

causality, so that henceforth there will be no more energy spent in attempts at defending any of the many "unquantifiable" statements which follow. When one wishes to discuss "the direction of the society", he does not sweat blood trying to fit every contingency into his analysis. (Myrdal's methodological statements, both from American Dilemma and his more recent Asian Drama, support this view.)

LaPiere:

...there is a complex, uncertain and variable relationship between the qualitative and the quantitative changes that occur in society...there is some evidence that some kinds of quantitative changes do more than just reflect qualitative changes, that they actually implement qualitative changes. When this is the case, the quantitative change would appear to operate as an intervening variable, a link between two orders of qualitative changes, although not in any sense the cause of the changes that are second in time...

...there is still another way in which the uncertain relationship between quantitative and qualitative social changes makes for difficulty in analysis. Every qualitative change, be it a new tool or technique, a new idea or belief, a new form of human relationship or method of organization, begins in the mind and action of one man. At that point it is most certainly not a significant change; indeed, as will be seen, it is often socially defined as the product of mental aberration. If, however, others adopt the new, if it gains more and more adherents, a kind of quantitative change is then occurring; in simple terms, the new tool, idea, or method of organization is being diffused through the membership of the society. But the question then arises: at what point in this quantitative change is the qualitative change accomplished? when 10 per cent of the population have adopted the new? when over 50 per cent have adopted it? (34)

LaPiere is here (controversially) laying the groundwork for brief analyses of "transitory social change" -

fads, fashions, cults and movements - all of which he concluded are not of much value in effectively restructuring the social order. (I see such activities as more propitious regarding change than does LaPiere.) Opposed to this are "socially significant changes", brought about by accumulation and synthesis. Quite simply, change is "significant" when enough people have partaken of it to give the particular phenomenon the look of the normal.

What LaPiere calls accumulation is simply that: the appearance of a "startling" discovery in innovation (e.g., modern medicine) which in fact has been in the cultural works for many decades. Synthesis is the logical partner of accumulation, the putting together of cultural artifacts (meant broadly) into a fresh pattern to form an hitherto unknown product or relationship. These terms are immediately recognizable as powerful antidotes to the common belief that social change is effected predominantly by abrupt, dramatic social events or equally meteoric ideas. Furthermore LaPiere, with usual laconic sentiment, points up the modern equivalent of "prayers and incantations": social planning.

A note vis a vis planning and its relation to LaPiere: since Comte, sociologists have dreamed of constructing the rational social order, bereft of repressive myths, ideologies and other constraining devices of exploitation and inequality. Karl Mannheim (35) redirected his gargantuan talents near the close of his life towards the multifaceted problems facing those who wished to "reconstruct"

postwar Britain. In his tracks Dahl and Lindblom (36) followed, with better data and a generally more positivistic orientation toward social engineering. As of late John Friedmann (37) has made his contribution to the growing list of authors who wish to be of aid in constructing a superior environment in these cataclysmic times.

Each of these authors, as well as others, finally succumbs to the bete noire of conservatives: the "floating unattached intellectual elite" with whom the hopes for a liberalized world must ride. Without entering this merry-go-round of polemics and frustrations, it should be noted that the forthcoming theory of change will, thankfully, not need to concern itself with the ancient quis custodiet dilemma. Instead of facing the problem "squarely" - and running into the same wall which has greeted every liberal planner from Voltaire to Etzioni - the elements of this theory take a less direct and therefore more effective route.

It is therefore to be expected that the significant social changes of the future will come about, as they have in the past, in a random and segmental fashion and that most of the legislated and other grandiose attempts to shape the social future will in the perspective of time turn out to be no more than social events.

At this point, however, it may suffice to say that one of the underlying assumptions of the present analysis is that man has not yet discovered a unique and effective means by which to determine his social future and that thus the same processes that have shaped the social present from the social past are working and will continue to work to make the social future from the social present. (38)

When using the concepts related to functional relativity, most theorists point hastily to the arbitrary, culturally-defined nature of "good" and "bad" elements within a system, without considering eufunctional change. Although dysfunction makes the dichotomy - normal versus abnormal - complete, a trichotomy makes more sense if adequate analyses be desired. Eufunctional changes are those which over time generate more positive than negative consequences, although at their inception they may have seemed catastrophic as viewed from the status quo. It is in the realm of the eufunctional that innovators must invariably operate.

In addition, LaPiere offers a complementary trichotomy, each of whose members provides differing climates for change. "Stable congruence" is best typified by a utopian vision - a highly unlikely social order in which any element's alteration is absorbed quickly and without excessive distortion by related elements. China between 500 and 1700 is the best modern historical example (39). "Static incongruence" is quickly understandable by referring to Franco's Spain, a condition which fails to provide the society with individuals inspired or permitted to work for alterations. The monogamous family system, the "American dilemma" and numerous other elements of social organization operate within this frustrating framework. Perhaps the extreme example of this condition is Sicily.

It is the usual state of affairs with statically incongruent societies that "entrepreneurs" of shady credentials arise in order to provide services and goods which the archaic legitimate machinery of state cannot. These exploitative individuals may in fact insure the continued operation of the society, even beyond the point of its "deserved" collapse; but this activity, of a parasitic nature, threatens to destroy whatever is left of the societal carcass. Black markets are the best examples, along with late Roman corruption on the administrative level. However, usually before social chaos develops, an intruder or a revolution (lead by those who refuse to exploit in this manner) end the widespread venality. The Reformation and the French Revolution are examples, yet the former began a useful period of eufunctional change for the Church, whereas the latter only increased the misery of its intended beneficiaries by creating havoc which produced a century of counter-revolution.

Finally, there exists the post-modern culture and the area of primary concern here, "dynamic incongruence".

When the characteristics of the social system are such that the psychological tensions generated by incongruence between functionally interdependent social elements tend to be directed toward a modification of those elements, rather than an exploitation of them,...(40)

this condition is in evidence. American society is renowned for its disorganization, and since it allows for some degree of ideological and organizational modification, its more innovative members have room to work. (In an absolutistic

situation, these same individuals might well resort to artistic extravagance or insanity as expressions of innovative zeal, although one would expect the number of experimenters to be inversely related to the degree of absolutism evident in the culture. There are those of course who would maintain that just this type of "creative deviance" obtains especially in the U.S.)

The most important aspect of this discussion concerns the range of possible behavior and thought in any given society. Historically there have been a great many cultures which demanded and rewarded behavior (in the ideological, technological and organizational) which maintained what by our standards is the unthinkable predictability of stable congruence. Societal members could deviate only slightly from normal patterns, for two reasons: social controls maintained their obedience with narrow definitions of what constituted "human" behavior and, secondly, the mental or logical processes necessary to rational evaluation of existence - the precursor to innovation along organizational lines - were absent.

Static incongruence generated manipulators of the inefficiency and inadequacy connected with "legitimate" social order. The roots of western trade and commerce lie in the late medieval when sly, courageous merchants braved negative sanctions of the church and in some instances the secular authorities as well, in hope of gain. Their tactics were by modern standards barbarous, yet considering the

opposition all around to their "unholy" behavior, it is surprising that some of the more persistent entrepreneurs were financing royalty during the 14th and 15th centuries (41).

But for there to be culture-wide approval and awareness of the possibility of social change, dynamic incongruence must prevail. This is why within the sociohistorical framework, innovation can almost become routine - but only in its prevalence, not in its "method", which to date has escaped codification or even precise analysis. With these general remarks, it is time to review the role of the innovator.

LaPiere feels that it is relatively easy to show historically that collective action has contributed far less to important change than has the behavior of what are being termed "innovators". (Again, for me this is somewhat hyperbolic.) What is practically impossible to illustrate, however, are any hard and fast sociological or psychological "laws" regarding either the genesis or operation of these "asocial" individuals. Whether it be in technology, social organization or ideology, the whys and wherefores of innovation have not been resolved through comprehensive appraisal. While it is comforting to lean heavily on the old "social forces" idea - that the correct social conditions "produce" (in an unspecified manner) certain types of mental and physical behavior - this is hardly sufficient. On first reading The German Ideology, the sociologist is gratified

to learn that the ideological "superstructure" of a given socio-physical "substructure" is altogether appropriate, until the bald fact dawns that Marx and Engels' realization is an interesting description of reality: for an analysis one must go elsewhere. In this instance, even the encyclopedic LaPiere throws up his hands. Any attempt at systematizing the history of innovation is doomed to failure: innovators have produced their gems under any and all conditions of recorded history, sometimes in the great flurry of creative civilization (Renaissance), but nearly as often in solitude, moreover in social structures more characterized by static incongruence than by the preferable dynamic incongruence. It must be admitted that the unquestioned, unexaminable a priori which underlies all that follows is the problem of how innovators "get that way". Though much documentation and caricature, perhaps even an "ideal-type" - although that smacks of contradiction - can be offered, a theory of the development of the innovator will only be sketched in roughly. If this be allowed, then much can be offered in terms of the promised theory of future social change, but if this lacuna becomes a theoretical stumbling block, the rest of the work loses its credibility.

Certainly the most aggravating feature of the innovator has to do with the incessant paradoxes which surround him. It is almost as if some mephistophelian were behind the scenes, pulling the strings of contradiction, first this way then that, in many instances tearing the subject, or

his social environment, or both into pieces. On one hand he must be enough of his historical period to perceive a need (again, technological, organizational or ideological), yet he must utilize uncommon effort and ability in radically transcending the thought and behavior patterns of his epoch, in order to arrange the data of experience differently. He must be peculiar enough in Goffman's terms to maintain that necessary distance which allows him critical time to produce, yet he must also maintain sufficient contact with his peers that he is not classified insane or foolish, and consequently discounted out of hand. Even more mysterious, he must feel somehow that his particular social setting deserves his attention (which typically is of an extreme ardor) and labor, but he must not be enamored of the status quo or the opinions of the many who are to the point that he worries over its alteration. In all instances he must conclude, albeit with many reservations, that the rewards of productive conformity do not outweigh the less structured, less assured rewards of innovative thinking and acting, a belief which runs counter to the very nature of socialization processes.

The list of paradoxes could (and will) be extended at greater length, each succeeding sentence more illuminating the character of the enigmatic performer in a world of the new. Generally it can be said that a more perfect example of the severe failure of socialization and indoctrination cannot be conjured up than the vision of the "typical" innovator (a necessary contradiction in terms). In approaching these

peculiar sorts, the study of Zen koans, full of paradoxical "wisdom", is perhaps of more use as an introductory exercise to the researcher than positivistic investigation in hopes of finding fabricated regularities.

Now, again allowing the dialectic its due: innovators are not in any sense the supermen of human history. They do not fall neatly into Hollywood caricatures a la Einstein. They are as varied and difficult to catalog as are their productions, and each of them has usually made a relatively minor rearranging of the data in order to come up with (in a very short time) what comes to be regarded as a cultural "of-courseism". Although H. G. Barnett in his monumental statement on the subject exaggerates somewhat, his contention supports this view:

It is commonly supposed that inventions are extraordinary achievements of rare and brilliant individuals, and consequently that at any one period in history few of them appear. A contrary view is taken in this book... innovations - even important ones - are everyday commonplaces... Everyone is an innovator, whether popular definitions allow him that recognition or not. (42)

Before offering any qualification of that statement, perhaps it is advisable to allow Barnett to mitigate to some extent his own hyperbole:

There are incentives for innovation, just as there are motivations for any other action. They may be treated within more than one conceptual framework, but it is essential that some position concerning them be taken. The "why" of innovation is an inescapable question. It is also one of the most difficult aspects of the problem and one of the two that have been treated only very superficially. The analysis is admittedly a formidable task, the more baffling and confusing the deeper the probing goes. (emphasis added) (43)

At this point, to the disgust of the sociologist, Barnett takes off on a complex Kurt-Lewin-like, entirely too psychologistic interpretation of the innovator, which takes slight and insufficient account of social factors as they operate in the phenomenon. That is a major reason for LaPiere's superior position vis a vis useful theory, although Barnett's ground-breaking work preceded LaPiere's by 12 years. Moreover, Barnett's entire book is based on data selected from five cultures and a sect: American, European, three Indian tribes on the west coast and an Indian Shaker cult. He admits (along with every other researcher) that these sources were as much chosen for convenience as for their intellectual value.

However, Barnett's divergent views notwithstanding, the most impenetrable problem is not determining who and what the innovator is, but how he gets that way, and why relative to the population, there seem to be either few innovators (LaPiere) or many whose suggestions for cultural rearrangement are not advocated and utilized by the culture (Barnett). (It would seem that LaPiere is talking after the fact, Barnett before.)

What has been established is the fact that the innovator must be convinced to an abnormal degree that consensual validation of his Weltanschauung - or at least a particular section of it - is not only unnecessary, but undesirable. Perhaps this explains in part Marx's displeasure towards the end of his life regarding his

apotheosis, and the concomitant gibberish which many "Marxists" had already begun offering to the proletariat at The Word. Marx's view of social reality in 1844 was to say the least a radical perception when compared to the reigning bourgeoisie of Manchester and London, who were to a large extent the arbiters of what was and was not "Truth". But by the 1880's, his many innovations and historical insights in terms of economic and social thought had been to a large extent incorporated into civilized, bourgeois-centered operations, such as the Fabians. If Marx is further utilized as a "typical" innovator, then his life is most instructive: he was a miserable father, husband and "man" by all cultural definitions of the time; he had absolutely no status, no role, no "position" in the social structure except that to which he appointed himself, Theorist of the Oppressed; he was slipshod and unkind in his financial dealings with close friends, earning the distinction of being totally unreliable and cantankerous whenever the issue of finances arose; he was in short, not a positively sanctioned representative of what 19th century Europe offered as its personality cynosure. And yet through terrible harrassments by bill collectors, wife and friends, through unending physical ailments and emotional dilemmas typical of an innovator's consciousness, Marx persisted until death in loudly defying the dominant culture, in rejecting wholesale any apparent need for validation of his private, asocial definition of what was and what was not Good, True and

Beautiful. Put colloquially, Marx for his culture was a bastard. More important, in our age of pseudo-individualism (do your own thing so long as your thing is an approved commodity or behavior pattern), it would be presumptuous and inaccurate to minimize Marx's achievement, that is of defying by intention the status quo. He should be accorded, along with most pre-modern innovators, limitless respect and awe in pursuing "undaunted" his personally approved course of action and thought. While nowadays Paul Sweezy and like-minded writers can with no great difficulty publish neo-Marxist, critical tracts, this is all a function of the marvelous diversity of tastes and persuasions that typify post-modern society. To continue with Marx colloquially, he was also a lonely bastard.

But lest the image of the innovator be inaccurately cast, it should also be mentioned that the romantic innovator (such as the current example) is only one type or style and certainly not the predominant form. He who braves the storm of social control and relentless socialization to come out blatantly "a man ahead of his time" is no more the typical innovator than Marx could be characterized as the typical 19th century economist. Adam Smith's quiet and conservative life in Glasgow or even more, Kant's comically sequestered and pedestrian existence in Konigsberg make the case for unobtrusive innovators.

LaPiere:

...man has rarely, and then only in limited ways, exercised his capacity to devise new and functionally more effective forms of social life; (44)

an innovation is an idea for accomplishing some recognized social end in a new way or for a means of accomplishing some new social end...the innovating consists of the creation of a unique and to a significant degree unprecedented mental construct, the idea that makes possible the "thing". (45)

LaPiere here points to the distinctive differences in types of innovations: technological, organizational, ideological. He notes that the process of innovation has been studied basically through the history of "mechanics, and fine arts, medicine, world exploration and the physical and biological sciences" (46) but from this it is not to be assumed that as process, innovation along organizational and ideological lines is radically different. He does note that organizational innovation usually takes a great deal of time, and that the number of people involved in technical advance is usually smaller than those trying to change a form of social organization (47).

The distinction between innovation and development is now made:

Innovation...does not occur in a piecemeal fashion; it cannot be facilitated by organization and a division of labor; and it cannot be forced by financial or other extraneous incentives (as can developments). (48)

It is in considerable measure the failure to distinguish conceptually between the process of innovation and that of development that has led many writers, including some sociologists, to advance the view that innovation is a normative social process. In this view innovation is thought of either very abstractly as the emergence of new cultural items out of antecedent ones or as the result of organized social endeavor to produce something new; as in research institutes. There is no doubt that

the development of innovations is currently facilitated by organized support; but there is good reason to believe that innovations themselves are for the most part today as in time past the product of individual endeavor that is more likely to be hampered than facilitated by membership in a business, industrial or scientific organization. (49)

LaPiere continues the discussion by pointing to the difference between discovery (a mental construct that gives recognition to the existence of something previously unknown) and invention (the creation of something by the synthesizing of pre-existing cultural elements into a new pattern) (50). He also points to the fallacy of believing that the mother of invention is necessity, when of course, necessity is culturally defined - and redefined by the innovator.

It is not some inherent necessity that mothers invention, but, rather, an asocial perception of the existence of a problem that is susceptible of solution.* That perception may be either a specific redefinition of a socially recognized inadequacy or, as is much more common, the definition as a problem of what has not previously been defined as such... From time to time in any society, vague discontent with things as they are on the part of some individuals or class of individuals may lead to political or some other form of rebellion; but a general and vague discontent does not result in the kind of asocial perception that fosters innovative efforts to change the system. It is, rather, discontent of a specific and individual nature that leads to perception of this sort, the discontent of some individual with some specific condition of life - chronic hunger, too many babies,...or some other circumstance that is accepted as normal by the other members of the society. (emphasis added) (51)

It is well documented among historians that the plague of the late medieval and the ensuing lack of labor, along with the

*One objection to this statement lies in recent history. The Second World War produced innumerable innovations through dire necessity. However, over the centuries it would seem that LaPiere's attitude is supportable.

sentiment of the Reformation, created the markedly new conception of the dignity of the individual. This was the beginning, however tenuous, of the generation of a climate suitable to innovation which has persisted until today. However, transcending historical epochs, there is this consideration:

Although they (innovations) reflect the trend of the times in which they are made, they are made by some individual who because of peculiarities of personal experience and character is hypersensitive to some specific circumstance of his time and place. (52)

In a most informative subsection - "The Innovative Process" - LaPiere continues pointing to the inherently problematic aspects of studying the innovator, due of course to the complexity and ambiguity of the process itself.

An asocial perception of a problem does not, of course, ensure that an innovation will in due course be forthcoming. Some of the problems that men pose themselves may conceivably be unsolvable... For the most part however, failure of innovative endeavor to solve a problem seems to have stemmed from one or both of two circumstances: the fact that innovation is inherently difficult and the fact that social preconceptions of one sort or another inhibit the innovative process. Little is actually known about the innovative endeavor, aside from the fact that it is not standardized, that it is difficult, and that it is a random trial-and-error procedure that involves for the most part the use of symbols rather than things. (53)

Creative thinking, the kind that is necessary if a unique solution to a problem or any solution to a unique problem is to be achieved, involves a more or less random synthesis of symbols that are themselves often of vague and uncertain meaning. Each such putting together constitutes a trial that, upon evaluation by the creative thinker, usually proves to be an error. Essential to this process is the ability to ascertain all the possible permutations in the arrangement of the symbols that are being manipulated and the capacity to evaluate each permutation in turn in terms of its relevance to the problem. Equally essential is the

ability to continue the endeavor trial after trial and error after error until a workable solution has been found, even though the solution may not be reached for weeks, months or years. (54)

Following these seminal remarks, LaPiere gives at length data to support his contention that the talented amateur, the marginal nonprofessional has historically contributed (more often than the institutionalized members of any professional organization or discipline) significant and radical innovations which have had tremendous impact upon the professionals as well as the larger world. Needless to say, the reaction of those who have undergone the appropriate training and apprenticeship is one of scoffing ridicule, until the value of the new idea becomes undeniable.

...it is just because American universities are in this respect (Russian-styled indoctrination) somewhat ineffective that they occasionally produce a scholar, scientist or technician who is qualified to do innovative work in his field and yet not so fully indoctrinated in the established beliefs, preconceptions, and ways of thinking of that field to preclude his engaging in fairly random trial-and-error experimentation. (55)

Following very closely LaPiere's explanation, we now arrive at myths having to do with innovation, which for convenience are here listed and compressed:

- 1) That innovation is a single, stunning "creative synthesis" while in fact it is a synthesis of a long series of specific innovations, each prerequisite to those that followed.
- 2) That there exist in science "breakthroughs" which will at one blow shatter any number of extremely difficult problems, when in fact the idea of the great and wise scientist - to whom charisma is often imputed as to political heroes - and the spectacular act are more in keeping with Jules Verne than the actual history of scientific development.

- 3) That innovation is a group or collective phenomenon which while in keeping with the prevalent democratic bias of the West is completely out of keeping with actuality. The "research team" is effective not because of its collective skills but because of the talent of each of its members and the rationalization of behavior and research possible through financial backing, etc. As advocate (to be discussed) the committee may do wonders for the innovation produced individually.
- 4) That innovations are "social imperatives" - somehow immanent within the culture - and will "out" as perhaps justice is alleged to do, with the naturalness of the coming of spring.* This is a conservative and inaccurate bias which attempts to depreciate the deviant who innovates. (56)

Very closely connected with these myths are broader stereotypic conceptions about the innovator himself. Originating in Confucian China, the idea has also been embraced by Western cultures that the innovator is of such refined and unusual sensibilities that his behavioral excesses, his "amoralisms", must be allowed so as not to smother his innovating furnaces. From this it is an easy jump into the realm of the artist, supposedly so much of another, "higher", world that peculiar or outlandish behavior, particularly in the case of recognized artists, is now considered merely par for the course. What is evident immediately to those familiar with the history of new ideas and cultural apparatus, is that a peculiarity of outward behavior does not typify the innovator so often as an oddity or unconventionality of mind, the ability and/or need to reshape reality through

*My reservation about this statement is rooted in the late Western development of complex organizations, an extremely important innovation, for which there is no ascertainable single innovator. Organizations seem to have grown out of a larger cultural heritage, and very slowly.

symbol manipulation. Although it has often been noted that some of the more famous inventors and artists behaved "strangely", or that they utilized slight infirmities to their advantage in avoiding the time-consuming duties of normal existence, these are but the partial manifestations of innovation, and not its essence.

There are many things which need to be said regarding the innovator and his indecipherable craft. These few pages have been a whirlwind statement of necessary conceptions before the remainder of the theory may be discussed. The ultimate goal, the wedding of several key theories, is not possible without a clear understanding of what the innovator is and to the degree possible, some appreciation of how he operates. It has been established that he holds an asocial perception of social reality, and through unflagging effort and a brand of hyper-motivation typically lacking in orthodox societal members, he may - but usually is not able - bring to the consciousness of the social environment his suggestion for change. That change is most often of small dimension, yet quite distinct, and even in its minor, unmonumental form it excites opposition. In order to foil the dictates of the society, in order to sidestep and personally sabotage the unceasing demands of roles, social controls, and sentiments of his culture, he must be possessed of enormous egocentricity which corroborates his belief that the thing(s) which concerns him is ultimately of more value than the conventional activities and thought he eschews. It does

not surprise the sociologist that only a miniscule proportion of any cultural population displays these personality requirements, plus of course sufficient intelligence and creativity to pursue innovative careers.

If LaPiere's trichotomy is recalled, it makes some sense to note that the innovator - as failure in socialization - is (theoretically) more likely to be found in American culture, known for its dynamic incongruence, than in Franco's Spain. LaPiere points to three possible responses to dynamic incongruence by those members of the culture who do not for the most part imbibe its patterns and values: there are "social parasites" (predatory criminals, social incompetents and sexual and other antisocial deviants); the similarly learned behavior of "neurotics and psychopaths"; and finally the other group who occupy us here, the innovators (57). As can be imagined, this line of reasoning has serious implications for many current ideologies regarding the "sad lack" of continuity, integration or predictability in post-modern culture. Would it not be gravely "dysfunctional" to any culture to produce a dearth of innovators due to the society arriving at the social nirvana of static congruence? Utopians in this instance, even those with the dialectical skills of Marcuse, may be at a loss to respond except in the most abstract and imprecise manner.

Central to the theory of Barnett and LaPiere is the subsidiary role of the "advocate" (58). Briefly, he is the man or group who has the pull to have the innovation

