a public welfare policy made it possible for "pauper lunatics" to be sustained in their own homes rather than in a institution. Commentators have pointed out the connection between the public policy approaches to mental health and those towards pauperism (Kingsley, 1986; Hill, 1989; Scull, 1984). Lunacy and poverty were linked in that the mental asylum was itself a development of the poor law. The asylum was an alternative to the workhouse, for those paupers who were to poor to sustain themselves in the community and who were not able to work. The workhouse was in any case made a

deliberately unpleasant place to live, in order that people might avoid the sin of idleness, while the asylum was often the place of last resort for those who could not be subjected to the discipline of work. The asylum could not appear to be too comfortable or else it could be used as a means of escape from the work house.

By 1948, there was nowhere else for those who were poor and with mental health problems to go. However with the development of forms of income support it became possible for the poor and mentally distressed to maintain themselves within the community. The 1948 National Assistance Scheme meant that many people who would have previously been sent to, or would have sought, the asylum as the only means of support, could now subsist outside the institution (Kingsley, 1986).

This, in turn, enabled alternatives to the hospital to be developed; alternatives such as the half-way hostels, group homes and supported lodgings which depended on their residents having means of financial support. Local authority responsibilities for social support meant that people with mental health and subsistence problems were catered for by social services departments more than the health services themselves. Mental health professions no longer included just the psychiatrists, psychologists and physicians who worked within the hospital system but also social workers as well as health workers who worked outside the hospital. The mental health professions, therefore, had extended their sphere beyond the institution into the community before the hospital's legitimacy began to be called into question.

Later on, the welfare system could be seen as being a victim of its own success. Instead of simply reducing disease and poverty, it also increased the demand for the development of more and more expensive technology to deal with acute diseases, and, because the general welfare of citizens had improved, there was a massive increase in the number of aged dependents who required long term care. But institutional forms of care were costly and ineffective (Ramon, 1988a). The moral arguments for the dignity of community care approaches were given greater force by the underlying need to cut expenditure on wasteful means of providing support which could be obtained in more cost effective ways. It is perhaps not surprising that as the welfare system itself is now being called into question (especially the costs of benefit for the unemployed) proposals that the unemployed should be used to do socially useful work (especially in the voluntary sector) are being proposed.

However, changes towards a community-based system of care cannot simply be seen as in the interests of the State. People were also protesting against what were perceived to be illegitimate forms of social control, directed against certain sectors of the population. Out of the intellectual and popular revolts, mentioned earlier, against authority, professionalism and the cult of the expert, emerged a general interest in forms of "people power" in which spheres of activity would be controlled and agendas would be set by the recipients rather than the providers. Whereas the 1960s could be seen as having been an age of revolt there emerged after a brief period of stagnation, a constructive period of grassroots initiatives in

areas which had previously been considered the responsibility of the state bureaucracy (New Society, 1988). Within mental health care this took the form of patients' councils and user groups, and the formation of a number of different pressure groups (such as the Mental Patients' Union and Survivors Speak Out) which have focused on the need to have a user run service. The National Association for Mental Health (MIND), a pressure group which sees itself as more in the mainstream, has also attempted to represent the views of those who would have a totally user run service, while (perhaps inconsistently for those who believed that mental illness was itself a myth) arguing for better resources within the mental health framework as a whole.

Although different commentators concentrate on different factors it is probably the case that all these factors, in different ways, helped to speed up the change to community care and to promote the belief that change in this direction was morally correct. These changes included first, the development of psychotropic drugs which could be prescribed through the general practice system and be self-administered; and secondly, the formation, success and subsequent partial dismantlement of the welfare state which a) enabled the poor to subsist without the need for "indoor relief", and b) precipitated a crisis of costs which meant that a non-institutional solution to state dependency had to be found. Finally, on the cultural level, the 1960s saw a general upsurge of civil rights movements which included the rights of people who used the mental health system. These movements have, in turn, developed into various forms of self-help and political action groups.

Now that we have identified the major moral arguments for community care and the historical factors which led up to its development, we should look more closely at the ideological reasons for the support given to community care.

7.4 The Ideological Reasons for Community Care

In order to understand why these historical changes could have led to an acceptance of the move to the community as the locus of care, we need to understand the ideological background which legitimated them. That community care reduces financial costs is obviously very relevant in a capitalist economy which stresses the market value of profit; but this alone would not have made the move acceptable without other shifts in the collective liberal consciousness. After all, whatever the actual material economic conditions, the move to community care must have been motivated, to a certain extent, by political visions as to how the state and how individuals ought to respond to problems of human need.

There are three possible theories regarding the relationship between ideology and economics. The first is the crude Marxist view, arguably not held by Marx himself, that ideology simply reduces to economics. However such a view is not able to account for human subjectivity and consciousness at all.

Nonetheless the alternative is not to argue that ideology is independent from economics. After all, the economic relations of production and exchange are the structural settings of our experience and we base our moral ideas on the possibilities and difficulties that they present to us. They generate ideas about

the kind of society that is possible as well as the moral nature of the person that ought to reside in such a society. Our hopes and our moral convictions are based on the extent to which we see ourselves and others as liberated or oppressed by certain systems. This in itself does not make dominant ideas illegitimate, but it can have the effect of reinforcing structures of domination whilst these ideas are at the same time couched in terms of morality. If, for instance, the freedom for mental health service users in a community care system is the freedom of the consumer in the market place, then for many people this may simply bring with it new structures of domination which will ensure that non-producers are not rewarded.

I argue that the economic structures that we now inhabit do influence the ideological motivations behind community care. Community care is a battleground of competing ideologies of domination and liberation (Butchart and Seedat, 1990), yet they are all also shaped by the same economic system. The issue for many mental health campaigners today is how far they ought to collude with the forces of change. For some it offers the possibility of liberation, despite the conflicting motives of the government (Levick, 1992), whilst for others community care will become a means of oppression no less cruel than in the institutional system (see the debate between Chapman et al. and Pilgrim in Critical Social Policy issues 32,34 & 35, 1992). We must therefore look at the way in which ideology has shaped the debate on community care.

The concept of health itself can be seen as inherently

ideological; and as society changes so too do the ways in which we perceive the possibilities of creating a healthy society. Bloch conceived of the ideal of health as not merely medical but social:

> "In capitalist society health is the capability to earn, among the Greeks it was the capability to enjoy, and in the Middle Ages it was the capability to believe." (Bloch, 1986, p465)

So health appears to reflect the prevailing ideology of a particular society. Other writers have seen health as acting as some kind of norm (Sayers, 1973), which rests on the prevailing social environment as the criterion of normality.

This argument is particularly pertinent to the concept of "mental health" which legitimates certain forms of behaviour and rationality and stigmatizes others. To be seen as "mentally" sick is to have one's actions and judgements declared as in need of treatment - as needing to be suppressed or corrected. Foucault (1984) argues that the power of the norm can be used as a means of coercion, in that it generates norms of health which reproduce forms of knowledge and expertise. Labelling subversive or deviant forms of behaviour as sick allows us to give a technical rationale to our arguments against them. Medical terminology can therefore be used to disguise the social and political nature of certain kinds of action. This argument supports the idea that the social structures which deal with mental illness are necessarily, among other things, and rightly or wrongly, a mode of social control. In that case, although we may judge that it is right to argue that the institution is the wrong place to organise mental health services, the move away

from the institution is not, in itself, going to make them more open.

We should therefore look more closely at the way in which health is commonly defined to see if there are any other clues as to how and why community care meets with such moral approval.

One feature of contemporary social policy towards health education is its concentration on "life-style." The reason why some people become ill is because of certain bad habits in their lives. The increase in the emphasis on disease prevention and health promotion focuses on the ways in which individuals themselves can change, and therefore control, their lives for the better. Health is something which individuals can bring about, and illness is something which can be avoided. Thus, information is given on the damage that cigarettes do to people's lungs and what alcohol does to the liver. While there is obviously work which shows the links between ill health and poverty or inequality, the bulk of practical health care initiatives come from showing how individuals can improve their life-styles to improve their health, regardless of their circumstances.

Since health is seen as something which can be controlled by individuals it is also promoted as an ideal which can be achieved through a moral act of self-control. The attainment of health is often seen to be an act of virtue, which can be achieved through appropriate conduct, such as getting the right kind of food and exercise (Rodmell and Watt, 1986).

The concept of health as a virtue is different from the concept of health as the lack of disease, since it promotes

health as a positive value in itself. It is also different from the "Platonic" concept employed by the World Health Organisation (WHO) which defines health in terms of physical, mental, social and spiritual well-being, since the concept of health as a virtue implies that health is something which is "achieved" essentially through individual work and activity.

A popular idea of health, reinforced by an increase of consumer goods aimed at enabling people to achieve it, appears to be one which goes well beyond the negative concept of health in that it portrays health as something which has more in common with fitness. This ideal image is of the super-fit individual. It is health which is visible to others, and is a distinct symbol of individual success. Health, in this view, is something which can be attained by overcoming personal and social difficulties which a person may encounter. This idea of health is social but it is also moral in that it makes normative assumptions as to how health may be judged. It appears to reflect the ideas and values of the age in which we live in that it is very much associated with the responsibility of the agent, and it involves work. If one is healthy, then one has reason to feel self-satisfied, but if one is ill then there may be cause to question whether this is due to one's own misdemeanours. All this focuses entirely on the individual and her ability to transcend the social and material circumstances in which she is placed.

In the mental health field Szasz coined the phrase "problems in living" to refer to those situations of unhappiness which we all encounter (Szasz, 1972). Although he was keen to see this

as an alternative to the view that mental distress was an illness, since he believed that mental illness was a myth, he was still keen to argue that psychiatrists could be the relevant people to contact in these moments of difficulty if the clients so wished. What he objected to was public mental health services, which supposedly create a climate of dependency, as opposed to a contractual agreement which, because it is paid for, is under the individual's control. The relationship, for him, is legitimate within the cash nexus (Busfield, 1986). This idea fits in with that of health as a virtue and illness as a failure to enact virtue, since it promotes the importance of individual control through the market. For Szasz, the psychiatrist can be seen as a service which can be bought, should she require it, to enable the client to see herself through her difficulties, or at least improve her understanding of the situation (Wettersten, 1987).

We can see the connection between this view of mental health and the civil libertarian concerns of the mental health movement. The stress on independent living and the criticism that mental health services necessarily label the mentally ill person as a helpless victim reinforce the idea that health is an individual concern, as well as giving moral grounds for reducing costs by phasing out "outmoded" forms of mental health care. Where independent living is a priority, state provision can be seen as a measure of last resort.

Underlying a concept of health, therefore, are also ideas about what qualities individuals should value and what kind of social world a healthy person, and, for that matter, an

unhealthy one, should fit into. It also indicates what kind of relationship people ought to have to the state and what one legitimately can expect from it. Community care has been well received, not just because it satisfies a consumer orientated approach to the health service in general, but because it celebrates the upright independent individual, who asks nothing from, or even asks to be freed from, the state.

Such upright individuals can be seen as necessary in an "enterprise" culture, especially one which faces a severe economic crisis. Bearing the full costs of those who are unable to work is proving to be increasingly difficult. It is not surprising, therefore, that there is general dissatisfaction with the large, impersonal bureaucratic structures of welfare capitalism as a whole and that solutions are sought which hinge on beliefs about responsibility and independence that people have concerning their own well-being. Such notions of autonomy and freedom give moral legitimacy to the current belief that mass solutions cannot deal with the immediate problems in people's lives (Willmott, 1986). Community care can be seen as centring solutions within the context of peoples ordinary lives and the relationships which have meaning for them. The word "community", here, relates to that which is divorced or separated from politics or at least the agencies of the state. It reinforces the idea that state policies themselves cannot solve the problems people face in real encounters with other people.

Both the left and the right, for different reasons, have emphasized the need for the state to back off from its

intervention into people's private lives. Both, also, produce images of the individual as essentially independent and as most free when she is liberated from the tentacles of the state. The desire for a separation of civil society from the state is what unifies proponents of the free market economy and the, so called, New Social Movements (NSMs) which concern themselves with issues such as autonomy, self-determination and identity.

The popularity of community care measures suggests the legitimacy of being dependent on the community, as the natural sphere of both reciprocity and altruism, as opposed to the State. Advocates of community care have often pointed to the way in which solutions to the practical difficulties which people with mental health difficulties can encounter can and should be met through "ordinary" solutions within the normal settings of community life (Bayley et al, 1989). Where the contexts of giving actually exist, it is argued, they should be supported. Where they do not exist, they should be generated. The Seebohm Report (1968) articulated the need for social policy measures to encourage the formation of good neighbourhoods. In other words communities themselves do and should be encouraged to develop their own solutions to problems rather than state bureaucracies.

Belief in the capacity for the community to "care" for its own "problems in living", is also reflected in the popularity amongst some mental health activists of the theory of "normalisation". It is important to say that the idea was originally developed by Wolfensberger (1972) in the field of special learning difficulties (previously referred to as mental

handicap). The idea is really more of an attitude than a fully developed theory (Jones, 1988), and is based on the belief that disability itself is of no importance, and that, therefore, the concentration should be on the "normal" person rather than the disabled person. In other words, if disabled people were treated like everybody else then disability would cease to be of importance. Once the handicap has been dissolved then disabled persons could become integrated into society.

Normalisation has a de-politicizing effect. It attempts, quite rightly to see all people as persons worthy of equal respect and dignity, but assumes normal society to be a given (Anspach, 1975). What is more, the disabled person is assumed to be able to separate her personhood from her disability, something which, instead of challenging society to see people as they are, puts enormous pressures on the individual to transcend her disability. In seeing mental distress as an "attitude" problem it ignores the sociopolitical features of the concept of mental illness, and forces mentally distressed people to accept a society which may be problematic in the first place.

In short, although we can see that there have been historical factors that have led up to the implementation of community care, accompanied by humanitarian arguments as to why the institutional approach was no longer suitable, this has also been reinforced by ideological arguments as to the appropriate relationship between the person and the State. These ideas are held by both the right and the left, by government agencies and mental health activists. We need however to look at the context of community life itself and see how our ideas about mental

illness and community will impinge on the way in which care will actually be delivered.

7.5 Conclusion

In this chapter I have looked at the reasons why change to some kind of community care system was morally appropriate, the historical factors which contributed to these arguments, and finally at some of the ideological arguments that have shaped and legitimated beliefs about the appropriate relationships that needy (as well as irresponsible) individuals ought to have to the state. Ironically the community care argument appears to be advocated, by both left and right, on individual libertarian grounds, that is, on the ground that what is important to individuals is that they are allowed to be independent from the state apparatus and that our capacity to be autonomous is conditional on this separation. Very little has been written on how community care can actually work as a specifically "communitarian" policy. It is not that its advocates do not have a conception that community exists (the government assumes that families and neighbours will participate in the system, whilst mental health activists tend to look to the user led voluntary groups as taking a lead); it is just that they assume that the state cannot have any role in the creation and support of communities themselves. The context of community itself does not appear to be an issue.

I shall go on now, to look at some of the problems with implementing a community care policy. These problems are both philosophical, in that they raise conceptual problems concerning

the nature of both community and mental illness, and practical, in that they will have a direct impact on the way in which people with mental health problems are treated by the health and social services. From these objections we shall try find a positive means of furnishing the community with the means to deliver care in such a way that its recipients are treated as members of the community and that they benefit from the values of community that we outlined in Chapter six.

CHAPTER EIGHT - MADNESS AND THE COMMUNITY

8.1 Introduction

So far we have looked at some of the reasons why mental health is now being treated in the "community" as opposed to the institution. Our task in this chapter is to look at some of the philosophical and practical problems in implementing this if the aim is to be the treatment of people as members of the community.

In the first place we must look at the extent to which there has been as change in society's treatment of the mentally ill. If the institution is merely another form of incarceration and just another way in which we manage deviance or the control of problem populations, does community care represent an essential retreat from society's view of madness or does it continue to fulfil social purposes that the institution once served?

This takes us to the core of the problem with regard to community care for the mentally ill, since "madness" represents what is beyond the boundary of what is considered acceptable. It represents something "Other". Like other forms of deviance it marks out that which society cannot accept or tolerate (Ingleby, 1981). The mentally ill person is often portrayed as someone who has no place in society except as a stranger. So although the person who is mentally ill may be given the appropriate rights as a citizen, she may still lead the life of an outsider from the community to which she nominally belongs. Getting rid of the asylum, does not mean that the person who is considered as "mad" or mentally ill, and not merely unusual, is automatically going to become a member of the community (Barham

and Hayward, 1992). Even though the categories of mental illness are in dispute, I shall also argue that just because the terms in which certain forms of exclusion are expressed may become obsolete, this does not mean that the forms of exclusion themselves do.

Once I have looked at some of the conceptual problems relating to the care of mental illness in the community I shall examine at some of the practical difficulties in its implementation.

I shall end by looking at three models of the community itself and see to what extent they alleviate or aggravate some of the problems that I have already identified.

8.2 The Mad Person as the Archetypal Stranger

One problem with the argument that people with mental health problems ought to be treated as members of the community (as opposed to patients in an institution) is that there have always been people who have displayed actions and expressed beliefs which are considered to be beyond the bounds of acceptability. Historically, the strangeness of the "mad" has been couched in various terms such as "possession", "lack of reason", or "insanity", but sometimes as "genius" or "divine possession". If the mentally ill are still defined as those who are considered "outside" the community then we have to question what happens to community care for such people.

As we have seen, much of the criticisms by historians and sociologists, in the last 30 years, has revolved around the way in which the treatment of the mentally ill is just one way in which society manages deviance. The legitimacy of the medical

model with its roots in science, the techniques of which were felt to be culturally neutral and value free, gave psychiatrists the right to define deviant behaviour as sick (Manning and Oliver, 1985).

Manning and Oliver refer to three paradigms of deviance, sin, crime and sickness, all of which have methods and social institutions by which those who display deviant behaviour may be controlled. However, madness could be seen as a category in itself which systematically excludes people from full membership of the society to which they belong. Getting rid of the asylum does not mean that the person who is considered mad will enter society as one of its members. Like criminals and vagrants the mad person represents the archetypal outsider.

Community on the other hand concerns what is shared and common amongst people. The symbolic boundary, however, not only defines who are "friends" with a common history and identity, but also who are the "strangers" who exist beyond the boundary. We have to question whether and how community care will continue to find new ways of excluding the mentally distressed and the apparently "disordered".

It is interesting to see that the notion of community is often used today in relation to new responses to criminals. We have "community policing", "neighbourhood watch" as well as the introduction of "community service" as an alternative to custodial forms of punishment. Recently, there was some experimentation with electronic bracelets for remand prisoners, which suggests the emergence of new technology which will be able to continue its surveillance imperatives without reliance

on institutional custody. But community alternatives to incarceration do not imply that criminals will become full members of any community. Neither does community care mean that those who are mentally distressed or who are perceived to be "mad", will stop being seen as strange.

The defining of mental distress or "madness" as mental illness makes the individual the essential reference point. It is therefore the individual who is seen as pathological and requiring treatment rather than society itself (Ingleby, 1980). So the community under this interpretation could be seen as pathologising certain forms of behaviour in order to maintain an agreed public code as to what signifies reasonable behaviour even when certain kinds of insanity could be seen as intelligible given the strains that people are placed under. The community itself could continue to use sick labels to exclude those it cannot tolerate and use them to disguise social problems by seeing certain people as misfits.

There are three things that could happen to people under a community care system. Firstly, they may be simply redefined by the use of alternative categories of deviance. Secondly, they may reside in the community, but not be members of the community. Thirdly, the community itself may be adapted to bring them in. Some form of the third alternative is obviously what is needed but this raises the problem as to how this could happen and goes to the heart of our political concerns about citizenship, needs and community.

The first alternative is not without its supporters. Although Szasz was critical of the community health movement (because it

still operated in terms of the existence of the categories of mental illness) he suggests one way in which the demise of the mental health institution could, and, for him, should go.

For Szasz, the public mental health system was worse than the prison system, since you could be incarcerated without the dignity of a fair trial (Szasz, 1989). Szasz also cites many examples of the use that families, communities and States make of the public health system to outlaw what could often be seen as eccentric behaviour. So long as a public mental health system exists, therefore, it can be used to deal with people it simply cannot tolerate. For Szasz we indeed need to clean up our categories, but that involves refusing to label someone as mentally ill. We must see them as simply unhappy, eccentric, criminal or, (although Szasz doesn't actually say this), as social failures.

In other words we must give up the category of mental illness and let society deal with criminals, eccentrics and social failures in the appropriate ways - or rather, deal with criminals, leave the eccentrics alone, and provide help for social failures without forcing it on them.

So one way in which people who would have previously been seen as ill and in need of treatment can be dealt with, is that they may be recategorised as other kinds of deviant. But this may merely make their situation worse, as is predicted in Scull's descriptions of the future ghettos to which the deeply disturbed and the unwanted will be consigned. He fears the relegation of the poor mentally ill to a swelling and forsaken "underclass". Indeed, he sees the dumping of mentally vulnerable people as

already having happened in the U.S.A.. These are the people who are accepted nowhere, unless they have money or a supportive family, except in those areas where there is little community organisation to resist them. These also tend to be in run down city areas which will not be affected economically by their presence:

> "As if they are industrial wastes which can be left to decompose in some well contained dump, these problem populations have increasingly been dealt with by a resort to their ecological separation and isolation in areas where they are by and large no longer visible, and where they may be safely left to prey on one another." (Scull, 1984, p.142)

It could be argued however, that the medical category of mental illness will not disappear, but that community solutions, by centring the problem of mental health in the community, will destigmatise it and make it more acceptable.

However, as I have already argued, it is not necessarily the institution itself which placed the "mad" outside the community: it was one way of excluding those who were unacceptable to the existing society. Indeed, there is no reason to suppose that the categories of mentally illness will disappear; on the contrary, the techniques of diagnosis and treatment could simply be extended into the community itself. The attempt by the government and the Royal College of Psychiatry to allow legislation on Community Treatment Orders[2] (which would allow

[2] There is now, as I wrote, some distance between the government and the Royal College of Psychiatry regarding the extent to which there ought to be the legal means to enforce treatment on non-compliant and exceptionally "sick" clients living in the community. The Royal College appears to be more extreme in proposing the enforced supervision of certain diagnosed, mentally ill, individuals (Brindle, 1993).

the enforcement of medical treatment on those clients who refuse to take medication and are thought to benefit from it), is evidence that the powers of psychiatry can simply be extended from the institution into the community.

This raises the second possible outcome of community care. Those who are believed to be "mad" may live in the community but in other respects they will not be of the community. For some their lives may continue to be dominated by the routines imposed by being a mental health service patient. For others they may find that they are excluded from the social and political life of the community through either prejudice or neglect. The aims of community care suggest a higher aim than simply the removal of the institution. They suggests that needs can be met within the context of community life itself. It implies a more "homely", empowering and democratic setting through which one's differences and difficulties can be negotiated.

It is the nature of "empowerment" which has concerned many commentators and activists in the mental health (as well as the disability) "movement". However empowerment is often spoken of in terms of individual rights rather than as relating to those structural features of our society which affect the status of our membership of a community. For some the right to refuse treatment and the right to live independently under the conditions of ones own choice may be a liberation from oppressive and unnecessary constraints; but for what kind of person would such measures would be sufficient? Such a person is probably reasonably affluent, reasonably articulate and reasonably sure of her own abilities to cope with social life -

even if this means choosing to keep away from other people as much as possible. It is assumed that to "stand on one's own two feet", and to have the right to confront the problem of marginalisation in one's own way is the objective in mental health policy. Such people probably do exist, but for those who feel that they do not have such fortitude there would need to be certain other conditions met in the "community".

This takes us back to the problem of the community itself. In what way can we meet the problems of marginalisation and segregation that mental health services users accuse the institutionally based system of creating? This entails looking at the needs of mentally ill people as citizens living in a community. The problem is how this can be made possible, since the remit seems to be so wide.

The main point is that the concept of mental illness or "madness" is intrinsically political, and one of its main functions is to delineate the boundary between people who may participate as members within a given society and those who cannot. Mental illness or "madness" can be thought of as by definition incompatible with social membership, since madness is used as a symbol of what the limits of social interaction are. This interpretation of the relationship between "insanity" and the "community" must render the idea of community care as far more problematic than if you view it as simply a problem of demythologising people's views about mental illness itself. The problem must focus much more on the nature of the community and the ideology which sustains it. It forces the view that if community care is going to succeed and enable people who are

mentally distressed or who are seen to be "crazy" to participate as members of that community, then it has to be seen as a political problem requiring solutions which lie beyond the medical problems that mental illnesses present. Simply because more mentally distressed people will be treated and cared for within the "community" does not mean that they will not also continue to be marginalised from many aspects of social activity.

8.3 Practical Problems with Community Care

There are a number of practical problems in implementing a community care programme which arises from the conceptual difficulties with what we call both "mental illness" and "community". I shall argue in the next chapter that some of these difficulties can be used to justify the lack of resources in the development of certain kinds of health and social care services.

The first problem is related to our difficulty in understanding what we mean by mental illness. How do we know who is mentally ill and therefore requires the mental health services? It is already a problem, but it will present particular problems in the change over to community care service.

In many western capitalist countries there have been economic changes which have resulted in increasing rates of unemployment and homelessness. This, on top of the closing of mental health hospitals has resulted in the increased visibility of mentally distressed people on our streets, even though many, if not most,

will not have been officially diagnosed as being mentally ill. The chronically ill and the chronically destitute take the same paths as those taken by vagrants, such as to hostels, drop-in shelters and onto the streets themselves.

The problem is, how do we know who is mentally ill and who is destitute? Indeed, especially if we see mental illness as mental distress, does it make sense to distinguish the two? Kathleen Jones (1988) has pointed out that those who would have previously been categorised as mentally ill would now be recategorised amongst other "problem" groups. These were her observations in Italy, after a revolutionary Law closed down all the mental hospitals in favour of "community" based facilities (Jones and Poletti, 1985). However, she sees this as an emerging problem in Britain too. The damage occurs when people are no longer classified as patients but as "members of the community". In the community:

> "They may be reclassified - as homeless persons if they have nowhere to live; as prisoners if they break the law...; as old people when they reach the age of sixty or sixty-five." (Jones, 1988, p63-4)

Many commentators have pointed out that instead of deinstitutionalisation there may be a drift to transinstitutionalisation (De Leonardis et al., 1986), into residential homes, prisons and geriatric wards. Those who have lost their homes may simply have merged into a new "amorphous underclass" (Brown, 1985), who are socially and politically disenfranchised. Such blurring of categories can mean that the "mentally ill" may simply blend into alternative categories of the poor, the wicked and the eccentric.

On the other hand a recognition that apparent "madness" may actually be hiding the genuine problem is welcomed by some. An illustration of this as well as the difficulty of deciding who is mentally ill is the Joyce Brown case.

Joyce Brown was one of the people taken off the streets of New York in 1987 as a part of Mayor Koch's experiment to rid the streets of the mentally ill. The plan was to try and locate, out of the city's estimated 30,000-50,000 homeless, the mentally ill who had fallen through the cracks of mental health provision. Joyce Brown was a well known, though not very welcome, street person who hung around the smart Midtown district of Manhattan. She was dirty with her clothes soiled with urine and excrement, she showered passers-by with obscenities, she occasionally burnt the dollar notes that passers-by would throw at her, and, perhaps most unpleasant of all, frequently defecated in the streets. For the people who saw her and for the mental health team under Mayor Koch, Joyce Brown was distinctly mad and in need of treatment. She was taken to the Bellevue Hospital, from which she was eventually "freed" in January 1988 after her testimony showed that she was rational and coherent (Swanson, 1988).

After her release she became quite a media celebrity as an articulate campaigner against homelessness and against what she believed were abuses in the mental health system. She said that she had been subjected to a range of drug and surgical interventions against her will. What was more, she had not been crazy, merely homeless. What others had seen as symptoms of mental illness were really survival strategies. She defecated

in the streets because there were no public toilets and the nearby restaurant would not let her use their facilities. Her clothes were filthy, but where could she wash them? It is not surprising that she should vent her anger by shouting obscenities, though she apparently gave no reason as to why she sometimes burned dollar notes (Miller, 1988).

This was a case where all sides claimed moral victory. Mayor Koch argued that his scheme had obviously worked well for Joyce Brown, since she appeared to have made a miraculous recovery. Joyce Brown, however, was adamant that her problem was homelessness and that she was not crazy. The New York Coalition for the Homeless used the example of Joyce Brown to demonstrate the degrading effect that homelessness can have on people.

Of course, another way of interpreting the problem of distinguishing between poverty and mental illness is to say that it makes sense to talk about the two distinct problems but that maybe they are causally related in some way. However, as the Joyce Brown case illustrates it could be that we find mental illness a convenient way of constructing a problem if the alternative social solutions appear too troublesome for governments of the day. As David Ingleby says of the problems in interpreting the relationship between high admission rates and poverty:

> "Do these statistics tell us something about the problems which the unemployed or overworked, underpaid, poorly housed and ill-nourished actually have, or about the way society processes their complaints?" (Ingleby, 1981, p51)

So the first practical problem is, who are the clients, the

potential users of mental health services as opposed to any other kind of social service?

The second practical problem which is closely related to the above is how one distinguishes between mental health needs as opposed to other needs. Both Mayor Koch and Joyce Brown may have see her homelessness as a serious problem. However, it is apparent that if Joyce Brown had not been thought to be mentally ill, whether or not one agrees with the treatment she underwent, she would not have been given the housing that she acquired after she left hospital.

Housing and good employment are recognised to be mental health needs (DoH, 1989), but if community care is to deliver what is needed then where does its remit stop? Mental health is something which is the concern of all social and welfare policy initiatives, yet it is also obvious, from the money which has been apportioned, that there will be a limit to the extent to which housing and employment problems can be dealt with. What is more, if employment and housing are thought to be mental health needs, then surely this should prompt government initiatives to ensure full employment and the right to decent housing for all? This is unlikely to happen. The concern is that needs will only be perceived within the scope of projects which are set up to "target" particular problems. In other words any problem which has not got a service for it is not a problem (De Leonardis et al., 1986).

The second two practical problems in developing community care concern the nature of community itself. Firstly, there is the problem of getting the "community" to accept mental health

facilities in its neighbourhoods. It is assumed that the community is itself a therapeutic setting, and one which is preferable to the institution because this is the source of "normal" human relationships. It is also assumed that the community will itself undertake some of the caring. However, we have already looked at the concept of community and seen that if it is supposed to be something more than mere locality it is assumed that there is a sense in which the people within it share a sense of common purpose. They share a sense of belonging and a sense of mutual responsibility. But, it is surely in these areas, where the sense of belonging to a shared community is stronger, that there will be more resistance to the "stranger" - a rejection of those who do not fit in. Will this not adversely affect efforts to set up mental health community projects and housing?

Unfortunately, research confirms the above fear. Two Canadian anthropologists (Dear and Taylor, 1982) studied the responses to the development of mental health projects in a variety of neighbourhood settings. They found that the rejection of mental health facilities was at its greatest in those areas where there was a higher degree of community integration and participation. Indeed they concluded that the best course of action would be to build high walls around the centres so that their existence could be ignored and therefore forgotten about by the other people who live there. The biggest worry, in these neighbourhoods, was that the mental health facilities would reduce property values, because of the commonly held belief that mentally ill people reduce the quality of community life. It

appears, therefore, that if we want those who require mental health services to be "cared" for in the community the least that we have to do is to deal with those economic and social factors which prevent certain people from being considered "one of us".

Finally, there is the problem of who does the caring. If, as we have seen, one of the reasons for the move to community care is the high costs of institutional care and if another reason is that the community itself is more caring, then part of the assumption must be that many of those who do the caring are unpaid members of the "community" themselves. The Audit Commission, reviewing community care (1986), was keen to point out that once the bridging money had been provided community care would be cheaper, since it depended, in part, on social support networks which, they said, persisted in society. The White Paper on community care (DoH et al., 1989) also acknowledged the amount of unpaid care that had been carried out, and would increasingly be carried out, by relatives of those with mental health needs.

Bayley et al (1989) pointed out the importance of locating the informal care networks which, they argue, should form the basis of basic care provision. However, at a time of increasing social mobility, this might create resentment amongst those who may feel that their role as informal carers prevents them from pursuing any other kind of interests, as well as a shifting of responsibility from formal agencies to informal agencies should budgets become tight. This, as I shall argue at greater length in the next chapter, may create a crisis of accountability. Who

should be counted as an informal carer - the mother, the father, the uncle, the next door neighbour? To what extent can informal carers to called into account? To what extent can informal carers themselves be seen as clients of the mental health services since it is quite clear that many informal carers have themselves relied on formal support services to enable them to provide care? Community care will create a certain amount of confusion as the nature of the roles and duties of carers between informal and formal agencies, and how they are resolved will be determined largely by the political and economic constraints within which community care arrangements are set.

It will be necessary to look at some of the different possible approaches to community care and see if different approaches to the problem of community itself, combined with an understanding with the problems that it posses for mental health care, will have an impact on some of the problems that we have already identified.

8.4 Models of Understanding and Resolving the Problems

I wish, now, to look at three possible models of understanding, all of which break away from the old style model which concentrated solely on top down planning and which allowed no voice to those who were the recipients of mental health services. These models differ in the way in which "communities" are perceived and the kind of relationship that they may have to the state and those authorities who will be concerned with the arrangements, and the distribution of resources, for community

mental health services.

8.4.1 "Radical" Rights Model

The first model is based on what are called New Social Movements with their emphasis on rights-based solutions. Phil Brown (1985) refers to this response as radical, since its character is based on pressures which are external to the pre-existing structures of mental health care. Those who call for "radical" reform do not accept the medical model of mental distress, nor do they accept the authority of the medical profession to be organisers of its management. The people who see themselves as part of this movement of reform come from different backgrounds and include civil rights activists, users and ex-users of the mental health system, as well as professionals and social scientists who are critical of the mental health system (Brown, 1985). They support a consumer orientated service, with the decisions on the planning of treatment largely in the hands of the "clients themselves." Many would argue that this involves the complete restructuring of the professional hierarchy, as well as giving more of a focus to self-help groups.

According to Phil Brown, this model implies a recognition that restructuring at the economic level must occur in order that these changes may follow. However the commitment to a philosophy of "independent living" appeals to people of various political persuasions, not all of whom would approve of the level of State support to the same degree as does Brown.

The main problem with this view is that in its efforts to

redescribe users of mental health services as rights bearing citizens rather than objects of society's pity and fears, it appears to rely on a conception of the individual as already active and self-reliant. For Rene Anspach the "identity" politics of disability rights groups goes out to challenge traditional views of the disabled person as a political actor, not a mere recipient of services, who should not be subject to the dominant ideas about what constitutes a "healthy human being". Such movements aim to show disabled people in a situation of being in control over their environment. However, the stress on liberation from dominance in itself does not leave much room for discussion as to what collective provisions may be necessary in order that the disabled person may gain self-sufficiency with others (Williams 1991).

Secondly, although the model of the individual political actor might suit the articulate, economically secure person, this strident view of the individual will do little for, for instance, for the bewildered old woman, living alone in a high rise flat (Dalley, 1988). In her case, self-sufficiency would entail an active political environment which would go out to meet her needs and not one which would simply allow her to express her ontological independence. There are signs that some mental health rights groups have recognised the implications of such an exclusive emphasis on independence at a time when the political parties in power (especially in Britain and the U.S.A.) were also emphasising economic independence at the expense of social support (Rogers and Pilgrim, 1991). Such a stress on independence may itself, inadvertently, generate and

support the wider society's categories of social failures.

Thirdly, to do away with a conception of politics as the desire to create a flourishing society with a common language of the good is to see being an outsider, whether it be from illness, poverty or protest, as something that has to do with the individual alone. But the creation of the outsider must be seen as something which society creates (Becker, 1966). People are only outside society if society itself has no common language (or opportunities to obtain the products) of the good, which tie up their own aspirations with the aspirations of others. Mental health rights activists are right to see the mental health users as having the right to claim political power, but to see it just as an individual right is to give uncritical support to the political and economic status quo. There is still a need to look at those conditions which prevent certain people with certain kinds of problem from becoming full members of society. This itself requires an examination of the notion of membership itself and how it relates to political, social and economic organisation.

8.4.2 The Romantic Communitarian Model

The second response is based on what I call the Romantic Communitarian model. This is probably the route that the previous group of activists fear that community care policy will go down. Those who adhere to this model also see the institutional approach as inappropriate. However this view believes itself to be non-political in that it supports the view that the bulk of what is called health care is really social

care and can, and should, become the responsibility of the "community", particularly the family, and not of the state. The organisation of such care should be outside of the political domain and established within the ordinary settings of human life. For the romantic communitarian, the welfare state has simply inhibited the natural social responses which are required when a person requires long term social care.

Such a view emphasizes the need for a division between the social group and the State. What is more, the setting in which people live is taken to be the social networks which are located in the geographical spaces in which people live. The community is bound to a particular space rather than to the group interests with which a person may identify.

The romantic response recognises the importance of the person's social relationships. The institutional approach removed the person from any kind of social context within which she had formed relationships and from which she gained a sense of who she was. It undermined the complex narrative threads which sustained her sense of identity at a time when that sense of "who I am" was at its most vulnerable. In a very deep sense the institution was dehumanizing, and the communitarian approach consciously seeks to restore care to the person within that person's own social setting.

However, the romantic communitarian approach does have its limitations. With regard to its assumptions about the nature of "community" its scope is limited to those ties in which she may well have face to face relationships, to the family and the neighbours, but with whom she may not share fundamental

interests. The effect is that her capacity to develop her potential through others is limited in important ways.

Her power to act as a political agent and as a citizen is frustrated by the limitations that her immediate community imposes on her. Mental health rights groups could be seen as social communities whose views ought to be taken into consideration in community care policy. Individual users often see their interests as being expressed through such groups. If community care policy fails to take these political voices into account then it could be bracketing out a significant aspect of the users own experience of community.

There is a tendency, as we have seen, to use the term "community" to refer to a state of affairs which is good. This tendency is extended to beliefs about community care. Community is perceived as a sphere of freedom from restraint whereas the institution was seen as intrinsically restrictive. However, we have no reason to suppose that people's beliefs about mental illness will change or that they will automatically be absorbed into the life and activity of the local community itself. We have already pointed to research which shows the most active and organised neighbourhoods are often those which have resisted mental health facilities. This is not because the communities themselves have decided to take a dislike to mentally distressed people but because they have inherited the prejudices and assumptions which society itself holds.

Another assumption is that the "community" can exist as a self-sufficient unit. Community and family responsibilities are seen as replacing public ones, through the State. Such an

exchange of responsibilities is seen as actually strengthening the ties of community. However, we have already seen that communities are shaped and strengthened or destroyed by economic and social factors which they themselves are powerless to control. The effects of unemployment, of the increase of part-time work, of a change from a male-based work-force to one which is both male and female, of the increase in the aged population, of increased social mobility, all demonstrate the way in which community is built on the shifting effects of economic and demographic change. As yet we only have the nation state through which we can counteract the worst effects of these changes.

In brief, the romantic communitarian response rests on a misconception which isolates community from the economic, social, political and ideological influences which shape it. Without recognising the need for people to be treated as members of society with their own stake in the processes which affect everyone, people with mental health difficulties will continue to be isolated in the community rather than becoming members of it. There is reason to suppose that the abuses could be just as bad as in the institution. However they will be more difficult to expose since they will not be routinized to such large numbers of people in one palace and at one time.

The liberal rights view and the romantic conservative view are both represented in the responses to community care legislation today. Both welcome community care but do so for very different reasons. However I have tried to show that, whatever the intention, the effects on both attitudes and responses to people

with mental health problems could be devastating.

Part of this problem stems from an uncritical acceptance of community itself, even though the underlying arguments stem from ideological differences as to what the community can and should do. I believe that an acceptable communitarian solution can be found, which satisfies the radical rights concern for autonomy and freedom and the conservative belief that care should take place in the "homely" settings in which one lives. Such a solution must fulfil the conditions which I have identified in the first part of this thesis. In other words it must support the values of community, that is of membership and citizenship protected by rights and realised through democratic structures, which demand a concern for both the well-being of members and their capacity to participate in the processes which affect their care.

8.4.3 The Progressive Communitarian Model

A progressive communitarian view must first and foremost recognize the different ways in which people's involvements with others extend around them. Although this could mean that they will be living with a family member it may not. This suggests that contact by health or social care services could take place in the family home but could take equally place in a setting where she feels her interests may best be understood. Perhaps this will be with other mental health service users, with other friends or with other people she may consider as allies.

Secondly, facilities and opportunities must be created with the idea of creating membership. This needs to be approached at

a micro and a macro level. At the micro level, this will mean establishing public spaces, such as library or council building rooms which would allow people with similar interests to meet together for companionship or for more political activities. It means establishing areas of "safety" and drop-in centres with professional or non-professional support at those times when people feel the need for particular kinds of assistance. It means small, comfortable and friendly crisis units which people can call upon for emergencies. These are special provisions for people with mental health needs which could be provided in ordinary buildings within the locality.

On the macro-level it means looking at those social and environmental factors which have been associated with both the causes and, for others, the construction of mental illness. Factors such as unemployment, low pay, bad living conditions, homelessness, lack of accessible leisure facilities. These are, however, factors which could be seen as limitations on membership in general and not simply needs for those who are already diagnosed as mentally ill. In any case, once we see these as special needs then we find ourselves confronted with the problems of deciding who is mentally ill and who has merely "failed" in society. However idealistic it may seem to call for decent homes for everyone or for full employment with decent rate of pay and working conditions, it is essential that mental health is seen as a universal social concern and not just a specific medical problem for certain problematic individuals.

Finally, a progressive communitarian view must concern itself with the democratic input that users have into the planning

processes for provision and for the articulations of what the needs of the mentally ill are. As Croft and Beresford argue:

> "People do not only want to be involved in the definition of their own needs. They also want to be involved in the conceptualisation of such ideas." (Croft and Beresford, 1989, p10)

This means that users themselves, or their advocates, must be represented at every level of planning for the kind of services that are required and in the definition of the needs that mental distress raises. Just how this should be structured in a way that would allow users to have a significant voice is not something that I wish to deal with in great detail, especially as the structures which govern health services, especially community health services are highly uncertain at the present time. The point is that in order to be involved people need to have a voice in the processes that effect them. Only then can they begin to feel that they are members of the community with which they are involved.

This approach improves on the radical rights approach in that it perceives the issue of control, power and freedom from the standpoint of the membership one can have to the community and to society as a citizen rather than from the standpoint of the individual against society. Such a relationship makes it more likely that mental health patients could effect change. It also recognises that different people have different needs, which are partly conditioned by the degree of severity of their distress and partly conditioned by their living conditions at the time. Mental health workers need to be sensitive to the situational difficulties that people find themselves in. This approach also

improves on the romantic communitarian view in that it locates the individual within the settings within which she needs to gain control. The user is not a passive receiver of care by others but is dynamically involved with others in creating the good life for herself. It sees the individual as needing to be a member of society as a prerequisite to being a member the community.

8.5 Conclusion

In this chapter I have looked at some of the conceptual difficulties which support the idea that people considered "mad" should be treated as members of the community and some of the practical difficulties that these conceptual problems present.

I have looked at three possible approaches to how community care could be pictured and have concluded that a progressive communitarian approach fulfils the need for mental health users to feel at home in a community as well as to have a voice in it.

The progressive communitarian approach may seem Utopian in that it is unlikely that any government of the near future would be willing either to take the risk of allowing diagnosed mental health service users such levels of input or to deliver the resources that would be needed to create community care on such a level. However, the model does suggest a way forward along which tentative steps could be taken. Since community care is also an ideal, this model could also be used as a measure to put pressure on governments, as it were, to come up with the goods. In any case, in a community care policy, it is important to indicate the factors which will improve or worsen the

possibilities of a flourishing community care policy.

In the next chapter I look at the assumptions underlying and the implications of the Government White Paper on Community Care (1989) and its succeeding Bill (1990). Since community care is now British mental health policy it is important to examine the assumptions underlying its conception of the community and the effects it is likely to have on users of mental health care services.

CHAPTER NINE - CURRENT PROBLEMS AND THE WAY FORWARD

9.1 Introduction

The principle that mental health care should be moved from the institution to the community has been broadly welcomed by those who are concerned with mental health. There has been quite a vocal backlash recently, but this has been largely concerned with the lack of effective community-based facilities, which results in vulnerable people and their families having to fend for themselves, and the effects of this policy on the increasing numbers of homeless. The National Schizophrenia Fellowship, for instance, has asked for the closing down of hospitals to slow down while community facilities are allowed to develop. However, while the principle of community care is generally welcomed, what kind of community care should be envisaged is hotly contested. At a theoretical level, I argue, the battle is over different concepts of community and what needs the community is expected to meet.

There are underlying assumptions about the nature of the community by both users of services and the government. Both camps draw upon the language of citizenship and rights in order to give moral authority to their own particular visions. But they have different ideas about what the community is and about how people with mental health problems relate to it. There are also different concerns which face policy-makers and users. For the policy-makers the problem is framed in terms of what we should do with or for such people, whereas for users the problem that faces them is what kind of life they can now expect to lead (Barham and Hayward, 1991).

In this chapter I shall be focusing on present British mental health policy initiatives. The White Paper on community care (DoH, 1989) and the subsequent Act (National Health Service and Community Care Act, 1990) make specific assumptions about what is meant by the community and what they expect from it as a part of the delivery of mental health services.

The White Paper is typically vague and leaves a great deal unsaid about the structure of services, the degree to which services will be protected by the State, the extent to which consumer choices will be guaranteed, the form in which health workers will themselves be involved and retrained for the service and so on. I believe that this vagueness and ambiguity stems from the fact that the new proposed forms of care represent a complete departure from welfarist responses to health needs, something which could have repercussions for the future health and welfare system as a whole. Underlying the proposals is a vision of a revitalised and active "community" which itself has a role in providing care. It is a communitarian vision which requires careful scrutiny.

8.2 From Welfare to Community

The White Paper on community care is an attempt to make new political visions come true. It is an experiment which itself questions the relationship between the State, the market and the community. For the user of services it represents a liberation from bureaucratic and impersonal responses to a more personal, people-centred approach.

We have already looked at some of the historical and

ideological factors which prompted the change to community care. However the move to community care has also been accompanied by a belief that the welfare state itself is flawed. Mental health care has appeared to have been used not only as a direct criticism of institutions but of the notion of welfare and the assumptions concerning the duties and entitlements of citizenship that it presupposes.

The British Government first acknowledged the value of treating mentally ill people outside of the institution and in their home in the Mental Treatment Act of 1930. The Mental Health Act of 1959 went much further, in including a commitment to care in the community and recognising it as a choice amongst the range of mental health options. Community care was first declared as a positive principle in a speech made at the national conference of the National Association of Mental Health (now more commonly known as MIND) by Enoch Powell. For the first time a government health minister was expounding the evils of the institution and foresaw and welcomed its demise. However, very little was done to implement those commitments until the 1980's.

In the process of formulating an ideal model of community care there appears to be a shift from a model which emphasises services which are constructed <u>in</u> the community to one emphasizing those which are provided <u>by</u> the community (Bayley, 1973). This shift is also reflected in the demands by mental health groups for more control over services themselves and freedom from professional control. What unites the approaches is a belief that the institution is not the appropriate setting

for mental health care and that account must be taken of the social difficulties that are part and parcel of the experience of mental "illness". What distinguishes them is the shift from the central planning of provision for needs to one which is taken out of the arena of central control.

However, the idea of a National Health Service, which provides professional services to meet our general health needs, is still highly popular. The notion of community care, I argue, is an attempt to fill a gap in the public consciousness, since any kind of alternative service needs to be seen as morally legitimate. Community politics has embraced, or been embraced by, the public imagination. What is significant is that it is has become a central feature of a wider political vision. The notion of community care can be seen as a mediating moral symbol tying together the rhetoric and the actions taking place in the restructuring of welfare (Burton, 1984). "Community care" has the moral allegiance of everyone - it is the obvious step to take. What is at stake is whose vision of community we accept as valid.

The mental health services are an ideal battle ground for this transformation to take place, since this is one area in which the bureaucratic National Health structures have failed. The institutional approach to mental health care has been met with resistance far greater than in any other form of health care. Although there have been changes in the general hospital as being the centre point for the delivery of health care services, its demise would not be accepted so readily as has been the decline of the asylum.

It must be remembered, moreover, that the mental health system existed in its institutionalised form before the creation of the National Health Service and therefore prior to the ideals of the Welfare State. It has been argued that the social control functions of the lunatic asylums in the 19th century were simply taken over the NHS (Hill, 1989). The mental health service was, therefore, significantly different from the new general services since it had a very specific history and fulfilled a significantly different social function. However the changes which are taking place now are not an attempt to extend the benevolent features of the NHS into the mental health service, but to provide a blue-print for a new approach to social need.

For many on the right, and on the left (though for different reasons), the Welfare State had failed in important ways. The Beveridge Report, upon which the development of the modern Welfare State is built, had assumed that there would be full employment. The simple handouts of social security would simply act as a safety net to safeguard those people who were unemployed for short periods of time (Heginbotham, 1990), or who for reasons of severe disability were unable to work. There was no need, it was assumed, for a full scale redistribution of wealth, since public welfare was the companion of market capitalism:

> "Like the Invisible Hand it replaced, the Keynesian Hand reconciled private interest and public good." (Harris, 1987, p5)

However, the increasing numbers of elderly (in part due to the medical successes above but mainly due to overall improvement in social conditions), plus the range of chronic illnesses not

susceptible to the "quick fix" aims of the disease centred medical model focused attention on needs not met by centrally planned health policy. These changes have created a situation of crisis for the NHS that is both fiscal and ideological (G.H. Williams, 1991). The maintenance and development of new technology is highly expensive and effects relatively few people. However, the long term care problems of an ever increasing number of elderly people has also created high economic costs. What is more, the needs of many categories of ill and disabled people were not just "medical" but social. The new community care initiatives attempt to remould responses to health needs in terms of health and social care and in doing so blurs the distinction between them.

Thus community care paves the way for the social dimensions of health care to be a central plank of health care policy, since it steps into the terrain of the social worlds that care recipients inhabit and focuses on their expressed needs. This lends itself to less of a "patient"-directed approach to more of a people centred or consumer approach. It appears to endorse a retreat by the state from the "public spaces" where people organise their own lives. This raises questions of consumer sovereignty and of citizenship in the way it never has done before, and is therefore something of an ideological football. For the right, consumer sovereignty liberates people from the welfare dependency trap and enables them to assert their dignity as individuals. For the left it reveals the social needs of citizenship. For many politically active users of services it opens up the possibilities for social change in which people

with long term health requirements, who have previously been marginalised from society, can participate in the determination of their needs (Heginbotham, 1990).

The White Paper is the outcome of changing attitudes to social needs and is an attempt to carve out a particular vision of community care. The drawing up of the document must be seen within the context of the particular social and economic concerns of the government of the day. Included in that is an underlying conception of what the community is and what it can and should deliver.

9.3 Care "in" and "by" the Community

One central issue concerning the nature of community care services is the role given to the community itself. Is the community simply a container for services or a source of care itself? In other words, should we simply be aiming to provide services in the community or should we see services provided by the community? Historically we have seen a growing shift in emphasis from the former to the latter, but there are very different views on who we mean by the community and the extent to which we should allocate powers and responsibilities to that community. We shall, however look at the problem in terms of membership itself. In other words, how do the different views identify the barriers that prevent people from becoming members of the community, and to which communities do they refer?

The Seebohm Report of 1968 is considered to be one of the most significant and radical reports to articulate a need for a community service which is rooted within the social networks of

local communities themselves. It emphasised the need for the interweaving of statutory agencies and existing social networks of reciprocity which could be utilised for many forms of service delivery.

The DHSS Report, Better Services for the Mentally Ill (1975), appeared less concerned with the role of the community itself and more with the development of localised and accessible services in the community. However, even this report acknowledged the role of informal carers and their needs, as well as the need to involve the local community in decisions relating to the provision of mental health provision in their neighbourhoods.

The more recent Griffiths Report appeared to return to an emphasis on the role of informal carers and the need to build upon existing social networks in the neighbourhood. However whereas the Seebohm Report recognised the difficulty in relying on traditional networks based on kinship and locality, and the importance of diverse interest communities, the Griffiths Report appears to return to the more conservative use of the term "community". He states:

> "Families, friends, neighbours and other local people provide the majority of care in response to needs they which are uniquely well placed to identify and respond to." (Griffiths, 1988, p5)

This understanding of the foundations of community and the source of carers is echoed in the White Paper (DoH et al., 1989), and notes that the majority of care that is already given is of an informal nature and consists of friends, family and neighbours. Although the White Paper acknowledges that support

must be given for informal carers it appears not to notice the social changes which have challenged the reliability and stability of those networks. This is in spite of the fact that these were noted in the Audit Commission's Report on Community Care, which itself prompted Griffiths. It says:

> "Many commentators have observed a danger in using the term 'community care' indiscriminately as a panacea: and that 'community care' policies place an additional burden on relatives at a time when the whole concept of a support community is breaking down." (Audit Commission, 1986, p16)

Nobody appears to be suggesting that there will be no mental health facilities <u>in</u> the community, but rather that a role must be given to the "community" itself in the development and delivery of care. The question is, therefore, how the informal aspects of care (family and neighbourhood care, independent living, mutual aid and so on) will relate to statutory agencies and formally employed health and social workers.

Those who simply advocate care <u>in</u> the community appear to be primarily concerned with accessibility to services, in the sense that no-one would have to travel far from the familiar settings in which they live (Khoosal and Jones, 1989). In the past it has meant the provision of resources to enable families to look after their dependents in their own home (Bayley, 1983).

Community, in this sense, is simply the locality in which service users reside. The community, therefore, is seen as objective, physical space - a sort of container into which resources are poured. Users continue to be seen as passive recipients with special needs which, with adequate resources,

are met within that specified area. This approach looks, therefore, uncritically at community. It is stripped of its psychological and social dimensions.

Merely to create more mental health resources in the community is inadequate in the eyes of many critics, who fear that community care may simply mean the extension of unwanted psychiatric practices into the community, rather than keeping them in the asylums outside the community. It does not challenge the power relationships which constrain service users in both the institutions of psychiatry and society at large. It takes existing relationships as given (De Leonardis, 1986; Ramon, 1988). It does not challenge the medically dominated forms of treatment which many thought to be oppressive in themselves (Rogers and Pilgrim, 1989). What is the significant difference, for instance, between taking tranquillisers in the asylum and taking them in the community? Is one less dependent on health and social work professionals just because the walls of the institution no longer exist? Does the fact that one may be living in residential sheltered housing mean that one is accepted more by non-users of mental health facilities? Obviously the community cannot be a total institution in the way that the asylum was, but it is also evident that the controlling elements of the asylum-centred system are not totally diminished in the community. For instance, many of those who hope that living in the community will protect them from medical intervention are concerned about the calls from the Royal College of Psychiatrists, with the support of the National Schizophrenia Fellowship (an organisation which is dominated by

the families of schizophrenics rather than people assumed to be schizophrenics themselves), to implement compulsory Community Treatment Orders (Rogers and Pilgrim, 1989).

However, the move is to effect a much more fundamental change which seeks to utilise pre-existing social networks to inform a package of all round health and social care. Users, their families, their neighbours and other significant informal groups are seen as the vital agents in the provision of care itself. This approach forces policy makers and researchers into peering into the character of community itself. As Bayley argued:

> "Care out of the community need not concern itself with the community from which it is removing the client. Even care in the community need not concern itself overmuch with what the community is or the way it functions. But care by the community demands understanding of what it is, sympathy with the way it works and insight into the way the community can help. It demands that some consideration should be given to what is meant when we use the word community" (Bayley, 1973, p10)

Care <u>by</u> the community transforms the meaning of community and gives it a new role. Instead of being seen as a container for services, it is seen in dynamic terms, as the total interaction of the social agents themselves. Physical space, therefore is transformed into social space (Moon, 1990). It is an expressive domain characterised by human interaction and agency.

The problem here is to locate those networks which are relatively stable and where the main participants are likely to engage in reciprocal relationships of care. Abrams points out that communities understood as the local neighbourhoods are unlikely to be reliable as the foundations for reciprocal

relationships since, he argues, the strongest networks are still those of kin, race and religion (Abrams, 1977). The Griffiths Report and the White Paper also acknowledge that it is the women within families who are providing the bulk of informal care. Nonetheless family life is changing. There are high rates of divorce, people are choosing to live in less traditional home settings, and women are increasingly relinquishing their domestic roles for ones in the employment market. Whereas a basic "care in the community" service could be seen as reinforcing power relationships between users and professional service providers, care by the community could be seen as attempting to reinforce social patterns which still exist but are changing and which many people wish to change. Changes which could be seen as in themselves good, such as better employment opportunities for women, increased child-care facilities and so on, could significantly affect the maintenance of a community care system which depended on free, female domestic labour.

For feminist critics, community care in its proposed form, will simply tie women to the domestic roles that they longer want (Finch, 1989). Given that many women, therefore, could be cast in the role of carer out of necessity rather than choice, this could militate against one of the aims of community, care which is to give those who experience it a sense of well-being (Seebohm Report, 1968).

Other critics have looked at the dangers of a practice of care by the community in which the users themselves are not considered significant agents within that community. In other

words, they are still being cared for by others, rather than being seen as participants in the development and provision of health and social care. They are still the passive recipients of care provided by the community without being of the community themselves. In order to do this, however, the release of mental health service users into the community requires a transformation of the relationships in that community.

A different interpretation of the idea that care should be delivered by the community is that users, and ex-users, themselves, individually and as a group, be involved in the development and delivery of services. Such a shift in the focus of care would, it is believed, transform power relationships and release the "mental patient" from her position of powerlessness in relation to professional and the rest of society. It is for this reason that many proponents for change have turned to the Italian model of Psichiatria Democratica.

The Italian reformers were concerned to point out the distinction between dehospitalisation and deinstitutionalisation (Giannichedda, 1988). Dehospitalisation is simply the administrative rundown of the psychiatric institutions. This is a necessary but insufficient step in the process of deinstitutionalisation, which involves a deconstruction of the relationships between, firstly the treated and the treater, and secondly, the institution and society (De Leonardis et al., 1986). Both processes are necessary for the transformation of the mentally distressed person's relationship to the society from which she had previously been marginalised. For the mentally distressed to be treated as one of the community a

radical reconstruction of the social relationships which had previously required the segregation of the "insane", must take place.

The assumption which was made was that deconstruction can occur without directly challenging the "core" social and economic factors which underpin the ideological framework and which are supported by the state. For the original Italian mental health pioneers, if you can deconstruct the social relationships which exist around you the political framework will simply change of its own accord in response:

> "It is based on using resources and problems <u>inside the structure</u> which is being dismantled in order to build new <u>external structures</u> piece by piece. " (Rotelli, 1988, p186)

What is more, if the relationship between psychiatry and its users, and users and other members of the local community, are transformed, then the nature of mental suffering is itself altered (De Leonardis, 1986).

It is a bold example of the way in which care by the community is forced to look at the nature of the community itself and to attempt to transform it in order to allow the mentally distressed to become full members of that community. Whilst there is disagreement as to whether the experiment has succeeded or not, what the Italian experiment does show is that care by the community requires us to look at the ways in which people do interact and relate to each other in order to facilitate a community care service.

Mental health activities have clearly been influenced by Psichiatria Democratica, especially in their concern to see the

service user essentially as a citizen and therefore in control over the processes that engulf her as a distressed person. There is an emphasis on a more democratically controlled service, where the users themselves have a role in defining the kind of service that they require. The Socialist Health Association's Goodbye to All That (1989), for instance, bridges the two types of care, care that is provided in and by the community, by focusing on a dual meaning of accessibility. They argue that community health service facilities and support must be:

> "... accessible, in the concrete sense of them being local and in the abstract sense of no barriers existing between people in distress who want to use the service. This means that the users of the service must have a genuine say in the planning, management and running of the services." (SHA, 1989, p23)

So community care is welcomed by both mental health activities and those who have a more conservative view of the role of community. They are typical of both the radical rights approach and the of romantic communitarian approach that we looked at in the last chapter. Both, therefore, welcome the White Paper and its proposals for change, even though, for mental health activists, too much emphasis appear to be placed on the role of families and neighbours.

We should therefore look at the White Paper itself, which does put a emphasis on care by the community, and think through some of its implications. I shall look at some of the ways in which the present approach to community care reveals tensions which militate against the possibility of common purpose which is itself a condition of membership.

Firstly, it questions the relationship between the state and civil society. Community care involves the retreat of the state from the delivery of welfare. The potential interests, in establishing this separation, however, are different. For the right, the rolling back of the state enables people to foster the virtues of self-help. For the left it enables people develop a self-consciousness about their own needs in order to challenge the authority of the state. For the right it is a conservative move to preserve those social groupings, such as the family and the neighbourhood, which are the mainstay of capitalist society. For the left it can liberate a social movement which will act to challenge pre-existing political orthodoxies. For the right these groups should be de-politicised and for the left the groups should be politicised, albeit in a non-party political way. As we have argued, however, such a separation also creates a tension between the person as a member of society and the person as the member of a community.

Secondly, care <u>by</u> the community questions the professional relationships, both between the treated and the treater, and between formal and informal carers. The professional and non-professional boundaries are blurred. Where social care is concerned the White Paper stresses the importance of help in terms of cleaning, shopping, budgeting advice, searching for employment and so on (para. 3.2.2.); yet which agencies, statutory or informal, are responsible is uncertain. On the one hand it suggests that extensive use may be made of home helps and other workers in the social services; yet on the other hand it points out that friends, relatives and neighbours have

provided and will continue to provide social care (para. 1.9.).

The role of the "carer" is ambiguous. The term lumps together those people who are employed and paid by the health or social services on the one hand, and those informal providers of care whose reasons for caring may be ones of sympathy, concern or familial obligation, on the other. This raises issues concerning both users and carers.

From the point of view of the user, if the bulk of community care is to be delivered by informal agencies this raises questions as to what extent these services can be depended upon. What happens if the relationship breaks down? What happens if the carer herself provides inadequate care, since the dependent, unlike in the statutory services, will not be in a situation to demand better services from, for instance, another neighbour. A user who depends on a neighbour to do regular shopping a) must be expected to be grateful to that neighbour, and b) is not in an appropriate situation to demand the service. The neighbour, having undertaken to do a regular shop, may have a duty to continue to do so once such assistance has been offered, but the user does not have the correlative right to claim her services.

In reality, even if neighbours do offer help, it is quite likely to be of a sporadic nature, since they have their own lives to lead, their own jobs and their own concerns, which may necessarily prevent them from providing care at times, since other priorities may intervene. So even if good intentions do exist, care by the community, even if that care is semi-organised from, say, the local church, is likely to be more sporadic than regular in its nature.

Moreover, although many who have been concerned with the civil rights of the mentally ill have argued against the unjustified powers of mental health professionals, it is not necessarily true that the powers of the mentally ill and the "normal" will be equal in the community. In fact the possibilities for abuse could be seen as being greater than in the mental hospital where, although extremely difficult to operate, public systems of redress exist. Once cast in the role of carer and as acting in the user's best interests, an informal carer may acquire powers over their dependent which are legitimised and recognised by the community care system, but are difficult to challenge if used in ways which are unwanted.

From the point of view of the carer, the blurring of roles has ambiguous consequences. For many the artificial boundaries between different spheres of expertise on the one hand, and social and medical agencies (such as the health authority and the local authority) on the other, are to be welcomed, since they open up the possibility of a more holistic approach as well as breaking down traditional hierarchies. Breaking down the barriers enables the community care system to met the range needs which are experienced by the person with mental health difficulties.

But the blurring of the distinction between formal and informal carers reveals an apparent contradiction. On the one hand there seems to be a transformation of contractual relationships into more intimate relationships. Health workers are being asked to perform less specialised jobs. Care is more consumer orientated, with the emphasis on quality and all round

care (Heginbotham, 1990). The professionals are expected to be more sensitive to users' problems rather than dictating a set form of instructions, to be aware of the nature and needs of the community, and to have a more flexible approach to the difficulties that users encounter. "Workers" are expected to act more like "carers" who have a personal concern for their clients.

On the other hand it also seems that contractual-type relationships are being extended into the community. The contributions of friends, neighbours and relatives will be "commodified" and taken into account in the packaging of care. In other words a great deal of work which one may wish to call goodwill will be expected on the part of formal carers at the same time as ordinary social tasks by informal carers will be taken into account in the formal package of caring. This raises questions for both types of "carer" as to how much work they are expected to do and how much of it will be paid for or given public assistance.

However, care by the community does not just mean the provision of care by friends, family and neighbours. The White Paper, and most mental health activists, see the voluntary sector as playing a major role in the planning and development of community care. Voluntary organisations as well as self-help groups are seen as mediating organisations between the statutory administrators of community care and the mentally ill themselves. It is clear that the government sees voluntary organisations as representing the views of the mentally ill. The new Act makes it clear that local authorities must consult

with those voluntary organisations that best represent the views of the users, potential users of the services, and their carers (section 52 3(c)). It is also clear in the White Paper that the government expects these organisations to become providers of care.

This raises a third problem for the role of the community. If voluntary organisation are seen as, in part, the voices of the community, then to what extent are their powers as critics of the system affected? Will their role as critics of the system will be compromised by becoming part of that system (Heginbotham, 1990)? It could be seen as an attempt to muffle the noisy voices of dissent.

Moreover voluntary organisations will themselves have to operate within tight budgetary constraints and may be drawn to dealing with the less expensive, more rewarding and more glamorous service areas, leaving the "chronically crazy" to struggle on by themselves (Scull, 1984) or to be swept up by the prison service.

Fourthly, the transfer of care from formal to informal agencies means that the economic system itself becomes more reliant on the labour of informal agencies such as the family. Not only is there an assumption that families and neighbours should do the caring but this is portrayed as making good economic sense. Packages of care will take into account the financial worth of the labour provided by informal carers. Thus supporting informal care is seen to be good value for money:

> "Helping carers to maintain their valuable contribution to the spectrum of care is both right and a sound investment." (DoH, 1989,

para.2.3)

At the same time the White Paper makes it clear that provision will be seen in the context of what can be afforded and says that users may be expected to pay for most of the services that they receive.

That the government is expecting families and neighbours to become the mainstay of care is demonstrated by the amount of money that it has give to Local Authorities in order to run community care services. The financial commitments have been made explicit by the grants which will be available for social care. Critics have condemned the amount as insufficient to meet the costs of social care (Chapman et al., 1991), i.e. employment advice, good housing provision, day care facilities, education and leisure opportunities and so on.

Finally, there is the physical strain that paid workers themselves are under, because, as yet, formal agencies are still carrying out work which many informal agencies will be expected to shoulder in the future. Health and social workers over the last decade have been complaining about increased workloads and poor wages. Such strains are reflected on the relationship between users and workers and have been created because of an increased emphasis on the user as a consumer. There has been an increasing emphasis on the satisfied consumer rather than (and some would say at the expense of) the satisfied worker. Butterworth and Skidmore state that:

> "The heady days of the ever open purse are over and there is no doubt that increasing pressure will be placed upon care givers to recognise responsibility in their everyday work." (Butterworth and Skidmore, 1983, p121)

Nonetheless it is perhaps insufficient to argue that the government's enthusiasm for community care is based on an uncaring attitude and a wish to wash its hands of the responsibility for the well-being of people with mental health problems. The government clearly does believe in the existence of a type of community which can be resurrected and actually provide a level of care which, they believe, publically funded agencies would never be able to do. They also believe in the moral appropriateness of the community to do this. However, we cannot assess community care on the basis of good intention. What is important is the underlying theory and the shape of the society in which it is practised. As I have argued previously, a communitarian policy which is enforced in a non-communitarian society and which is also torn apart by divergent and incompatible interests is doomed to failure.

9.4 Redrawing the Boundaries

One of the intentions of the new Act is to reintegrate the mentally ill into society as members of the community. It is seen by mental health activists as necessary step towards removing the boundary which separates the so called sane from the insane. In other words, when the physical boundaries are removed the social boundaries will also disappear. However community is thought of as not only individuals living alongside each other but people who have some special relationship to each other - they relate to each other as members of the community. The aim of community care should be, therefore, that people with mental health difficulties should be seen as full members of the

community and not that their physical presence is merely observed in the community.

The problem is determining which factors count as resulting in exclusion. It could be argued that having the rights that others have is enough to confer membership. If care is provided in the locality and if they are not denied access to the activities and goods that others enjoy, then there is no longer any reason to argue that exclusion takes place. What is more, it could be argued, the acceptance of community care as appropriate in the community may also remove some of the stigma which is often attached to those who are receiving treatment. However, there may be other ways in which people are denied membership - the participation in and the enjoyment of the fruits of the community.

Let us therefore look at some of the factors which militate against inclusion, see whether these affect people with mental health difficulties, and then go on to examine whether the White Paper goes to any lengths to deal with them.

One of the material reasons why people do not feel to be a part of their social environment is when they are denied the material resources which are available to others. Proponents of citizenship theory, from Marshall (1964) onwards, have pointed to the way in which exclusion from the nation's social and economic heritage effectively excludes people from the way of life of the society. As David Harris points out:

> "Beyond a certain point, lack of resources entails exclusion; individuals are "in" but not "of" the community. Although they are members of society, they are not in a position to enjoy its fruits." (Harris, 1987, p51)

If people with (alleged) mental health problems are denied access to the social and economic goods which most other citizens appear to enjoy, then they will continue to be marginalised from society and excluded from any form of community. One way in which people feel that they can belong in modern capitalist society is through employment. This is not only because it brings in money to pay for the goods that are enjoyed by others but because it satisfies a social need - a means by which we can relate to others. The Socialist Health Association has noted that employment is a key component of a person's identity since so many of our roles in life are dependent on it. Many people who suffer from mental distress lose their jobs and therefore lose the connections they ever had to any community:

> "Roles such as breadwinner, social drinker, provider, consumer, which previously shaped a person's reason for living and gave them a social identity, may be removed because the person no longer earns a wage." (SHA, 1989, p9)

The acceptance of community care must deal with the special needs relating to employment and mental health. This has two aspects - the obtainability of employment (one's mental health history ought not to make it difficult to get work), and the nature of employment (working conditions ought to be sensitive to people's mental health needs). In fact many people may not be in the position to work at certain stages in their lives. In those cases people must be able to move into a needs based system of payment from a work-based system of payment in such a way that they are not penalised materially or psychologically

for having to do so.

The White Paper, whilst acknowledging the importance of job opportunities and stating that social care must include employment advice, does not develop ways in which work may be offered. In fact many employers are reluctant to take on people who are known to have had a history of mental health difficulties (Barham and Hayward, 1991).

The White Paper also has to be looked at in terms of other welfare legislation. Since 1989 individuals have had to show that they are actively seeking work in order to qualify for income support. This means that people who have mental health problems, but wish to claim income support whilst searching for work as someone who is well, will have to submit themselves to the scrutiny of social security officers whose job it is to ensure that the person is doing everything possible to secure employment. On top of the fear of not being seen to be doing enough is the fear that they may have to accept a job which is itself stressful. The choice is either to submit oneself to such a process or to register as sick (Davis, 1990). Both options are likely to alienate the mentally distressed from other people.

Furthermore, benefits are only available to those who already have homes. The increased amount of homelessness suggests that there will be an ever-increasing number of people who are excluded from any of the conditions of citizenship. The homeless regions - under the railway bridge, in shop fronts, in the bus station - are fast replacing those places of exclusion and segregation which the asylum previously filled.

Symbolically, the city of cardboard has replaced the "ship of fools" (Mason, 1990, p8).

Indeed, housing is also a basic good of modern society and therefore a prerequisite for membership. Although, the White Paper echoes the concerns of the Audit Commission and Griffiths that incentives ought to be weighted towards ordinary housing rather than residential accommodation there is little to suggest that there will be a parallel increase in the availability of housing. What homes there will be for people with mental health difficulties will depend on the will and the ability of voluntary organisations, housing associations and local authorities to provide them.

Another way in which people are barred from membership is the failure to meet their special needs. This raises many difficult issues with regard to mental health, since the recognition of some needs may entail an uncritical acceptance of the medical model of mental illness. For some (especially for mental health rights activists), community care offers freedom from the dominance of psychiatry and the oppressive methods of treatment used within the mental health system. For others (especially mental health professionals, although by no means exclusively), what is worrying about community care is the possible loss of contact from special medical treatment and expertise. We will look at the different expressed interests of users in the next chapter. What we need to know, however is if the new system of community health care may systematically exclude certain people from obtaining goods necessary for their membership to society.

The White Paper outlines its concern to provide a "seamless

service" through a mixed economy of care provided by not-for-profit agencies, private care, voluntary organisations, social services and informal carers. The traditional divisions between different agencies are also recognised to be a barrier to the meeting of the wide variety of needs experienced by people with mental health difficulties. Such an approach is surely a necessary step to take if the variety of special needs are to be met in an uncomplicated way as possible. However the concern is that a "seamless service" will be all right for some but only for those who fit the cloth.

Services will be based on a free market, where providers of care will compete for the resources to provide care. Local authorities responsible for the designing of community care services are likely to choose those services which they can afford. Providers themselves will be concerned to maintain services strictly within their budgetary constraints. It is also unlikely that there will be any incentive to provide services for the more unglamorous aspects of care. Certainly all providers will have their own remit and will be unlikely to wish to deal with aspects of care which they do not see as their concern. De Leonardis et al (1986), commenting on the American system, wrote that an "ill" was created for each service that existed. In other words mental health needs are defined in terms of the range of services which exist to service those needs.

This brings us on to a third means of exclusion which is the recategorisation of problem populations. As we saw in the last chapter if it is not convenient to see people as mentally ill

they may be redefined as other forms of deviant. They may be seen as criminals - and therefore a concern for the police authorities, they may be seen as social failures, or they may be seen as just so crazy that they are beyond help, leaving them, as Scull (1984) so dramatically put it, to the ghettos of human misery.

It must be clear that the intentions of the White Paper are to provide a cost-effective and efficient community care service which meets the needs of those with mental health difficulties. The problem is that the economic and ideological context in which it takes place may create new forms of exclusion. The asylum marked a physical territory which placed the mentally ill beyond the boundary of any possible community in society. However it is possible that new forms of exclusion may create new social boundaries between those who do and those who do not have certain kinds of mental health needs.

9.5 The Pursuit of the Individual

The White Paper expresses a concern for the individual client. Community care is thought to respect the individual, in that care is set within the ordinary contexts of living and in which the person is treated as a "normal" citizen. Community care supposedly represents a new kind of relationship between the "sick" individual and the state in that the person is no longer a subject of state controlled welfare planning. The emphasis in the community is that the territory of care is one in which the individual is sovereign.

The aims of the White Paper seem, at first glance, to be quite

noble:

> "Community care means providing the right level of intervention and support to enable people to achieve maximum independence over their own lives." (DoH, 1989, p9)

However it is the meaning of terms like "independence" that we need to analyze, since the term implies that normative judgements have been made as to how responsible people ought to be for the management of their own lives. In the context of the relationship between public provision and individual control the White Paper makes it clear that it has a view of public supports as marring personal responsibility:

> "Nor should community care be seen as the prerogative of public services. People like to take responsibility for their own needs wherever possible. (DoH, 1989, p13)

"Independence" here implies freedom from the ties of public agencies. It is also assumed that "community" is a sphere in which people have needs which the state cannot, and should not, satisfy.

What I have argued in previous chapters is that it is impossible to understand the nature of communities without examining the ideological, social and economic structures in which they are set. Although the State and civil society can often be seen as opposing forces it is a mistake to view them as unrelated spheres of human activity and interest. They are both expressions of the deeper ideological forms of our particular society as a whole. As David Taylor writes:

> "Civil society in which 'communities' exist is structured through the power relations which underlie both the state and the market." (Taylor, D., 1989, p23)

However, although the state is the expression of the power relations in society, as is civil society, it is a mistake to conclude that the state cannot exert control over civil society and therefore over the way in which communities themselves both act and are manipulated. This can be in obvious ways in which the state can make use of surveillance techniques to check the activities of "deviant" populations, and in ways which are much more subtle - such as the way in which decisions are made regarding eligibility of users to certain kinds of support.

The danger, I wish to argue, of current community care initiatives is that the overriding concern may be for individuals not to be a burden on financial resources and that this budget-driven approach may subject individuals to forms of intervention which affect their ability to control and make decisions over the running of their own life. Far from being freed from the tentacles of the state individuals are subject to new and real, forms of State control.

In the White Paper it is made clear that individual assessments will be made in order to provide a package of care which is best suited to their own particular problems and circumstances. The need for individual assessments has been universally welcomed, including by mental health activists. However, the problem is not about whether there should be assessment procedures or not, but about the moral, social and economic factors which are built into the assessment process (Cornwell, 1992).

To begin with the White Paper makes it clear that assessments are the means by which it is decided whether the individual

should receive public support. Instead of there being an automatic right to any form of social care which is available the individual has to go through the assessment test:

> "While welcoming the extension of choice the Governments accepts the view of Sir Roy Griffith and others that the provision of care at public expense should be preceded by a proper assessment of the individual's needs, and in particular whether they could be met while enabling the individual to live independently." (DoH, 1989, para 3.1.3.)

What is clear is that some judgement will be made as to what an individual ought to be able to do before she is entitled to services for her community care needs. This is made explicit later on:

> "Assessments should focus on what the individual can and cannot do, and could be expected to achieve, taking account of her own personal and social relationships." (DoH, 1989, para 3.2.3)

Clearly the notion of independence is being related to the belief that public support in many circumstances actually erodes individual responsibility and therefore the capacity to live independently. It creates a "culture of dependency". The idea of the individual which lies behind this view is one sees the person as essentially self-reliant, and to be helped to reach a state where she is assisted as little as possible by organised services. This emphasis on independence from organised support may not assist those people whose own experience of such "freedom" may be one of isolation leading to a sense of helplessness.

At the same time, as we saw in the last chapter, there has been a shift in health promotion to a position in which the

maintenance of health and the avoidance of "disease" is seen to be the responsibility of the individual. If mental illness is perceived by her assessors as a form of moral weakness her entitlement to certain therapeutic services may be withheld or she may be forced to take medication, against her will, to inhibit actions deemed as dangerous or irresponsible by the state. Such is the nature of discussions taking place over the value of Community Treatment Orders. Ironically, it may be that plenty of public money will be provided to control individuals, at the same time as resources for therapeutic services which may be believed to help individuals are eroded (Goodwin, 1990). So much, it could be exclaimed, for the respect for the individual's requirements.

The user's credentials as a legitimate user of mental health services are likely to be examined in such a way that she becomes the object of technical scrutiny. The line between the recognition of a user's vulnerabilities and the aim to move her into a state of independence will be decided with these moral and financial constraints in mind. The arguments are not against assessment but the context of assessment. They are similar to those made by Deborah Stone in her argument about the ideological nature of preventative health:

> "My argument is that any form of prevention, however sensible and well meaning, is likely to take a different cast when it is conducted by and in a state whose welfare policy emphasizes individualism, responsibility for oneself and deterrence." (Stone, 1989, p89)

Coupled with the concern to find out what services a user would legitimately find beneficial is the concern to reach those

mentally ill who have gone beyond the reach of services. The White Paper acknowledges that there is concern for those people who have been released from the old asylums without access to facilities which could maintain them "in the community" (para 7.5). At the same time it says that there is a concern that there may be many people who are homeless who may be suffering from a mental illness.

The question of who is mentally ill and therefore in need of services again becomes important. Presumably, to ascertain who requires mental health services will require a strict use of medical models of mental illness in order to determine whether the claimant really requires services due to mental illness. Otherwise, presumably everyone who is homeless will require the social care which comes under the rubric of community care as a whole. It is in this area of care which pinpoints the concern for distinguishing those who are "legitimate" recipients of services. For the poor this means that distinctions must be made between the undeserving and deserving poor. As we have seen, however, it is difficult, in practice to distinguish the mere poor from the sick poor (Stone 1984).

Again, the individual is under examination. For those who have been established as mentally ill it entails a particular type of invasion. It is uncertain what status and what form the notion of inform and consent will take. Where outreach services exist in amongst large poor populations it is quite likely that similar cases like Joyce Brown's will occur. In her case she was forced to undergo various forms of medical intervention which were performed on behalf of her interests.

What outreach services will do, especially if their budget is limited, is to make a distinction between a person's medical and social needs. To the extent that she is in need of various social goods, such as food or shelter, this is because she is a victim of a medical condition which is not of her own making. Seeing the problem as primarily a medical one individualises the problem, seeing it in terms of medical pathology rather than as the failure of the realisation of collective needs.

To conclude, the need for assessment will subject the individual to processes of evaluation which could be just as alienating as if she were still in an institution. Assessment of need will be judged on the basis of what professionals judge to be the extent of her independence, which in turn will be constrained by the availability of services and resources in any particular area. What is more those who are poor and distressed will have to declare themselves or be seen as "insane" in order to be seen as in need of help. In order to receive continuing care she must allow herself to be subjected to processes which she may herself find degrading.

I argue that the effects of the Community Care Act on community care, rather than liberating the individual to a new found independence, could be to make her the constant object of scrutiny in order to justify the care that she receives.

9.6 Conclusion

In this chapter I have tried to show that the implementation of the community care section of the National Health Service and Community Care Act has a number of implications for recipients

of mental health services and their carers.

Firstly, I have outlined the strains that are likely to be placed on carers, whether they are paid or voluntary. Part of this stem from the ambiguity of their roles, and the obligations that they have to the people who are put in their care. Carers themselves could also take on the authoritative roles that former professionals working in the institution inhabited.

This moves on to the second implication, that mentally ill people will still be excluded from the community. They may be recategorised as another of society's failures or deviants, or simply be ignored, subsisting in but not treated as being part of the community. The community care act fails to address those social, economic and cultural factors which alienate people with mental health difficulties and cast them out into a social arena of misfits and "crazies".

Thirdly, there are the continued strains placed on the mentally ill from the assessment procedure as it stands at the moment in a climate of limited resources. Paradoxically, it may require greater interference by professionals on the individual, and greater pressures to take on the role of "mental patient" in order to justify the allocation of benefits and services. Instead of situating the user in a context where she has control over her life and freedom from the tentacles of the state and the psychiatric profession, she will be subject to different though no less powerful forces of state and professional control.

What I would argue is needed is a model of community which I proposed in the last chapter. The Radical Communitarian

approach suggests a number of principles which should underlie the implementation of a community mental health service. However, this approach would urge measures that could not be undertaken by health and social services alone, since in order for there to be "caring" communities, there must be a commitment to the flourishing of community values which underpin a wide range of political and economic initiatives.

A positive and important aspect of this approach is that community care should be set within a participative democratic framework in which the voices of those who are involved affect the nature of service planning and development. However gloomy the prospects for community care are at the present time, I argue that given it does place importance on the expressed needs of users that this gives us an opportunity to propose the beginnings of a service which values some of the features of community life.

In the next chapter I want to look at how users may be involved in the all aspects of the mental health service. This presents us with a slightly different problem in relation to the concept of community. Users are themselves seen by activists as a community rather like the "Black" or "gay" community. The problem is, however, that activist appear to have different functions and different objectives. Many profoundly disagree with each other in their battle to see themselves as representative of the mental health community.

I will look at different models of these communities of interest, or social communities, and see to what extent they express the "real" interests of the distressed and the allegedly

"mad". What does the diversity of these communities, imply about the needs of those who use the mental health services?

CHAPTER TEN - CREATING COMMUNITY FROM BELOW

10.1 Introduction

In the last two chapters I looked at the move from the treatment of the mentally ill in the institution to a system which cares for people in the "community". I have examined the consequences of present community care policies in the context of not only the need to cut costs, but also the ideological pressure to create independent, self-reliant individuals who will be responsible for themselves rather than depending on public welfare structures to support them.

The communitarian task of locating and utilizing the services and goodwill of the person's "natural neighbours" (Bayley et al., 1990) must be seen in this context, and I have argued that such a policy is likely to create new boundaries between the deserving and undeserving poor as well as new forms of exploitation of peoples' labour. The current approach to community care combines a robust moral and economic individualism with a nostalgic vision of community which is not only rare within neighbourhoods but is undesirable for many of those who have special medical, social and emotional needs. Such needs must be supported within the public institutions of society which themselves will equip communities with the capacity to flourish as moral communities.

However, such a view is problematic, since community care suggests that the focus of development and provision should originate from the members of the community themselves. Public provision on this scale requires state planning, which appears

to take away from the community the capacity to control and address its own problems. Yet, the National Health Service and Community Care Act (1990), despite the fact that the state and its institutions are still able to control and police the meaning of, and the response to, mental illness, says that local authorities, in their duties as coordinators of community care services, are required to consult with representatives of users (and their carers) of those services. We should, therefore, switch our focus onto the users and see what a service based on their views might look like. I shall therefore look at the initiatives for mental health care from below.

For activists a community care policy, given adequate resources, provides an opportunity to challenge the prevailing oppressive ideology. Many believe that it will enable them to reconstruct a system in which the relationships between themselves, others in the community and mental health workers are less negative (Ramon and Giannichedda, 1988).

But there is a problem. Who are the representatives of the community with whom local authorities are expected to consult? Whose vision is valid? The mentally ill cannot be seen as a homogeneous group. The idea of what counts as a change for the better depends on whose story one listens to and what problems it resolves for them, since stories cannot be understood as coming from isolated and detached voices in a void. Also, not only do most mentally ill people not have any connection with any kind of organised group, but the groups themselves differ a great deal.

However, many mental health activists and mental health care

users and ex-users do have a shared experience and it is this that draws them together and endows them with a legitimate voice. In this sense they could be called a community in themselves. Many of these people would see themselves as having more in common with other people with mental health experiences than with their next door neighbours in the local "community". Indeed, for many, relations with the local community are fraught with anxiety, since it is precisely their neighbours who represent the obstacles to a sense of belonging. Nonetheless, as I have a said, there is a problem in identifying who has the authentic voice of that community.

I have classified mental health groups into four ideal types representing four very different ways in which they see themselves as relating to each other and the changes to health and social care which are taking part. They have very different visions of the future, different conceptions of the nature of the conflict and of who the enemies are with whom they are required to bargain or do battle. Users often see themselves as bearers of different forms of identity and this is reflected, in part, in the very different kinds of mental health groups which are in existence. What I shall do now is to look at the different ways in which the so called mentally ill see themselves as the authentic voice of a community and try to unpick the reasons why some people are drawn to one group rather than another. What I shall argue is that no group can be seen as the exclusive voice of the community, but all four ideal types are rooted in experiences which express genuine needs.

10.2 Social Communities

If people with mental health difficulties can be said to be a community then they are a different kind of community to the kind that we usually think of when we use the term. When we talk about community care, community development, community arts, community schools and so on, we assume that this is referring to something that is being done within a specific locality. However we also think of community as being more than mere physical space and we assume that any "community" type service will be concerned to facilitate or make use of certain kinds of relationships amongst the people who live there. In other words in talking about the community we assume (or hope that people will develop) a "sense" of community (Willmott, 1987).

It is this "sense" of community which is central to the concept, even though when people use it they often use it simply to refer to a specific location. In many cases people feel that they belong to, or identify with, a certain group of people even though they may not live in close proximity to them. We may develop a sense of belonging and common purpose amongst those we work with or share our hobbies with, through our social networks and the variety of associations that we find ourselves in or choose to commit ourselves to.

We can, then, distinguish those forms of community which are based on geographical location and those which unite people through shared social interests or activities.

It could be argued that it is these interest or social communities which express the meaning of community best in the

twentieth century, when one's geographical habitat is less likely to be an important feature of one's life. However when people declare that they belong to a community they are making a much stronger point. They are saying that their identity as a person is somehow characterised in and through their associations with others in that community. They share some interest or characteristic which is more encompassing of their being. Their sense of belonging to that community is central to their lives and not incidental to it. In other words if the community was threatened then their very sense of purpose and who they are would be threatened too.

When these forms of community arise out of beliefs that certain people are marginalised or oppressed or have their interests ignored by the rest of society, conflicts often arise when they confront the local community. The local community represents, in microcosm, the society from which they are excluded. The local community too may see them as unwanted "aliens" - social contaminants who threaten the fabric of the local environs. Indeed, such confrontations may bring out latent feelings of togetherness, previously dormant, which can be very effective if used to oust or ignore unwanted groups of people.

I have already referred to the Canadian study (Dear and Taylor, 1982) which showed how neighbourhoods often became active in opposing proposals to set up mental health facilities in their area. Such adversity is often shown to other kinds of development - such as attempts to set up an AIDS centre. In these cases the facilities are not seen to be anything to do

with improving the local community but is actually a threat to it. The interest group which is seeking entry often feels itself to be a community at odds with the "outside" world.

We often refer to "the gay community", "the Black community", the "disabled community" or, in this case, the "mental health community". However, on closer inspection these cannot be seen as homogeneous groups and, just as I have argued that local communities cannot be understood out of relation to the political and ideological structures in which they are set, neither can these social communities.

The groups within these communities differ radically in the way in which they see themselves as bearers of a common identity, in the way in which they relate to the outside world and how they see themselves as social actors both belonging to a specific social life and as agents and commanders of specific social processes (Touraine, 1985).

Although commentators such as Phil Brown (1985) have seen the mental health movement as one aspect of the civil rights movement as a whole, different groups reveal significant differences in their socio-political beliefs and interests. People with mental health problems may have experiences which reflect their class, gender or race which mean that they experience the world in very different ways from other people with mental health problems. They may have very different moral and political visions. These are reflected in the four categories of the mental health community which I have formulated.

What I want to show is that these ideal types are both

rational unities - that is, people have a particular rational framework through which they see the mentally ill as a community - and actual expressions of their identity. The user in one category will see herself as a quite different person and may express quite a different vision of the future than someone who identifies themselves with another.

Few activists would see themselves as fitting in neatly into any one of these categories and may see themselves as fitting in between two or more of the types that I have outlined. This, I argue, does not undermine the validity of the categories since I will show that all of these groups relate to each other along a particular ideological dimension and that it is through these dimensions that we can also more clearly identify their opposition to each other.

Let us turn to an examination of the character of each community before we see how they relate to and differ from each other.

10.3 Communities of Suffering

Those people who see themselves or other people with mental health problems as belonging to a community of suffering tend to see themselves as coming to terms with their situation as sufferers. They would see themselves as sharing a common affliction. Self-help groups and voluntary organisations such as these see the type of misfortune that they have as a criterion for membership and a starting point from which to come to terms with the "reality" of their situation.

They do not reject the medical labels of their condition, such

as "depression" or "schizophrenia", although they may be concerned about the stigma of having such an ailment. Indeed, for some of these groups, the name is actually seen as a way of coming to terms with their condition. Their response to mental health professionals is not that they need to be done away with but that they need to improve on their role as serving the needs of the afflicted.

However, since the needs of sufferers are to create support for those who find themselves in such situations they may find that health professionals alone are insufficient to deal with the subjective meanings of their distress. This means that self-help groups and voluntary organisations under this category not only provide each other with information about their condition and the research being carried out on it, but are concerned to provide each other with care and protection. The community of suffering provides fellowship in the face of a disease which isolates individuals from others. It may be that self-help groups like these may fulfil a longing for community that has been denied them (Helman, 1985). Groups like Depressives Associated appear to offer such help:

> "We are not a charity in the sense that we are superior beings offering to do good to you. We are all in it together, trying to help one another. You may be down just now, but I may be the one needing help next week ... We don't pretend to have all the answers ... but you will learn all about other people with similar problems and how they cope with them. We offer 'sharing in caring'." (Depressives Associated pamphlet, 1985)

In trying to understand why they have their particular problem, they do not seek to blame society, psychiatrists or

"normal" people. Many groups have a religious influence which could be seen as one way of accounting for and understanding their suffering. The founders of the Simon Communities (Leach, 1979) which were set up for the mentally ill homeless in London, saw themselves as gaining insight into the presence and nature of suffering in the world through their work. Many believed that people who were deprived of material wealth were untainted by the corruption that materialism brings. The Simon Communities' objectives were not to change the material conditions in which people lived, but to provide fellowship, community and comfort in the context of the hardship in which they lived.

However, most groups under this heading are concerned that unnecessary suffering may be abated. This is one reason why they are apprehensive about the changes that are occurring in community care policy. Given their concern for the protection of sufferers (and in the case of some forms of mental illness such as schizophrenia, the protection of their families as well) they as concerned that the institutional structures of protection may be lost. Deinstitutionalisation may leave individuals struggling to fend for themselves in a hostile environment. The hospital, for all its faults, has been seen by these groups as a "community resource" (Weller, 1990) which needs to be replaced by something which fulfils the protective function should it no longer be an option for care. They would not object to community care if the appropriate structures of caring were extended from the hospital into the localities in which people live. Physicians and psychiatrists, since the

sufferers are sick, are seen as necessary sources of care and providers of relief. For this reason many groups, such as the National Schizophrenia Fellowship (NSF), have supported the arguments for Community Treatment Orders, where physicians are given the right to enforce medication on those who refuse to take it, even when they are not living in a mental health institution.

Such treatment orders are considered to be in the sufferers' best interests. Non-compliance in such cases is not seen to be a valid, free choice by the individual but an aspect of the illness itself, which renders the individual not responsible for her actions. Such actions would be seen as a necessary aspect of the caring network that sufferers require.

It must be made clear that these groups do not see the medical profession as the only source of care. Many would be critical of the way in which the traditional mental hospitals have ignored the social and spiritual well being of sufferers. However in their concern for mental patients they stress the necessary role that the medical model plays in defining a safe haven for those people who see themselves or others as unable to fend for themselves alone. Not surprisingly many groups find themselves involving, and sometimes being dominated by, others who are concerned. These include mental health professionals, family members and other informal carers who see themselves as having a role to play in defining the needs of mental health patients. The NSF, for instance, prides itself on its family membership and it is for this reason that some groups in my other categories criticise them.

10.4 Communities of Interest

These groups also express a concern for the welfare of the person undergoing treatment from the mental health system. However they take a broader view of the person's suffering and tend to see them more as aggrieved citizens than as sufferers from a mental illness. The organisations of communities of interest see themselves as being the advocates of the mentally ill. They see users of the mental health system (whom for brevity I shall call simply "users") as united in that they are denied certain rights owed to them as individuals.

These communities believe that the interests of users are ignored in a variety of ways, and this is why they are often not treated as other citizens. In seeing users as essentially citizens who have been deprived of their rights they see their goal as to obtain what is legitimately already claimed by the rest of society. For instance, the right to vote (denied to many patients who are in residential care) is considered a legitimate right for all citizens.

However they do not see society as "the enemy", but simply as in need of enlightenment. The recognition of the rights of users is part and parcel of a progressive society.

Users and ex-users are seen as people who have an interest in being like others in the world. The validity of the dominant moral vision is assumed. Organisations of communities of interest, therefore, do not seek to "change the world" but to persuade and educate. They may play a collaborative role, seeing their specific aim as being integrated into mainstream social policy making procedures. They may also see themselves

as providing a bank of information to their members and as guides to policy making for government authorities. They wish governments to see them as allies, offering insight and information into the problems that service users face. For this reason, they are often unwilling to be confrontational with governments. They seek compromise and collaboration as far as possible.

However in seeing users essentially as individual citizens with equal rights to other citizens, they face problems. For example, an ordinary citizen has both a right to receive medical treatment and a right to refuse it; and these rights are both equal to the rights of other citizens and equal to each other. But with regard to mental health the equal weight given to the right to refuse treatment and the right to receive treatment represents, for many other groups, a refusal to come to a decision about the role that the medical model plays in the defining of mental health needs. In refusing to take a stand many users (who identify with other groups) see such organisations (such as MIND) as not paying heed to the lived experiences of people with mental health experiences, and their need for help.

Groups like MIND face another related problems. In attempting to define the problems of users and identifying their goals they often find that their belief in user participation conflicts with their need to pursue their other goals effectively (Scott, 1981). MIND finds it difficult to facilitate user groups (SHA, 1989), which is not surprising given that it expresses this tension. Once the goals of communities of interest have been

identified then who is actually involved in pursuing them is, for the person whose concern is with securing rights and interests, relatively unimportant.

10.5 Communities of Identity

Communities of identity, on the other hand, consider the social identity and the interpretations of a member's experiences to be of intrinsic importance. The belief that users and ex-users belong to a community of identity assumes that only people who have had experiences of the mental health system have a right to define their needs. They consider themselves as the only legitimate interpreters of their experiences. Those who believe the judgements of others, especially mental health professionals are simply deceiving themselves. Those who belong, and those who see users as belonging, to communities of this kind are suspicious of medical "experts" and believe that the very idea of collaborating with professionals entails subjecting one's own identity to the definitions of others.

Instead of seeing themselves as suffering from the impact of a mental illness, they see themselves as sharing a common experience of psychiatric domination. They see the mental health service as a fundamentally distorting institution which reproduces images and symbols of the sick patient. Such distortions invalidate their own interpretations, reducing them to illustrations of their "sickness". It is the medicalisation of ordinary experience that members of the community of identity seek to liberate themselves from. Groups such as these often

look back to Szasz and, even more, to the Laing of the late 1960s as the intellectual founders of the anti-psychiatric point of view.

Groups which could be seen as expressions of communities of identity differ in the extent to which they will involve themselves in anything that involves the mental health system. Survivors Speak Out, on the one hand, will try to seek out "allies" in the mental health profession and are in favour of patient councils which give people being treated in hospital a voice. The Campaign Against Psychiatric Oppression (CAPO), however, keep at arms length from any agency which smacks of psychiatry. Separatists such as these see patients' councils as "new shoes for concentration camp victims" (quoted from Lawson, 1991) and see their aim as bringing services totally under user control. Of the mental health system CAPO are uncompromising in their hostility:

> "Psychiatry is one of the most subtle methods of repression in advanced capitalist society. Because of this subtlety, few recognise the dangers shrouded by the mystification of 'modern medicine'. The psychiatrist has become the high priest of technological society, exorcising the 'devils' of social distress by psychosurgery (butchery of the brain), electric shock 'treatment' (plugging brains into mains) and heavy use of mind controlling drugs." (From the CAPO manifesto)

The organisations of communities of identity seek the right to define their own needs and develop their own services. What is important therefore is the participation of the membership itself to define its views. The participation of users (or survivors as ex-users are often called) is crucial and is necessary for their true empowerment in society. Groups such as

Survivors Speak Out do have non-user members (usually mental health workers) whom they call, as I mentioned above, allies, but efforts are made to ensure that it is the users' views which dictate the agenda.

Communities of identity raise particular problems in mental health since it is their members' very status as responsible agents which is at stake. Their "sickness" is seen as synonymous with an inability to make rational judgements. Survivors often speak of the problems they face when appointed as the user representative on mental health committees, since their very ability to articulate leads to the accusation that they are non-representative of users of mental health services as a whole.

The medical view, which subjects the "mentally ill" to the judgements of "experts", also excludes the possibility that the user has a political identity. It is this image of users as vulnerable, passive or weak that such groups go out to challenge. As Rene Anspach wrote:

> "Mental patients are often conceived deterministically as fundamentally powerless and irrational beings, who are at the mercy of their distortions. Such notions about "mental illness" are intrinsically incompatible with political action, which is by definition conscious and goal directed. (Anspach, 1979, p767)

It is the conception of the "normal" society with which communities of identity are concerned and the way in which the mental health system serves to deal with what it considers to be problem people. They seek to change society's attitudes, but do not seek political or economic change (except when it directly

discriminates against people with mental health experiences).

Those who are involved in these communities identify with each other as survivors of the mental health system. Their common experience of psychiatric domination is what unites them. As with communities of suffering it is the common experience which is important and what gives support to each other. Organised communities of identity create amongst themselves a social environment which enables them to express themselves free from the domination of the mental health system. In that sense identity communities resemble what Bellah et al (1985) called "life-style enclaves", through which islands of community are formed on the basis of a similar characteristic. In other words, the narrative experiences of the mental health care user are reduced to the mental health experience and everything else is bracketed out as irrelevant.

10.6 Communities of Oppression

Communities of oppression on the other hand see themselves as victims of socio-political oppression. Psychiatric breakdown is one way in which they have been punished by the system. Whereas communities of identity want society to "open up", communities of oppression want fundamental economic and social change. The former essentially see mental illness as being constructed by society, the latter may also see mental illness as being caused by the oppressive material conditions that society creates (Busfield, 1988). Its main focus is on the way in which psychiatry often masks the deeper social ills which create distress. Such groups do not necessarily object to the

provision of mental health facilities but see change in society as more pressing.

Since they see themselves as victims of socio-political oppression it may not simply be the mental health experience that unites them. They may relate to each other as women who have experienced loss of power and self esteem. They may relate to each other as Black, experiencing cultural isolation and social and economic discrimination.[1] Others may see it as part and parcel of the class struggle in that it is the conditions of the working class in society which create distress in society.

These groups differ in the way in which they see change as being brought about. Whereas in the communities of identity the "extremists" could be seen as the separatists, the extremists in the communities of oppression could be seen as the revolutionaries. Revolutionary tendencies as a whole, but also in relation to mental health, were more prevalent in the 1960's and early 1970's than they are today. At that time total revolution seemed much more of a possibility for some people than it does in post-Thatcherite Britain. Many statements of some of these groups appear out-dated today. An example of such views are expressed in this American Marxist-Maoist-Leninist group pamphlet which questioned more liberal groups' acceptance

[1] Many studies have demonstrated that even 3rd generation Blacks are more likely than the indigenous White population to be diagnosed as schizophrenic. This has prompted a heated debate amongst mental health activists. For some this fact demonstrates the way in which Blacks are labelled as mentally ill just because they are different, whereas for others it demonstrates the way in which Blacks are still treated badly by White capitalist society. For a review of these arguments see Fernando (1988).

of:

> "Mental patients' liberation groups which fail to challenge the ruling class as an enemy but instead identify attendants (working class people), individual doctors and/or nurses, and family members as the enemy - a tactic which divides the proletariat and its allies by failing to identify the real enemy." (Radical Therapy and Revolution, 1973)

Although most people within this form of community would not see themselves as revolutionary, they see capitalist society in its present form as fundamentally flawed and in need of structural change. They share an interest in community with communities of suffering in that they seek a society where "togetherness" is possible. However, whereas communities of suffering tend to be conservative, seeking forms of association that sufferer may retreat to, communities of oppression are utopian in that they look forward to a new kind of society which does not yet exist.

10.7 Shared Objectives

As I have already said, these groups are ideal types, but it is also important not to see them as isolated from each other - either in practice or ideologically. All the groups are linked through some shared objective relating to their experience of mental distress and the mental health services. These shared objectives are also the source of tension which exists between the categories.

The table below demonstrates the way in which these communities relate in terms of the objectives which they share. It also demonstrates the limitations of each ideological

framework. For example to understand the mentally distressed within the framework of communities of suffering is not to be particularly concerned with their social emancipation. To understand them as a community of identity is not to be particularly concerned with creating a society which values the existence of community.

	SUFFERING	OPPRESSION	INTEREST	IDENTITY
SUFFERING	-	community	welfare	fellowship
OPPRESSION	community	-	soc/ec rights	emancipation
INTEREST	welfare	soc/ec rights	-	civil rights
IDENTITY	fellowship	emancipation	civil rights	-

Let us look at these objectives more closely to see how they define the relationship between each category of community and to see how they are also the source of tension between them.

Communities of suffering and communities of oppression relate to each other in terms of their concern for <u>community</u> in society. Their desire is for a society in which people who are mentally distressed in some way are nonetheless seen as members of that society. However their conceptions of community and how it can be achieved are also the source of tension. Communities of suffering tend to be distrustful of change and conscious of the way in which it can upset the structures of care which already exist. Communities of oppression, on the other hand,

point to those structural features of society which inhibit the formation of community. They therefore look to structural change as a means of creating a communitarian society.

Another way of seeing this difference is to see the former as embodying and desiring a nostalgic notion of community whereas the latter is utopian in its orientation. Whereas the former may stress the importance of self-discovery and finding out one's sense of selfhood as a sufferer in society, the latter stresses the need to obliterate those social forms which create distress and create a future in which one's (non-oppressed or repressed) self is revealed.

Communities of suffering tend to be more concerned with the <u>welfare</u> of the sufferer of mental distress, an objective which they share with communities of interest. The availability of treatment is seen as crucial to both groups, although communities of interest may be more concerned to develop better structures for information and consent than to improve the availability of medication per se. Communities of suffering, on the other hand, hesitate to champion the cause of freedom of choice when a sufferer's mental health may be considered, by the relevant experts, to be at risk. For communities of suffering the protection of the sufferer overrides any concerns about the rights of the individual to choose. It is for this reason that the National Schizophrenia Fellowship back the Royal College of Psychiatry's call for compulsory community treatment orders, whereas MIND have been very much more reluctant.

The concern for welfare also involves looking at the way in which mentally ill people live. Housing is therefore a relevant

issue here. However, whereas groups like MIND have campaigned the need for improvements in the provision of housing and in the benefits system, other groups which would be classified as communities of suffering have been less concerned with rights to housing and income except in the face of dire poverty and homelessness. We have already seen how the Simon communities in London met the needs of homelessness - not by campaigning against economic hardship, but by providing relief for those sufferers who needed it.

Communities of identity and communities of suffering share an objective in creating <u>fellowship</u> amongst those who share a common experience, but it is the understanding of the character of their experience of fellowship which divides them. Both believe that the existence of this shared experience is both significant and unique. Communities of identity tend to come together for mutual support and to articulate a self-defined and alternative understanding of their shared traits. They may often come to perceive this trait as something positive or actually desirable. They may reject the whole notion of "mental illness", recasting the experience in a more positive light, or simply as an alternative experience of reality.

On the other hand communities of suffering tend to accept the existence of the problem and see the fellowship of the group as nourishing a process of self-understanding. Fellowship here offers a way of coming to terms with one's problem, and learning to deal with those experiential problems with which the medical system is ill equipped to deal with. In contrast, for communities of identity fellowship is a way of making a

political statement, for communities of suffering, it is a way of finding comfort and a means of coping.

A very different objective is one which is shared by communities of interest and communities of oppression. It is the pursuit of material goods - the realisation of social and economic rights. The tension which exists in the pursuit of this objective is really the extent to which they collaborate or confront the state for changes in legislation which would bring about change. An interest group like MIND, for instance, is concerned to find friends within the relevant institutions and find ways in which changes can be made through collaboration. Communities of oppression, however seek to win from the state the necessary changes. They see themselves as essentially against the state.[2] Communities of oppression also tend to have a wider vision in that they see society as systematically reproducing forms of mental illness. Communities of interest, on the other hand, tend to be more piece-meal - wanting certain reforms in housing and benefits for the people that they represent rather than full scale change in the housing and benefits system.

Communities of oppression are reluctant to have a

[2] With the changes in community care legislation voluntary organisations will need to decide the nature of their role in the development of provision. Voluntary organisations will now be expected to become providers of care. For some this may appear to be a poisoned chalice - giving them the chance to provide services whilst having little power to improve mental health facilities as a whole. The decision as to whether to become providers of care in the system or to maintain their campaigning role will be determined by deep self examination as to what kind of group they are and how they define themselves and the interests and identity of the people that they represent.

collaborative role in the mental health system because they are essentially concerned with the political emancipation of those who they see as oppressed by society. It is this emancipatory objective which they share with communities of identity. They see people who are mentally distressed or who are labelled as mentally ill as oppressed by society or the state and its agents. Their liberation from prejudice and from all forms of discrimination are what make these communities self consciously political.

They differ in terms of who they see as the enemy. For communities of identity the problem revolves around the creation of the problem of mental illness itself. The objective is to rid society of those institutions and attitudes which invent "mental illness" and therefore see the "mentally ill" as a problem for society. For communities of oppression the problem revolves around the creation of social conditions which create mental distress. At a time when there is increasing homelessness and increasing disparity between rich and poor as well as uncertainty as to whether adequate mental health facilities will be provided there are tensions between the view that users should welcome the demise of the asylum and the view that there should be a campaign to defend the entitlements to health and social benefits that developed in the post war era.

They differ too in the way in which they see themselves as relating to other social movements. Communities of identity do appear to identify with other groups of people who see themselves as oppressed, but they are concerned to maintain their separate identity as survivors of the mental health

system. They see themselves as sole authorities in the determination of their struggle. Communities of oppression on the other hand are less concerned to draw up an independent agenda and may see their concerns as one aspect of a wider political struggle to create a certain kind of society which they believe would be better for all. In a sense communities of oppression are akin to what people now think of the old form of social movement, which sought to challenge the core institutions of society, whereas communities of identity are more akin to the so-called New Social Movements which seek addresses the multiplicity of forms of injustice and prejudice call for the right of alternative forms of living to co-exist (Touraine, 1992).

The concerns for a separate identity, for the right to be different and for self-determination come under the heading of civil rights, a concern which communities of identity share with communities of interest. Both communities see themselves as being deprived of their rights as individuals. However whereas communities of interest tend to emphasize rights which enable them to participate in society, including the right to special treatment, communities of identity tend to emphasize their the right to be different and the right to be left alone. In practice this may involve agreement on many issues [3], but there

[3] The South Manchester Reporter (April 2nd, 1992) reported that a pub Landlord had refused to serve a group of mentally ill patients from the local hospital because they "scare the customers". Issues of discrimination would, of course, be a major issue to both communities of identity and communities of interest and could unite people from both groups to launch a protest.

is a difference in ideology. Communities of identity seek to break down the boundaries, or at least broaden them, to create a society in which all types of behaviour, beliefs and interpretations of reality are acceptable. Communities of interest, on the other hand seek to draw the mentally ill into the boundaries of the "normal" which essentially requires us to draw them into our own way of life. They are concerned with the way in which the interests of the mentally distressed are met in the system as it is,and so tend to define themselves as a group that needs to act "in the system". Communities of identity, on the other hand, define themselves as different from other people in society therefore see themselves as acting "outside the system" in order not to be compromised by it.

This tension, as we have mentioned before, creates problems for a community of interest such as MIND, which has organisational interests in achieving certain goals, yet is also concerned for the rights of people defined as mentally ill to have more say in the processes which affect them. MIND has had many difficulties in setting up user groups (although it has had some success in sustaining their consumer magazine Mindwaves). Essentially, the strategic objectives of a group like MIND tend to take precedence over the value of user involvement where these clash. They appear to take the view (not without justification) that the interests of people with mental health problems are not solely represented by those who chose to become involved in the users' groups themselves.

I have tried to show that we can indicate four different ways in which people both see themselves and others as belonging to

a mental health community. Although we started off by showing them as ideal types understandable as isolated categories we have also shown that we can gain more understanding of these communities through their common ground. Seeing them as ideal types helps us to understand the nature of tension between "them" and the rest of "normal" society. Seeing them as related communities helps us to understand the tensions which exist between the communities themselves. Both ways of seeing these communities help us to gain insight into the different ways in which people make sense of their mental health experience and the battles that they perceive need to be overcome.

When local authorities and health authorities are called upon to speak to users and representatives of users of the mental health services, it is important to recognise that the conflicts of views which they will encounter are rooted in very different kinds of experience. The nature of these experiences, give rise to different, though not mutually exclusive, needs. The needs which they express are not simply determined by the medical experience of mental illness but are also rooted in other problems in a world which is confronted as being difficult. These experiences of oppression, prejudice, isolation or marginalisation are due to many other social factors which, for the person, cannot be disentangled from a understanding of their mental health.

10.8 Who Speaks for the Mentally Ill?

The call today, from the Government, the policy makers and the mental health activists themselves, is for user

participation. There are attempts in many health authorities and local authorities to talk to the users and potential users of services, since it is believed (however much a sham it may be in practice) that a good community care policy must be one which is developed out of the experiences and preferences of those who have used and who wish to use the mental health care system (Kingsley and Towell, 1987; Davis, 1988). The problem is, who is it that speaks for the mentally ill? If there is no group of people who represents their views then whose views do we hold as valid? Would it not be better to simply do a survey or of a random sample of those who use the services?

Since the purpose of this thesis is not to address the sociological problems of collecting information and the methodological questions that underlie different kinds of approach, I will not dwell on these issues. However a survey could not demonstrate the very different needs which arise from different kinds of experiences that people have. If there are differences in the way in which users prioritise their health needs it may be for equally relevant reasons.

I wish to argue that although the different forms of community demonstrate different visions of the world, none of which can be seen as the exclusive view of the mental health user, all of them demonstrate some aspect of the mental health system that needs to be addressed. Simply to focus on the official views of an organisation like MIND, for instance, ignoring the dissenting voices from the centre of advocacy groups like Survivors Speak Out which try to work within MIND, would be to ignore the different kinds of problems that many other people with mental

health problems experience.

I believe that the needs that the different forms of community demonstrate can be summed up as follows:

SUFFERING

The need for protection and help.

IDENTITY

The need for autonomy and space.

INTEREST

The need to foster participation and respect the citizenship of the mentally ill.

OPPRESSION

The need to challenge the social order.

The fact that communities of suffering are reluctant to challenge the dominance of medical authority and are sceptical of any changes which seem to suggest that people who suffer from mental health problems should strive to live independently does not and should not invalidate the essential need for protection and help. For many, the need to be able to "stand on ones own two feet" is marginal to the need to find help from others. Notwithstanding the problem of who decides whether chemical support is what is really important in certain circumstances, it is nevertheless true that may people do feel that the medication they do receive does offer some kind of support against the frightening feelings that their mental health problem presents to them. At the same time it is the support and the protection from other people that many people desire and not the need to

confront the system (even if the system does need confronting). Why certain people feel these kind of needs and identify with that community, may be for many different reasons. The sense of vulnerability may be in part due to the severity of the mental health problem and in part to other social factors such as old age or low income, which may contribute to the feeling that they cannot manage alone.

At the same time, however, others may feel disempowered by the very insistence of a model of community care which emphasises this view of the vulnerable and helpless mentally ill individual. The experience of empowerment can be realised in different ways and depends, crucially, on other social and economic factors as well as medical ones.

Those who see themselves as belonging to a community of identity argue that their demands and beliefs have been, and still are, marginalised and regarded as indicators of mental illness. This puts them in an impossible position when it comes to challenging the mental health system and prevents them from having any legitimate role in terms of the planning and development of services. They believe, therefore, that users must be allowed some autonomy to make choices about the kinds of services which are appropriate and some space in which to develop these views. In other words, they need some physical and political space in order to be taken seriously. This suggests that the mental health system must provide some kind of opportunity in mental health services for users, or their advocates, to get together to be able to express their views

about the developments which affect them. [4]

However, it is a mistake to see the community of identity alone as expressing the needs of the mental health community, even though to be given the chance to have a voice in the processes is a necessary step in enabling users to participate in the system to which they are bound. There are also dangers in seeing the mental health community as taking this form. A model of radical independence and user control may simply play into the hands of governments who wish to scale down the resources they make available for a comprehensive mental health system. A system which emphasises its independence from the medical system may have difficulty in defending the resources for a mental health system at all.

Communities of interest reveal the importance of the citizenship rights that have been denied users both in and out of the mental health system. The needs of some users have revolved around those rights of citizenship which are the assumed inheritance of "ordinary" individuals. To be denied those rights is to be deprived, in some way, of own's humanity. The thrust of this concern is the demand to be seen as people first and as disabled second (Ramon, 1991). The bar to

[4] It is recognised that some people, for various reasons, do not feel equipped to speak up on behalf of themselves. This does not, however, mean that they have no legitimate views about the mental health system or about they way in which they are treated within it. Advocacy is a means by which the person's views can be put forward through a trusted spokesperson. There are various forms of advocacy, which are different in their implications and which has been discussed widely in the mental health literature. Communities of identity do tend to encourage self-advocacy, wherever possible, in which an individual or a group of people, speak or act on behalf of their own needs and interests (MIND, 1990).

membership of the "community" is perceived to be that of entry into citizenship, where citizenship is seen to concern the possession of crucial civil, political and social rights.

When, I suspect, most policy makers think about who represents the interests of the mentally ill, they will point to the large interest group, MIND. The extension of citizenship rights to the mentally ill and the problems of how these can apply to their special needs, is, of course, a necessary step in any improvement in the reorganisation of services, but this, again, cannot alone address the problems of community care which are expressed by the other groups.

It does not address the need to confront wider social and political issues which affect all people and not just those who are considered to be mentally ill. Of course, many people would be fearful of a community care policy that simply concentrated on the way in which society can be changed without looking at the immediate concerns of people with mental health needs. However, the demands of communities of oppression do point to a need to look at those features of economic and social policy which effect the mental health of its citizens. This requires the focus of mental health reform to look beyond the scope of the institutions which cater for mental illness to those structural features of society that enhance mental and physical well being and prevent the likelihood of certain kinds of mental illness to occur.

To sum up. The various communities express different needs which I believe express the lived experience of those who use, or have used, the mental health system. It will not be

surprising if local authorities and health departments simply see the range of battling groups as an impediment to reaching the "true" voice of the mental health community. I believe that firstly, the range of groups express different needs which are not mutually exclusive and, secondly, while they may not all be statistically significant (in that most users are not involved in any actual groups of this sort) that they are all politically significant. They represent ideal types of the possible ways in which users could see themselves as relating to each other, to the mental health system and to society at large.

In short, communities of suffering demonstrate the need for special services to be provided for both their medical and their non-medical, subjective needs. This may mean the provision of therapeutic and chemical services as well as counselling and the facilitation of self-help or mutual aid groups. The existence of some services must be available and protected as a right.

Communities of identity demonstrate the need for a voice in the system as well as the provision of space to articulate their own views to become politically self-conscious. This means that users must have a democratically significant voice at all levels of the planning process and also be allowed the right to form autonomous groups to meet and discuss mental health issues, campaigns and strategies of intervention.

They also have, as communities of interest express, citizen rights which point out their right to be treated as individuals who deserve dignity and respect. In that sense they demonstrate the need for legal advocacy to protect them from being subjected to unjustified psychiatric processes as well as representation

in the court where neighbourhoods may themselves threaten their well being through evictions or through intimidation. In this respect MIND has rightly pointed out that the cuts in legal aid will violate the right to defend themselves in mental health tribunals.

Finally communities of oppression demonstrate that the experiences of mental distress and the treatment of mental distress is a political and social issue which goes beyond the parameters of mental health provision. It concerns the very structures of membership itself and the way in which the uneven distribution of valued material and social goods contributes to the experience of mental distress as well as creating a population of social "undesirables" for which the term "lunatic" is a convenient label which legitimates the state's responses to her. Communities of oppression do not indicate so much a set of special rights so much as a vision of the kind of world we have to create if we want a society which is as free as possible from mental distress and as free as possible from those social and economic factors which create both conflict and boundaries both of which prevents the formation of a sense of community and a sense that everyone can contribute a members of the community. Communities of oppression politicise mental health and therefore the role of the therapist and mental health worker. To what extent mental health workers or, to that extent, anybody who campaigns politically remains to be seen, but the Joyce Brown case illustrates that such issues cannot, and will not, be swept under the carpet while people have such experiences.

10.9 Conclusion

In this chapter I have tried to do three things: to outline four ways in which those with mental health difficulties can be seen as belonging to a community, to show how these communities interrelate and, thirdly to show that these communities are rooted in specific experiences of difficulty and express particular needs. Unless policy makers come to terms with the diverse needs of people with mental health problems, which are not simply rooted in the medical experience of mental illness, we shall have a mental health system which will fail many people with mental health needs.

In the next, concluding, chapter I shall look at the relevance of looking at mental health policy in relation to our understanding of community itself and how community care relates to broader political visions of the communitarian society.

11.1 Introduction

Given the lack of available resources inherited by and given to local authorities, the hopes for a community care service which can integrate the individual into the "community", as well as provide for basic ordinary and expressed special needs, look slim. However, it is possible to see within the proposed changes the possibilities of a progressive, democratic communitarian framework which could point the way to a more satisfactory model of community care in the future. Activists and policy makers must search for ways in which they can use community care policy as a means of resolving the problems of marginalisation that people with mental health needs have faced in the past, and as a way of satisfying the needs illustrated by the four types of community outlined in the last chapter.

To conclude this thesis we must look at the changes that are needed and the problems in implementing them in face of the current "reforms". Some of the problems may actually reveal opportunities for those who wish to see a comprehensive and progressive community care package in force (Levick, 1992). The fact that local authorities, for instance, may not be able to deliver the services that assessment profiles say that individuals need may turn out to reveal an opportunity for a strong campaigning platform in order to demonstrate the catalogue of unmet needs which exist in their catchment areas. This will also allow health and local authorities a tremendous amount of scope to consider what the needs of a community might

be.

I shall explore the changes that are necessary and then look at a key area of community care policy and see what scope it provides for the recognition of the four needs that I have outlined. Notwithstanding some of the practical difficulties that the White Paper (DoH, 1989) presents for users, carers and workers, and the philosophical problems which underlie its assumptions (which we identified in chapter eight), I shall look at some of the opportunities for "enlightened" social policy that the practical changes may provoke. I shall also look at the way in which community care policy could prompt a welcome focus on the community itself which could provoke public debate on the nature of community and how best to support it.

11.2 The Changes that are Needed

I have argued that a successful community care policy will require a number of changes which affect the way that we think of both the nature of community and the way in which we deal with those we categorize as being mentally ill.

To begin with, the policies ought to be set within a progressive, democratic framework. I argued in the first half of this thesis that community must embrace the requirements of membership and citizenship which are protected by a system of rights and realised through structures which are democratic. Amongst other things, for a member to feel that she identifies with the purposes of the community to which she belongs, she must be able to participate in the practical organisation of the community itself. A communitarian society ought to be one that

values community of this kind and establishes ways in which people are able to participate in the processes which govern their lives. I also argued that the needs of membership require the distribution of socially valued goods in such a way that they secure for everyone the entitlements that citizens enjoy. No-one ought to have a monopoly over a good that is essentially a good of membership. Such membership goods, ones that we ought not to be excluded from, would certainly include housing, food and clothing, employment, health and education.

I went on to argue that the ideas contained in the notion of community outlined in the first part of the thesis can be used to frame an approach to community mental health care. In chapter eight, I contrasted a progressive communitarian view with a radical liberal rights view and a romantic communitarian view. Whilst the radical liberal rights view ignores many of the needs that people have arising from people's sense of their own vulnerability and their need for formal and informal networks of support, the romantic communitarian view denies the need for people to have a voice and some power within those processes which appear to govern their lives, and the right to reject the imposition of treatment. Both ignore, therefore, crucial aspects of what people require as members of a community and, by extension, as members of society.

Since the mentally ill have historically been treated as strangers to "normal" community and social life, changes are needed in society and the mental health system which will enable us to accept the mentally ill as both members of society, and as participants in the "community". Such changes will need to

recognise and deal with the strains on users and carers that community care imposes. In chapter eight I argued that many of the problems of marginalisation and the strains that community care impose is due to the way our society treats outsiders and decides who should be responsible for them. However the implementation of community care with all its attendant problems may force a public debate on these matters. The very fact that we will have people in our neighbourhoods who will appear to us as very different may encourage people to examine their own prejudices about what is acceptable and what is not acceptable. Since so many people do use the mental health services in their lifetime it may enable us to recognise and accept the vulnerabilities that are within us, and feel more open to discuss our own mental health problems and mental health as such, since the consequences of doing so will not suggest the need for incarceration.

In the last chapter we looked at the problem of finding out who is representative of those using the mental health services. Communitarianism offers a means by which we can understand people as expressions of different kinds of community. I suggested that service users see themselves as members of a community in four different ways. The demands that these communities make are not necessarily incompatible since they express four very different kinds of need which are born out of the experience of difficulty that they have had. The range of different groups and demands need not be a stumbling block for policy makers but can be used constructively to find ways of enhancing sensitivity to the needs of users as a community. The

needs that I argued ought to be accepted are - protection and help, autonomy and space, participation and respect as citizens, and the freedom to challenge the social order.

To a large extent the success of meeting these needs does depend, again, on the political framework in which the ability to meet needs is set. However, awareness of the needs that ought to be met may guide policy makers to find ways in which the new policy arrangements could be used to meet these objectives or at least to find ways which will publicise needs that exist but which are not met.

I shall now look at one of aspect of the changes to a community care system, the requirement that needs are to be assessed, which, although we have shown could lead to the creation of new problems given the current political and economic framework under which we live, could be used by sympathetic community care organisers in a way which could point the way towards a flourishing community mental health care service.

11.3 Assessment of Need - a Progressive Approach

There are really two forms of assessment that will take place under the new system. Firstly, there is the assessment of need that will take place in any local authority district. This is an integral aspect of the community care plan which local authorities are obliged to outline and publicise. They are required to determine priorities and to make public the needs for which assistance is available and the arrangements and the resources that are available in order to meet those needs

(Thornicroft et al., 1993). Local authorities will therefore need to make an assessment of the importance of certain needs and whether there is a local demand for such a need to be met.

The other form of assessment is that which is made of the individual. After an initial screening process, which will identify a person as in potential need of health and social care, an assessment is made, usually by a multi-professional team of health and social workers, of the needs that that particular individual will require. The task is then to find the appropriate resources to meet those needs and to package them in such a way that the individual experiences the care as a total and "seamless" service.

The changes mean that both the person's health and social needs will be assessed. This will automatically involve an assessment of the person's ordinary needs as well as her special needs. Her ordinary needs will be those that she requires as an ordinary citizen, but which have been denied to her due to mental health difficulties, such as housing and employment. Her special needs will be those which she needs as a person who has mental health difficulties, such as therapeutic and psychiatric services.

We have already looked at the way in which assessments could become a source of technical scrutiny and a means by which the person is judged to be deserving or not of care or of benefits. Decisions as to who will be assessed will be made by social services departments who will themselves be aware of the budgetary restrictions within which provision has to operate. Which needs are classed as priority needs may also be affected

by financial restrictions and result in decisions which maintain that some needs are deserving of care whilst others are not. There is concern, for instance, that services for those who are heavy alcohol or drug users may not feature in community care plans. It is possible that such services may disappear completely in some areas.

The financial constraints may also mean that departments will be unwilling to carry out beyond a certain numbers of assessments. Once an assessment is done there could be an obligation for departments for provide services at a time in which the money to provide such services is unobtainable. Nicki Cornwell (1992) has predicted that there may be a similarity with the process of "statementing" for children with special educational needs. Since a statement of needs creates a legal obligation to provide services education departments have found various ways of avoiding the statementing process where it is known that the resources for such services are not forthcoming. Perhaps because of the problems that statementing has created, government departments have been very vague as to what obligations local authorities will have to provide services once an assessment has been made (Thornicroft et al., 1993).

Shortages of resources may also, as we have already mentioned, mean that there will be pressures on informal carers to provide a large measure of the care. It may be felt that where users have families in which there is reasonably good relationship, then such a resource ought to play its part, especially if the provision of alternative accommodation and social care to such people may mean that users with no family links could be

deprived of it.

It appears to me that the requirement to assess need can, despite its problems, be used imaginatively both to look at the kind of needs which ought to be addressed, and as campaigning mechanism to demonstrate the extent of need that exists and the shortfall in resources that is required to meet those needs. Let us look at the four broad needs that I outlined in the last chapter and see how the assessment process could be used to come some way to meet them.

11.3.1 The Need for Protection and Help

Most people probably think that the kind of needs that the assessment process is intended for are the needs for protection and help. Health and social services are geared towards "helping" people who for reasons of ill health or unfavourable circumstances require services to aid recovery or to ease disadvantage or impairment. However, as the nature of communities of suffering demonstrates, community mental health services have an opportunity to meet many other of the expressed needs for fellowship, which could be seen as an integral aspect of protection and help that have traditionally been denied by the old style services. Community mental health services could create opportunities, for those who feel they could benefit, to organise self-help groups. They should at least be given the opportunity to meet others who they feel suffer from a similar complaint and to be able to use this to provide each other with support. Self-help groups could also be used as a means of gathering information and provide a forum by which information

can be discussed in a way which is not couched in obscure "professionalised" language. Many self-help groups do exist today, but we should identify them as a community need, and encourage the development of groups for those people who may have previously felt that the obstacles to set up one were too great, or may never have thought of this option: they may still feel that it would be a good idea.

11.3.2 The Need for Autonomy and Space

The needs for autonomy and space are related in that self-help groups offer an arena of activity which could be free from professional involvement if that was the way in which the group wished it to develop. In any case to identify autonomy and space as needs would be to encourage the development of users' groups and the organization of some means by which these groups had representation on the relevant planning and development committees. It could be that users groups could be set up within a particular catchment area or to represent a number of group houses. In some ways the nature of community care makes it more difficult for users to recognise their communal needs, as Tomlinson recognises:

> "In hospital, the very act of standardization lumped them together in such a way that they might be able to recognize their common needs. The converse of the principle of individual care is the lack of a community of recipients. Opportunities for collective action and empowerment are therefore fewer in the community setting." (Tomlinson, 1991 p163)

Therefore the need to set up users' groups, or the space for users to set up groups should they ask for them, requires a pro-

active approach by community health workers. Workers and users themselves may need to ensure that such opportunities are being created, and that there is fair representation from these groups on the relevant bodies concerned with the running of the local community mental health system.

The existence of users' groups may also encourage self-advocacy, in which "an individual, or a group of people, speak or act on their own behalf in pursuit of their needs and interests" (MIND, 1990), within the individual assessment process. For it could encourage individuals to reveal their own preferences for treatment, and even to call these groups to act as advocates when assessments take place.

11.3.3 The Need to Foster Participation and Respect the Citizenship of the Mentally Ill.

We have already seen that assessments are likely to involve the identification of both ordinary and special needs. Ordinary needs will be those which it is thought that users need as citizens. There is a considerable problem in formulating just what these needs are. This could open up public debate about what needs people have as citizens and as members of a community. The need to foster citizenship and participation is rather a broad need, and should perhaps be thought of as a guiding principle in formulating the actual needs that it engenders within any particular setting.

The need for participation overlaps with the needs for autonomy and space, in that they all suggest the desirability for users' groups. But whereas the needs for autonomy and space

involve the need for members to be able to criticise within the process, participation involves collaboration and cooperation on already agreed upon projects and activities. In practice it is probably difficult to make the distinction, but it is important to realise that the distinction exists and to suggest different ways in which such needs may be realised.

The need to participate and to be respected as a citizen suggests the need to include users in various aspects of ordinary activity that other citizens already enjoy. This may encourage a more creative look at the facilities that exist for others, such as Local Authority educational and leisure facilities (Murphy, 1991). It may be that special facilities could be organised for those who feel unable or who lack confidence to join in as ordinary members (recognising the need for protection and support where necessary). For instance there could be special sessions set aside for mental health service users at the local swimming pool, much in the same way as time is set aside for women (and even adults!).

As ordinary citizens we feel entitled to a range of goods which ought not to be denied to us. These include housing, health, education and employment. Such needs will be included in the assessment process, but it is likely that it is with these basic needs that the shortfall will be revealed. As we have seen, just as in the statementing process for children with special educational needs, there will probably be pressures not to assess where needs cannot be met. On the other hand it gives community mental health organisers an ideal opportunity to publicise the extent of need that exists and the lack of

resources that there are to meet those needs. It could bring to the surface the question of needs themselves - particularly those needs one has as a member of a community and from which one ought not to be excluded.

11.3.4 The Need to challenge the Social Order

Those authorities who choose to politicise community mental health in this way will recognise the fourth need that many users may have - the need to challenge the social order. This is because the experience of some, if not many, of mental health users, will not be that they have a mental illness, but that they have been socially disadvantaged for which their mental health has also suffered. Of course, there may be the need for therapeutic services to be provided to alleviate suffering but it may also prompt community mental health organisers and workers to see their own role as political. This requires recognition, in the assessment process both at the individual level and at the community level. On the individual level it means concentrating on those needs they may have due to social disadvantage. To recognise this in the assessment itself would be to indicate a respect for the individual as a victim of oppressive social forces rather than as victim of mental deterioration. On the community level it indicates, as we have mentioned above, the need to publish the shortfall in provision in such a way that it reveals the interchange between mental health and citizenship.

As I have said, the assessment process could just be used as a means of pretending that certain needs do not exist and as

means for scrutinizing the individual's suitability for certain kinds of benefit. On the other hand assessment within the community care system does offer a glimmer of hope in pointing the direction towards a better community health system should community mental health organisers chose to use the process in that way. A communitarian perspective on what a community itself requires, both in terms of the locality and in terms of users themselves, offers a plan of action which deals with needs that people have as members of a community.

11.4 Conclusion: Community Care and the Good Life

Community care suggests an ideal which goes beyond the need to provide services. It suggests a worthwhile way of living such that people who are cared for are treated as members of the community. As such the implementation of community care incorporates many dangers, if one does not consider what one might mean by the worthwhile life. We already live in a society which values and rewards individual endeavour, and, in Britain and the U.S.A. at any rate, community care provision has been set in motion at a time of spending cuts on public services. The reality of community care for many who require it may be that they are even more marginalised from goods and activities that many other citizens enjoy than they were before.

However, this is where we are presented with the opportunity to examine the difference between ideal and reality, since it puts the notion of community onto the political agenda. It allows us to examine what it means to live in a community and how we are to understand people if they are to be treated as

members of a community. We have said that mental health presents us with a particular challenge since historically, and conceptually, "madness" is what is unintelligible within "normal" society. Just as the notion of community raises the question of the boundary, so does "madness".

To live in a communitarian society, however, we must be able to show how it is possible for all people to live as members of the communities in which they participate, and through which, in turn, they manifest themselves as members of society. We need to develop a communitarian perspective of some sort in order to discern what it means to live as a member of a community rather than just as an individual with rights. This is not to dispense with liberalism or the notion of rights, but a recognition that there are certain goods that rights secure for individuals which presuppose communal values and a vision of what society ought to grant individuals in a worthwhile society. To start with the premise that people are bearers of a social identity and ought to be a members of society enables us to see what we can do to "communitize" the processes which already govern our lives so that our allegiance to our society is realised through our participation in our different communities.

Community is at its best, not when it imposes a blueprint of what the good life ought to be, but when it seeks to find ways in which its members can participate in the creation of the society in which they wish to live. Community care puts those aspirations onto the agenda. We must find ways in which we can begin to understand, and then go on to include, those whom we label as mentally ill as participants in our society and as

recipients of socially valued goods.

Far from the "mad", the "crazy" and the "desperate" being a threat to the natural sedateness of our "own" society, they may prove to be our salvation. In having "community" thrust upon them, the so-called mentally ill may now rekindle in us the idea that a society in which we are all valued as members of our communities has both political and psychological worth.

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