from it drawing refreshing insights.

For reasons of accuracy and clarity, LaPiere will be, at least temporarily, the centerpiece of what follows concerning sociological theory. His writing is authoritative, lucid, comprehensive and candid. Also, unlike others, LaPiere knows and uses history to his advantage, a technique to be emulated here. It is necessary to emphasize that when a part of his theory (or a minor extension) is offered, it is with the knowledge that such a "transcribing" inevitably mutilates and undoes, in terms of concision and style, what the original writer worked so hard to avoid: sloppy expression thereby linked with inept reasoning. To say that LaPiere's theory, at whatever level, is a "tight conceptual package" is to understate. It is hoped that a measure of his style can be retained in this presentation.

To emphasize by repetition, LaPiere's work is a complex and detailed accretion of data from many fields and sources, much of which escape the standard theorists of change. Included in this broad range are anthropological findings, especially the work of Homer G. Barnett (10), to whom LaPiere acknowledges an immense debt (11), detailed histories of inventions in all types of crafts, industries and disciplines, social history at its best (e.g. Marc Bloch and Preserved Smith), and other, more "offbeat" literatures. The theory is a subtle blend of macro and micro sociology, for example, the Industrial Revolution

(if such an "event" actually occurred) is balanced against social-psychological requisites and conditions which produce individuals capable of creating change. LaPiere is, amazingly perhaps, as comfortable in one area as in another. As mentioned before, the vast subject of social change is a logical culminating point for one whose prior books handled collective behavior and social control (12).

The remainder of this chapter will be devoted to an explication of LaPiere's theory with occasional elaborations and detours in the interests of my thesis. It is hoped that this project will not become tedious, although at times the analysis and recounting of LaPiere's 550-page book into less than a tenth the space will require uncomfortable compression. The most unfortunate aspect of this attempt at synopsis is the unavoidable omission of LaPiere's voluminous documentation. Only his conclusions will be chronicled, therefore creating the erroneous impression that they are pure armchair speculation. His data-gathering is scrupulously comprehensive.

I do this so that the position of the innovator as a motor of change will be appreciated completely, without my having to create an original explanation. At the outset I should make clear several things. First, LaPiere's exposition is not to be confused with my thesis: they are not absolutely synonymous, although I willingly acknowledge his indispensable contribution. Second, I differ with LaPiere regarding the role of culture and its cumulative

quality, since it is obvious that the social actor of whatever talent cannot successfully operate without knowledge and access to a nourishing cultural milieu. Moreover, the tools of innovation are the reservoir of cultural traits and their infinitely recombinable nature. In his polemical and outspoken style, LaPiere makes a superb case for the innovator, but only winks at the problem of culture and its role in change.

On the positive side however, I go through this rather onerous operation in order to provide a well-made platform from which to extend his theory, reshape it and present my own. I allow LaPiere to speak for himself at length so as to avoid unfairness in the presentation of what must be considered an excellent sociological tract. What follows then is a blow by blow account of Social Change, selectively edited of course, and mildly bastardized in order to better serve my intellectual intentions.

"Every innovation, whether it be a new mechanical device, a new form of human relationship, an addition to the stock of knowledge, or a theory, such as that which will be presented here, is at once a utilization of established cultural elements and a violation of some aspect of the status quo" is the first sentence of Social Change. With writing as sound and appealing as that, it will be an effort not to over-quote the source. Furthermore:

...Through most of recorded social history men have apparently considered that change per se is undesirable and that the ideal social condition is stability... Folklore, myth, legend, theology, social philosophy, ethical and aesthetic standards, and other symbolic constructs have, for the most part, reflected the traditional modes of social conduct and have operated as social controls, subtly or overtly coercing the individual members of society to conform to the traditional ways of life. Even the philosophers of change, such as Plato and Marx, have usually granted the desirability of change only as a means to the achievement of the good - and stable - social order; men have in fact through most of social history maintained a considerable degree of social stability. Wars, invasions, and other disasters, natural or social, have been a commonplace in most times and places; but periods of pronounced social change have been few and of short duration, and during these periods only limited areas of the social system have been affected, while the vast bulk of the social heritage has persisted, generation after generation, more or less intact. (13)

Social change, then, is atypical, asocial, historically rare and something of a "regularity" only in the last three hundred years in the West.

Even now, in the midst of the most rapid social change that man has ever experienced, the social ideal would seem to lean toward the glorification of stability and the depreciation of change, as witness the fact that most contemporary sociological writing is concerned with structure rather than process, with the state of things as they are rather than how they came to be that way and in what directions they are going. (emphasis added) (14)

LaPiere's dislike for Marx and other traditional heroes of those who claim to own the inside track vis a vis the study and ideological support of change, is a potentially aggravating note for many modern students. Yet in the final analysis, LaPiere comes off as better sociologically informed and currently more useful than the more revered 19th century radical heroes. His attention is to individual innovation,

advocacy and adoption of technological, organizational and ideological changes, and not to large-scale, collective change, as evidenced in the few successful social movements and revolutions of the last two centuries.

His theory was constructed upon many others' work, yet is noticeably removed from standard sociological presentations in many instances. I have added emendations to the overarching schema, as suggested principally by Marion G. Vanfossen and like theorists, who concern themselves with the necessity of developing adequate conceptual tools toward successfully understanding the future. (Were exhaustiveness my aim, a final section on the details of social planning, in the tradition of Mannheim, Dahl/ Lindblom, etc. would be included.) A crucial issue which will be given unfortunately short shrift is the idea now gaining some currency, that we should begin socializing our citizens from their youth to live in a segmented world rather than pretending we still operate in the never-never land of Gemeinschaft. This is for my purposes accepted as axiomatic, but slightly beyond the central issues, therefore mentioned rather briefly, as is the case with other significant extensions of thought.

LaPiere's analysis and description of social change in human history, especially the recent past, is the most precise, inclusive and sociologically sensible this researcher has been able to find. What will be shown is that the mechanisms of change themselves have undergone and

currently undergo transformations in form and content, and that therefore many current writers have been misled into considering only collective action as the motor of significant change. Not only is this not the case in post-modern culture, there is much evidence suggesting that this set of ideas never has been the most accurate portrayal of the purposive restructuring of society.

Bodin and Vico outdistanced their contemporaries by introducing cyclical theories of change, and Locke first posited normatively the possibility of human-designed alterations of society. Condorcet, however, was the first positivist for whom social engineering through scientific study of behavior seemed possible (15). On his heels, in the enlightenment, the idea of progress (16) as not only possible but a positive good vied with the remnants of conservative late medieval thought and institutions, in which change of any type was anathema. (While modern scholars of the medieval have worked valiantly at dispelling the misnomer, Dark Ages - born in 19th century scholarship - we still must accept the widely held opinion that in terms of human freedom, the Middle Ages were too immersed in tradition to allow very much. This attitude may become tempered through efforts of more scholars like Sylvia Thrupp (17). Examination of some modern studies portrays the people of the Middle Ages as often having been aware that trade procedures, military customs, and other

feudal realities (especially the Papacy) were obstructing

possible betterment of life. Yet, sadly, the social

structure and its overwhelmingly powerful legitimations

deterred most would-be innovators and coopted those few

whom it could not pacify in other ways. Changes which did

occur were very slow in coming and usually of a modifying

nature rather than the gross restructuring and rethinking

which has become the hallmark of modern society and its

theorists.)

> ...for it required great courage and profound contempt
> for the traditional to assert that not God but man
> himself had created society and that what man had
> wrought man could change to suit his needs and his
> conveniences. It is difficult now to appreciate how
> radical, how subversive in the eyes of authority,
> how strikingly adventurous, this idea must have
> seemed to most men of 18th century Europe. It reject-
> ed and ran counter to a vast collection of myths,
> legends, superstitions, laws and theological proscrip-
> tions. (18)

It should be pointed out that while social scientists have

long since adopted the enlightenment appreciation of man's

control of social reality, the vast majority of souls, even

within the political borders of "advanced" nations, still

feel extremely timorous when the question of their social

system's legitimacy is raised. Perhaps Maine was premature

in announcing the move from status to contract in the West,

when there still remain among us many powerful and demanding

"feudal" constraints under which people must carefully

operate, lest their "contracts" be revoked for noncontractual

reasons. Throughout any discussion of social change, the

basic and perennial distinction between intellectual

theorists and proselytizers and the masses with their leaders, sacred and secular, requires emphasis. To forget that the mental productions of a Vico, Locke or Condorcet were literally worlds removed from those of their contemporaries is to ignore one of the basic laws of innovation: its utterly atypical and asocial quality. To innovate is to deviate from established cultural values in the most heretical way.

Darwin became a great friend to social scientists interested in change, eventhough his <u>Origin of Species</u> often suffered in their writings. The evolution of species quickly became the "natural" evolution of society toward a "necessarily" improved state. In this way, a potentially radical theory of change lost much of its punch, being converted into a legitimation of the status quo. Capitalists' exploitation of the worker, imperialist wars and other 19th century conditions seemed in some half-informed minds suddenly to be affirmed by ontological forces larger than man. Amazingly, the public still remains at least slightly mystified and pleased by the "survival of the fittest" theory, especially when their particular group turns out to be the fittest.

The mid-nineteenth to early 20th century was rich in theories of change: (1) social Darwinism; (2) Toennies' famous dichotomy (more symptom than cause of change); (3) the socialist conceptions (anarchism, Marxism, Fabian socialism, and the most effective in many ways in the

non-Marxist countries, moralistic reformism; (4) cyclical theories of history; (5) particularistic theories (diffusion-ism, geographic determinism, biological determinism); and finally (6) the sociological theories (assimilation, social ecology, social lag, cultural acceleration, to name the more famous) - each brandishing its practitioners, theorists and schools.

Of the socialistic doctrines, Fabian socialism holds the distinction of being the most accurate prognosticator of 20th century reality (19). Its playing down of "necessary and immanent revolution" in lieu of compromise and moderately liberal "gradualism" more accurately reflects the changes which even now are being incorporated into modern society, than the apocalyptic visions of the Marxists. However, in terms of effectiveness of political action, the many short-lived, single-issue (segmented) (20) reform movements win hands down. Two beliefs characterized these movements, the power of organized minorities, and the power of religious righteousness in destroying the social evils of the world (prostitution, drinking, disenfranchisement of women, heathenism in foreign countries, etc.) (21). Although clothed in obfuscating State Department ideology, this basic "show the natives how to live" sentiment is today obvious in this country's aid to "underdeveloped nations".

Cyclical theories, whether of historical (Sorokin, Toynbee, Spengler, etc.) or anthropological persuasion (Kroeber, Leslie White, Gordon Childe, etc.), when tested

scrupulously against historical reality (as best we can know it) became merely useful and interesting prods to more sophisticated research. (Sorokin's monument to group-study probably better withstands attack than other cyclical theories, and his popularized versions hold great appeal for those who wish to return to "ideational" culture. The deep-seated Puritan motives behind his chosen trichotomy are too apparent to attack. That complex society should become less sensate runs counter to the very nature of modernization and increased rationalization of culture throughout the world.) Specialists of brief historical periods have repeatedly stated that cycles make sense only to the researcher whose period of interest extends beyond the possibility of detailed knowledge: the pyramid at two miles becomes hewn stones at two yards, molecules at two micromicrons. The sociologist must exercise care that relatively unlinked, "unique historical events", do not become magically glued in order to fit a desired conceptual arrangement.

Diffusionism and the famous determinisms suffer from an error of thinking regarding causality, in assuming that a given phenomenon is in direct causal chain with a proposed independent variable, without considering the (usual) condition of intervening variables. Under modern scrutiny, the deterministic route has been laid to rest, and the concept of "weighted variables" and multivariate causation has arisen to fill the void. The many "Only"

causes have been properly downgraded to the rank "One of many". As LaPiere notes, "The(se) systems of interpretation ...were grandiose social philosophies rather than scientific hypotheses - testaments of faith neither derived from nor testable against the evidences of social history or the observable facts of social life". (22)

Without going to unnecessary lengths in refuting the major sociological theorists of change, it can be said that each one seized haphazardly upon an interesting and time-locale specific feature of social reality, and announced that "all" change was therewith produced. While Thomas, Park and others offered intriguing and somewhat useful models of change (in terms for instance of assimilation of immigrant groups, cycles of race relations phenomena, and other "ecological" occurrences), Ogburn in 1922 brought forth a somewhat more useful idea. He built on Tarde's law of invention - invention by the individual - but added to that a little Marx, giving us the still popular conception of social lag, in which material productions necessarily out-strip in their sophistication attendant intellectual/emotive responses. To use LaPiere's trichotomy, technology confronts social organization and ideology with conflicting and challenging elements, thus creating the possibility of highly "inconsistent" behavior patterns and beliefs.

Even when these luminaries are considered, along with lesser figures - Hart, W. Moore, Martindale, etc. - their predominant fascination with stasis and structure blocks an

adequate appraisal of change. It is as if change will "take care of itself" while social scientists must concern themselves far more with the "problem" of societal ongoing-ness. This obvious fallacy has been attacked by more recent theorists - Mills, Barrington Moore, Barnes, to name the earliest. Out of this revolt, a most important suggestion emerges, as pointed out by LaPiere, in the words of Bendix and Berger:

> And to do this, to include in sociological concern the changes that may occur within the social system attention must be focused on the boundary-extending as well as upon the boundary-maintaining activities of individuals, in the permissive aspects of culture and society which enable individuals to experiment with what is possible as well as upon the social controls which limit the range of tolerated behavior without defining that range clearly. (23)

That sentence better than any other of its period - 1959 - suggests precisely where this thesis is going. What remains to be filled in are the outgrowths and reasons which are involved in that particular view of social possibilities.

Perhaps more amazing than old-style reductionism is the often attacked (by Europeans) ahistorical quality of American theory, especially that purported to explain change. It has been pointed out frequently that current American training in sociology does not stress history due to the 19th and early 20th century fascination and enslavement to histori-cal matters among its founders, which diluted the burgeoning sociological perspective. LaPiere suggests that a "funda-mental misconception regarding social change has closed the door to sociological exploration of the field" (24), speci-

fically, the belief, inherited from this history-laden legacy, that change is a constant, ever-present element of society, an "inherent social process". LaPiere continues with the interesting aside that economists, not shackled by this belief, have developed more useful theories of change through their involvement with modernization programs:

> The search for an explanation of this resistance (to change introduced from the outside) has not yet produced a general theory of social change that is sociologically acceptable, but it has led to a consensus among economists who are interested in economic stability and growth that it is the character and activities of individual members of the society, not the social system itself, that distinguishes the stable from the dynamic society, a view that is in general accord with that which will be developed in the present work. (25) (emphasis added)

In one of the most revolutionary and memorable sections of the book, LaPiere powerfully introduces key ideas under the heading "The Asocial Nature of Social Change". This section follows his critique of older theorists and sets the tone for the remaining pages. An extended quote (a practice not to be repeated) is in order at this point:

> ...It is the thesis of this book that the changes that occur within a society are asocial; that they are not in any sense a product of the society per se or a consequence of some universal and unvarying law of social life. Social change is not comparable to the changes that invariably occur through time in a living organism, to the normal changes that are involved in growth, maturity and decline. The changes that may occur in a society are, on the contrary, far more comparable to those violations of the normal organic processes that follow when, for reasons yet unknown, a cell goes wild - when it breaks from the "laws" that control its growth and reproduction and, multiplying, disturbs the functioning of the entire organism. The forces that make for social change are, if the organic analogy be pursued, abnormal - a violation of the normal process by which the social system is transmitted

from generation to generation of members. A change in
society comes, even as does a tumor in an organism, as
a foreign and unwanted agent, not necessarily of des-
truction, but always of disturbance to the established
and organizationally preferred structures and processes
of life... The idea that social change emerges directly
out of the society that it thereby changes has long
delayed recognition of the fact that society in all its
various aspects operates constantly and consistently
toward self-maintenance; that all social organization,
formal and informal, is as organization inherently
resistant to change; and that social change is the
work of socially deviant individuals acting in asocial
ways. That social change is not directly produced by
the society so changed was implicit in a theory of
collective behavior that was advanced in 1921 by Robert
E. Park (with Burgess, Introduction to the Science of
Sociology, U. of Chicago Press, pp.865-952). Change
comes about, in this theory, as an incidental conse-
quence of the fortuitous interaction of numbers of
people who have become desocialized – that is, stripped
of their normal social characteristics – through parti-
cipation in mass milling. In the milling process, new
modes of social conduct are sometimes created and he
thought, sometimes established in the social system as
the end product of a social movement. Had Park turned
his attention to deviant individuals rather than to
deviant masses of individuals, he might have broken the
conceptual barrier that has retarded sociological study
of social change and thereby inaugurated a fruitful
change in American Sociology. (26)

For many theorists, including in some measure the

present author, this position is extreme. It underestimates

the importance of institutionalized innovation (as in scien-

tific or technological research settings and "think tanks")

and it makes by implication the unorthodox suggestion that

a major component of change (if not all change) in the tech-

nological, ideological and organizational realms is not

subject to iron sociological laws, but actually random and

unpredictable in origin and frequency. These complaints

were offered in reviews of Social Change. However, even if

they were entirely valid and fatally so vis a vis the useful-

ness of LaPiere's approach (which is not the case, as will
be shown), his insight in this matter is nevertheless
valuable enough to explore and amend in various ways with
complementary and extending ideas. While far from perfect
in formulation, this theory is more capable of "handling
the data" of human history, especially in the post-modern
period, than any other - although in a few instances LaPiere's
conclusions and predictions arrived at by way of the theory
are demonstrably weak.

A common assumption among theorists of change is
an insistence upon the supposed cohesiveness of society;
they imply much more interdependence with "social system"
terminology than actually operates, especially concerning the
post-modern situation. One need not embrace an extreme form
of social atomism in order to appreciate the unalterable and
unmitigated individual quality of life, a function of the
physiological and mental situation of the human animal,
along with societal constraints such as ones "place" in the
system and the coincidences of personal history (Mills).
"Social System" reasoning carries in terms of personal
security a rich psychological pay-off assuredly, and as an
analytical, heuristic device it may have been useful vis a vis
premodern societies. Recently Gouldner and many others have
pointed to the false, "Pollyanna" sentiment implicit in this
approach as a product of 1930's theorists trying desperately
to put back together a world in fragmentation. Marxism was

beating on the American door and more and more academic ears were attuned to the "new" tones, so Parsons and his followers fictionalized the system perspective, and to their delight, over the years since its inception, it has begun in some minor ways to correlate with reality.

Change is as diverse and pervasive a reality as stability in both the social and physical worlds, yet in many minds, the dynamic tendency is conceptualized as a single, constantly uniform quality. It would make as much sense sociologically to allow change its due in terms of various tones, textures and rates, as to lavish upon stasis, equilibrium and stability the distorted, unhealthy attention which has become the hallmark of right-wing sociology. (However, in keeping with the nature of dialectics, it must also be admitted that of very late, those younger, "hip" practitioners - especially text writers and editers - have swung to the opposite pole with unwarrented ease, perhaps more in an effort to catch the liberated student market than to alter the direction of the discipline.)*

Change cannot be conceived and explained in anything like the terminology suitable to stability. The nature and structure of the language itself deal a poor hand to those wishing to compose an adequate portrait of this perplexing element. It has been suggested by some anthropologists that our physiological tensions, our readiness to explode into action has historically been geared towards conservatism.

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*written in 1972. The "liberated" stands as qualified.

Alterations in the environment of major dimensions were to

be avoided and quite literally fought off. This truism has

been entirely overdone in the interest of political conser-

vatism, but it is nevertheless foolish to ignore what seems

to be a rather basic human preference - for the predictable,

usual and unthreatening. Yet, alas, we simultaneously seek

after entertainment and new stimuli with nearly the same

zeal with which we protect our fragile status quo.

Keeping these "dialectical forces" in mind, LaPiere

divides (somewhat arbitrarily) the phenomena of change into

several types: (1) normal cycles of activity and the usual

and constant changes of personality, which represent the

normal, non-innovative aspects of change; (2) the other,

unpredictable elements of human history - great men and

events, change over historical time labeled as epoch or era,

and the more generic "quality vs. quantity", the most

difficult to measure in some aspects and the most inclusive

of all such terms (27). In addition there are other, less

important types: fads, fashions, cults, movements (28).

Again turning to LaPiere, we find that:

> Although a social system or particular aspects of a
> social system may be fairly stable through many
> generations, social life is nevertheless life. It
> exists only through the actions of the members of the
> society, and those actions are not in any real sense
> static or stable. Actions are motion; motion is
> fleeting; and the instant the members of a society cease
> acting, that society ceases to exist. (29)

His pronounced positivist, "action-theory" bias does not

vitiate the statement's value. LaPiere seeks to undo the

constraining theoretical knot of the functionalists, but
perhaps his view of the social fabric is a bit too loosely
woven, his vision somewhat distorted due to his over-
reacting to the stasis-champions. Great emphasis is put
throughout his study on the need for scholarly awareness
of the apparent static quality of systems, on the apparent
success of social control mechanisms in inhibiting innova-
tive behavior, yet, on the actually unpredictable, almost
anarchic potential for change evidenced in some semi-
socialized participants in any given society. The genesis
and impact of these deviants will concern us further at a
later point.

Methodological Interlude

History is very often the analysis and chronology
of crises and unique, unplanned situations and events.
The day to dayness, the normal and unperpetrated changes
that occupy most of society most of the time also gain the
attention of those who keep records: "Daily life in..."
is not an unusual title. But "Social Change in the time of
Henry I" would shock most medievalists, and certainly the
people who occupied that historical moment. Therefore the
uses of history for the scholar intrigued by change are
different from those of the standard academic historians.
There is enough recorded trivia to be sure, but incisive
and accurate analysis of change is something which until
very recently in the history of historical writing was

practically absent. The few well-known exceptions (e.g., Ibn Khaldun) prove the rule that historical writing meant a less than perfect recording of the "noteworthy" - and in less eclectic historical epochs the definition of that criterion fell largely to those few despots who could afford and were willing to support a court note-taker. Froissart, with his sly frankness concerning the social structure of late medieval Europe, or Machiavelli, whose Discourses smack of much less respect for the autocracy than does The Prince, were atypical enough to accentuate the usual legitimating, pandering words of court historians.

The time is taken here to point out the highly debateable uses of that most ambiguously handled art: pre-modern historiography. For a date, we might agree with Barnes and select Rankin as the founder of modern historical study (30). But for instance even so late as 1965, a new book, The Political Economy of Slavery (31), according to authorities, totally revised the accepted view of that ante-bellum practice, so that previous explanations were largely obsolete. And this is not the product of a new "discovery" in terms of primary materials, but more a substitution of a revised approach to the data (Marxist in this case) in lieu of the traditional one.

The problem of causality occupied this writer longer than was profitable. Some of the better studies (32) stressed more than anything else the hellish complexity of social life, particularly when viewed, as in this instance,

from a macro-orientation. Still useful is MacIver's study
of causation, although his diatribes against quantitative
analysis are somewhat dated. What this researcher did
learn from his study, among other things, was the utterly
assailable position taken throughout this thesis. A sharp
quantitative inquisitor could with little effort probe into
any number of large-scale generalizations in search of
experimental or other proof. As in the sociology of
sociology, one learns that a defensible position requires
such a watering down of content, especially when of an
innovative nature, that worry over problems of questioned
causality are fruitless. Here, it seems, positivism has
lost any sense of larger reality or meaning. When LaPiere
states without apology "Social change comes for the most
part inconspicuously, and for the most part it is worked
by unimpressive little men whose names and achievements
are rarely entered in the records of social history" (33),
it either strikes one as a useful, creditable assessment of
the past by an expert - and is thereby included in one's
stock of knowledge as valuable and contradictory to the
overriding great-man bias - or it is junked out of hand as
unsupportable intuition which at best is somewhat interest-
ing, at worst incorrect.

This section began with a few reservations and
announcements regarding the nature of change. We then
arrived at some equally hasty remarks about history and