

**The Relationship Between Objects and Identity in
Occupational Therapy:
A Dynamic Balance of Rationalism and Romanticism**

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degree of the Doctor of Philosophy.

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Attestation of Authorship

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person nor material which to a substantial extent has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning, except where due acknowledgement is made in the acknowledgements.

Signed

Dated

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The occupational impact of this undertaking has been immense. I have loved and hated the task itself, feeling competent, creative and incapable by turns. I have organised my home to accommodate it, scheduled self-care, leisure and work occupations around it, and forsaken preferred and frivolous occupations to get it done. Now it is complete I can clean the house, visit friends and family, and proceed with the other pressing scholarly tasks that seem to define who I am.

Abstract

This thesis uncovers the rational and Romantic assumptions about the relationship between objects and identity that are embedded in occupational therapy, and critiques current practice from that perspective. It is based on an initial assumption that there is in fact a relationship between people's identity and the objects they make, have, use and are associated with. This assumption is explored through an interpretive examination of the fields of literature that are commonly identified as informing occupational therapy, supplemented by selected popular literature. The exploration takes a philosophical approach, guided by notions from philosophical hermeneutics, including pre-understandings, the hermeneutic circle and fusion of horizons. The conclusion reached is that people informed by Western philosophies interpret the identity meanings of objects in both rational and Romantic ways. To inform the study, the nature of rationalism and Romanticism are then explained, and the implications of these philosophical traditions in relation to objects and identity are teased out. This interpretation is guided by a history of ideas methodology, which entails approaching historical texts from a new perspective, in this case the identity meanings of objects. Thus informed, occupational therapy literature, primarily that published in Britain between 1938 and 1962 is examined from the perspective of objects and identity. What is revealed is that rational and Romantic understandings of objects, and of patients' and their own identity are clearly discernible. Such understandings afforded early occupational therapists both ways to organise their growing knowledge of the therapeutic application of crafts and the transformative outcomes of occupational therapy intervention. Gradually however, factors both internal and external to the profession served to undermine therapists' Romanticism. Primary amongst these were World War II, which saw a redeployment of occupational therapists from mental health to physical rehabilitation settings; advances in rehabilitative medicine, which brought a reduction in secondary complications and the adoption of teamwork; and the development of new practice areas including domestic rehabilitation using gadgets to enhance function and pre-vocational rehabilitation. As a result, tensions between rational and Romantic understandings crystallised around two long-standing controversies. These were whether or not craft equipment such as weaving looms

should be adapted to serve specific remedial purposes, and whether it was the process of making a crafted object or the quality of the finished product that was more important. In the event, these contested ideologies became largely irrelevant as craftwork was sidelined from mainstream practice. With it, occupational therapists' Romantic vision of transforming people's lives through creative activity also slipped away. Several reasons for this loss of one of the profession's founding philosophies are proposed. They include the substantial absence of the professions' philosophical foundations from its education, and the paucity of theory and research methodologies that might have informed the nature and process of transformative change that earlier occupational therapists had observed and reported. The thesis concludes by arguing for the importance of recovering a balance between rationalism and Romanticism. A call to action is issued, addressing change in educational practice, concerted research effort to identify and articulate transformative processes within occupational therapy, and political action focusing on the inclusion of Romantic perspectives within policy and strategic documents.

Implications of the Treaty of Waitangi in Aotearoa/New Zealand

The Treaty of Waitangi, signed in 1840 between Maori, the indigenous people of New Zealand and Pakeha, the (largely) Anglo-Saxon colonisers underpins all political and social activity in contemporary New Zealand. A number of principles derived from the Treaty inform the relationship between Maori and Pakeha peoples, one of which is specifically relevant to this study. It concerns protection of the *taonga* (treasures) of Maori people, which includes protection of traditional Maori knowledge, and is an ethical responsibility in relation to legitimacy of access to information (Durie, 1994; Ramsden, 1992; Smith, 1986). Within Maori society, the knowledge that is required to carry out daily occupations, or pertaining to the interests of the *iwi* (tribe) is available to everyone. However, access to certain types of knowledge is considered a privilege. Such knowledge is entrusted only to those few considered able to protect it, use it appropriately, and transmit it accurately. Even for those few, knowledge may be made available only once they have demonstrated an eagerness to learn, the capacity to hold and use knowledge well, and when the appropriate time to share the knowledge occurs. Knowledge that contributes to the individual's *mana* (status) may be bestowed only when the person is perceived to be ready "to receive and respect such knowledge" (Smith, 1986, p. 6). In addition, certain knowledge may be perceived as *whanau* (extended family) specific or person specific, depending on their demonstrated capabilities, age and gender. Finally, some knowledge is considered exclusively Maori. In this regard, I cannot presume the right to access knowledge held by Maori and would not presume to investigate a Maori perspective on objects and identity. I also acknowledge that I have no authority to assume that this research question has salience for Maori or to seek knowledge of things that, in an important sense, are not mine to know. Equally, I make no claims that this thesis reflects or represents the views, beliefs or experiences of Maori people or that the ideas I have developed speak to Maori experience.

Grammar, Spelling and Style

There is no universally applicable guide to grammar, spelling and style in the English-speaking world. Conventions for grammar and spelling differ across America, Australia, Britain and New Zealand, as well as changing over time. Because of this, the decision about which conventions to follow has been beset with difficulties. Neither has it been easy to determine the most important audience to satisfy – potential examiners and professional colleagues internationally, or my peers and fellow students in New Zealand. Accordingly, because there seems to be no best answer, this thesis has been prepared to be true to its context in Aotearoa, New Zealand.

This has meant the inclusion of Maori terms (with English translations in brackets); the application of English grammar as outlined in the *Collins Pocket Dictionary of English Usage* (Hardie, 1992); the adoption of New Zealand English spelling as programmed into Microsoft Word 2000, backed up by Pearsall and Trumble's (1996) *Oxford English Reference Dictionary*; and consistent with Auckland University of Technology guidelines for the presentation of theses, utilisation of the style requirements of the American Psychological Association (2001). Even so, inconsistencies appear in the text, not the least of which are due to retaining the original spelling and grammar in all quoted extracts of other's work.

In addition, when the ideas of others are presented and discussed, the language used here is, by and large, true to the original. In chapters four through to eight in particular, this practice has resulted in the inclusion of what would now be considered sexist language and politically incorrect language. Specifically, in chapters six, seven and eight, which draw from journals and texts of the 1930s to the early 1960s, people with health conditions are referred to by diagnostic labels as was the manner of the times rather than in the people first language that is now expected. Finally, a variation from APA style worthy of note is the extensive use of direct quotations in chapters four through to eight, some of which are lengthy. The primary reason for this variation is that the material quoted is in a sense the “data”

that informed the analysis and its inclusion will allow readers to judge the veracity of the conclusions drawn.

Sincere apologies are given, in advance, to readers whose editorial eye will be jarred by the use of conventions different to those to which they are accustomed.

Chapter One

Introduction

This thesis explores the relationship between people's identity and the objects they have and use, and the Western philosophical assumptions that underlie the way we associate the things people have with who they are. It goes on to explore how occupational therapists have addressed the relationship between objects and identity in the past, and the implications that intellectual history may have for contemporary practice. The specific questions the thesis addresses are:

1. What do people understand the relationship between objects and identity to be?
2. What are the philosophies that explain that relationship?
3. Are those philosophies consistent or inconsistent with occupational therapy's philosophy?
4. What are the implications for occupational therapy?

The study is important because identity has emerged as a key concept within occupational therapy. One reason for identity now being recognised as important is the recognition being given to the implicit link between doing, being and becoming. This existential link implies, amongst other things, that the things people do and how they do them is informed by their understanding of who they are, their being. It also suggests that what people choose to do now and in the future will influence who they might become.

In the main, the relationship between occupation and identity is being framed in terms of occupational narratives, which are the stories people tell of things they have done, do now or plan to do in the future, and what those doings mean to them. In this thesis, a somewhat different perspective is taken in that the focus shifts from the things that are done (the occupations) to the things that are created, used, tended, introduced or removed in the course of the doing (the objects). This different perspective acknowledges occupation as interaction with the physical

environment, including objects. It also recognises our interactions with objects in the environment to be a source of identity meanings such as when people become synonymous with the things they make, tend or use, as in a furniture maker, a horticulturalist or a racing car driver. Viewing identity from the perspective of objects also brings into sharp focus those aspects of occupational therapy where objects are central, including the therapeutic process of making something; the prescription, design and fabrication of assistive devices and technologies; and modifications to the availability, design and placement of objects within domestic and work environments to, for example, conserve energy or protect joints. Thus, in focusing on the relationship between objects and identity, and the ways occupational therapists have addressed the relationship between objects and identity in the past, this thesis will inform occupational therapy in new ways.

Before the relationship between identity and objects can be explored in any depth, what is meant by the terms 'objects' and 'identity' must be defined. Both concepts are more complex than they might appear at first sight. Identity may be considered from many diverse perspectives. Four emerged as significant in this study: philosophical, cultural, psychological and sociological. The focus in this study is on identity-making processes and the ways these processes are mediated by the objects people have and use. In contrast to abstract notions of identity, objects, which have a physical presence, might seem more straightforward to define. In this context, the term object is used to refer to discrete physical things that can be seen and touched such as cars, clothes and cutlery. When considering objects in relation to identity, however, it is the human ideas about objects and the meanings ascribed to them that are paramount, rather than their physical nature. Thus, objects are considered primarily as cultural phenomena that hold and convey meanings precisely because the individuals within that culture understand them to do so. As such, objects have also been considered from a number of philosophical and theoretical perspectives that have varying relevance to this study.

Just as the key concepts in this study are multifaceted, the process of coming to appreciate the relationship between objects and identity, and how early occupational therapists addressed that relationship proved to be complex. In brief outline, it

entailed a three-stage process of analysis to build understanding. First, contemporary literature was analysed, to uncover taken for granted ideas about the nature of the relationship between objects and identity. Second, the history of the development of those ideas within Western philosophical tradition was traced. Third, the occupational therapy literature written as the profession was being established in Britain was analysed. The purpose of this final stage of the analysis was to uncover the assumptions about the relationship between objects and identity that are embedded in the professions' philosophies and practices. This understanding formed the basis for critiquing current practices and ideology, and making recommendations in relation to occupational therapy's conceptual foundations, contemporary practice and future directions.

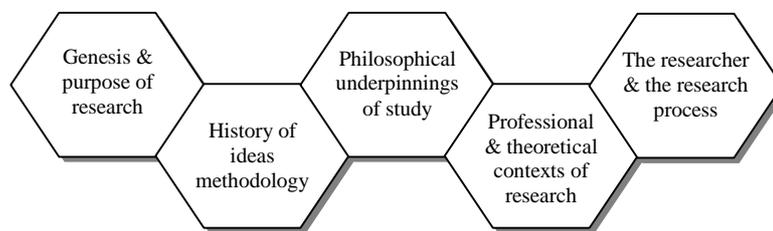


Figure 1:1 Progression of the Discussion in Chapter One.

The discussion that follows in this chapter tells the story of the study and how it came into being. It describes the research methodology and the philosophical underpinnings of the study. The study is then contextualised in relation to the professional and theoretical issues and constructs that informed and shaped it. Finally, the researcher is introduced and the research process outlined. Figure 1:1 diagrammatically presents the progression of the discussion in this chapter.

Genesis and Purpose of the Research

The genesis of this exploration lies in my own interest in objects and my observations of the ways people respond to them. These responses seem to relate to identity meanings, as illustrated by the following story. Some years ago I sent my god-daughter, aged 7, a red plastic torch. On receiving my gift Lydia is reported to have howled “She doesn’t even *know* me if she’d send me that!” The torch was, her mother reports, flung across the room and never used. For me, this story epitomises the very personal ways in which people respond to having, using, or being

associated with objects. While many objects do not elicit strong responses, some assume enormous importance. My beginning premise was that this importance relates to whether objects are perceived as consistent or inconsistent with identity, that is the ways in which objects are ‘me’ or ‘not me’ (Kleine, Kleine & Allen, 1995).

To some extent, advertising shapes this perception of whether an object relates to our identity, by linking products with prevalent cultural myths and the values, beliefs and attitudes associated with them (Nachbar & Lause, 1992). Recognising the cultural embeddedness of the meaning of objects does not, however, solve practical problems such as choosing suitable gifts because it does not address how we perceive objects as relating to our identity. So it seemed that more knowledge might be useful, and that achieving this understanding would require consideration of culturally based assumptions about the ways objects relate to who we are.

New understandings cannot, however, be directly applied within occupational therapy practice without first examining their consistency or lack of consistency with the fundamental values and beliefs of the profession. Apparent inconsistencies require analysis, because they may conflict with occupational therapy’s philosophical and conceptual foundations. Identifying such a conflict may indicate a need to re-examine and potentially update an aspect of the profession’s traditional philosophy, to review an aspect of established practice, or may challenge occupational therapy’s accepted boundaries. My previous research into object use in occupational therapy provides an example of re-examination of established practice, stimulated by the identification of a discrepancy between occupational therapists’ enacted values and culturally informed beliefs. The story of how I came to regard the examination of inconsistencies between ideology and practice as a useful process is therefore recounted in some detail.

Previous Research into Object Use

Over the last decade, my interest in objects has given direction to my work as an occupational therapy researcher. My initial work centred on how objects are used in occupation. This culminated in a critique of the factors proposed as explaining

object use within Kielhofner's (1985) Model of Human Occupation (Hocking, 1994a). The principal finding was that the model omitted to consider how objects' physical characteristics, such as malleability or sharpness, influence how they are used. This beginning led to exploration of how objects are developed and evolve in response to occupational, societal and cultural change (Hocking, 1994b), and the various ways in which people interact with objects (Hocking, 1997a).

Based on that research and reflection on personal experience, I came to understand that there is a relationship between people's identity and the objects they have and use. This belief informed an analysis of object use as documented in the Australian Occupational Therapy Journal, which identified that part of Australian occupational therapists' identity is to view objects primarily from a functional perspective (Hocking & Wilcock, 1997). That is, objects, especially assistive devices, are viewed as tools to replace physical abilities, as in a sock aid compensating for lost ability to reach one's feet. This finding was notable in that the professional valuing of taking a functional approach to assistive devices that is apparent in the literature is inconsistent with what I had come to understand about the ways people in Western cultures relate objects, including assistive devices, to their identity.

This body of work found practical application in relation to international concerns about the high rates of rejection and abandonment of assistive devices (Agnew & Maas, 1995; Clemson & Martin, 1996; Meyer & Shipham, 1995). Informed by an awareness that occupational therapists' belief in the value of promoting function contravenes, to some extent, cultural understandings of the relationship between people and objects, an examination of the literature that focuses on assistive devices was undertaken. This review revealed that when recommending equipment, occupational therapists in New Zealand, Australia, Britain and North America primarily focus on the demands of the occupation, the clients' capacities, and the features of the assistive device (Hocking, 1999). Issues of identity such as the client's self image, the loss of autonomy symbolised by the assistive device, or reluctance to use equipment which would identify them as disabled were represented in only a minority of publications (see Barber, 1996; Buning & Hanzlik, 1993; Conneeley, 1998; Lund & Nygård, 2003; Mulcahey, 1992; Taylor, 1987). On

this basis, revision of current practice to incorporate consideration of the impact of assistive devices on identity has been proposed (Hocking, 1997b, 1998a, 1998b, 1999).

Perspectives on Further Research

While growing awareness of a relationship between identity and the personal meaning and acceptance of equipment is evident, none of the work to date (including my own) draws on a coherent, over-arching body of knowledge to explain the relationship between identity and objects. This has two implications. In the absence of developed theory, therapists remain in the position of recognising a problem but having no clear guidelines of how to address it. Further, even if guidelines were to be devised based on knowledge accumulated from other disciplines, their consistency or otherwise with the philosophies and values of occupational therapy would not be known. The current research makes some contribution towards developing knowledge of how objects and identity are related, identifying key Western ideologies that inform this relationship, and exploring the implications of these findings for occupational therapy.

In so doing, this thesis continues my interest in why people with disability commonly reject or abandon the assistive devices they are offered. However, rather than focusing on the incidence of rejection or abandonment, as have most researchers in this area, I have sought to at least partially explain why it occurs. This has demanded research at a different level, founded on different assumptions. Within this research the acceptance or rejection of assistive devices is viewed not as failure to maximise functional independence but an issue of the identity people achieve in relation to the objects they have, use or are associated with. Rather than assuming that the processes of rejecting or accepting specific pieces of equipment is a problem of individuals with disability, I have taken the view that these processes are consistent with the ways in which people in general accept or reject having and using objects. Thus the focus of the research became understanding the cultural basis of accepting or rejecting objects according to how well having and using them fits individual identity. Culture, in the sense it is used here, refers to the schools of thought that inform the ways individuals' perceive, think about and act towards

their world. Because cultures change over time, the task of this study is to shed light on the ways people currently conceptualise identity in relation to the objects they have and use, and how people came to view the relationship between objects and identity in that ways. Broadly conceived, this undertaking is a history of ideas (Boas, 1969; Hamilton, 1993; Lovejoy, 1936/1983, 1960), which in essence is a study of culture from an historical perspective (Bevir, 1999).

With this shift in focus to the broader cultural mechanisms by which identity is shaped by objects, the relevance of the study to occupational therapy also shifted. Rather than informing just those occupational therapists who prescribe assistive devices, as I had originally envisioned, the purpose of the research became to better understand all of the occupations of therapists and their clients where the success of the therapy is influenced by the impact objects may have on identity. As identified, this potentially includes all aspects of occupational therapy practice that involve creating, using, and prescribing objects, or modifying how objects work or where they are placed within the environment.

However, as previously acknowledged, new ideas cannot simply be imported into occupational therapy without first examining their consistency with the existing knowledge base. The findings of this research could be expected to extend or challenge the ways in which occupational therapists conceptualise object use. This possibility demands a review of occupational therapy's conceptual foundations in light of the research findings to establish whether the professions' beliefs, values and practices in relation to objects are consistent with the beliefs and values of the societies within which we practice. Identified inconsistencies may give rise to recommendations for reconsideration of the profession's assumptions, modification of aspects of practice or for further research. It is important to note, however, that this examination of professional beliefs, values and practices focuses on occupational therapy within Australasia, Britain and North America, these being the contexts from which my knowledge and experience arises and the only places in which I may presume any credibility to make comment. Therefore, the recommendations may have no relevance to practice in other places.

History of Ideas Methodology

As stated, this study was undertaken as a history of ideas, which is a term coined by Arthur Lovejoy in the 1920s (Burke, 1988). A history of ideas is a research approach centring on concepts and how their meanings and connotations develop and change over time, as the context of human action changes. This approach to research falls within an interpretivist paradigm, as described by Guba and Lincoln (1994), which in contrast to the reductionist methods of traditional scientific method, is well suited to exploring the complexities of meaning in human endeavours such as establishing an identity.

A key assumption of Lovejoy and other early proponents of a history of ideas methodology was that some important ideas have persisted through human history, notwithstanding taking on varying significance, value and implications in different contexts. They referred to such ideas as core or unit-ideas (Boas, 1969; Lovejoy, 1936/1983, 1960). The core ideas typically traced by early proponents of this methodology were culturally significant notions such as freedom, justice and nature. More recently, Wilcock (1998, 2002a, 2002b) explored the idea that there is a relationship between occupation and health, and traced the various ways people have conceptualised this relationship through the different eras of human history. Wilcock's investigation revealed that the idea that people's health is influenced by what they do is long standing, which suggests that it is indeed a core idea within human societies. Nonetheless its connotations have changed over time, with health being conceptualised in more spiritual terms during the medieval period and in more biomedical terms for much of the twentieth century.

A hidden risk in a history of ideas methodology is that the particular idea a researcher is seeking to understand may not be a core idea. That is, researchers might mistake recurrent or merely similar ideas for ideas with a continuous life history. Another risk is that in stressing the continuity of ideas, researchers may fail to explain why and how those ideas were influential (Mandelbaum, 1983). In relation to these risks, however, it is important to acknowledge that there is value in understanding intellectual traditions with no sustained core, such as "ideas passed down from generation to generation, changing a little each time, so that no idea

persisted from start to finish” (Bevir, 1999, p. 202). The central idea in this study is that there is a relationship between objects and identity. Bearing the identified risks in mind, it cannot be assumed at the outset that the supposed relationship between objects and identity is longstanding. Accordingly, this study needs to be approached with an attitude of discovery that is open to uncovering enduring, recurrent, successive, multiple or even contradictory ideas, as well as a commitment to explaining why and how such ideas were and are influential.

What a history of ideas entails, in essence, is an analysis of literature from a new perspective so that new understandings emerge (Lovejoy, 1936/1983). Precisely because the researcher is taking a new perspective to existing literature, these understandings may not be those the original works were intended to convey. For example, Wilcock (1998) described her “voyage of discovery” (p. 8) through multiple fields of knowledge without finding a direct answer to her question about whether humans had always engaged in occupation. Instead, she found that “engagement in occupation is so fundamental that it is taken for granted” (p. 8). Similarly, there can be no expectation at the outset that notions about the relationship between objects and identity will be directly addressed within contemporary or historical literature. This is the nature of a history of ideas, precisely because the concepts they address tend to be so widely diffused through a society that they become an implicit part of people’s understanding of being human.

Philosophical Underpinnings of the Study

Lovejoy, Boas and other early proponents of a history of ideas methodology did not identify the philosophical underpinnings of their endeavours. Nonetheless, histories of ideas clearly fall within an interpretive tradition and so share some of the philosophical underpinnings of other interpretivist methodologies. In particular, there seems to be a close alignment between a history of ideas methodology and philosophical hermeneutics. What follows is my interpretation of that alignment, focusing on those philosophical concepts that shed light on how to conduct this study. As shown in Figure 1:2, the discussion is organised under four headings.

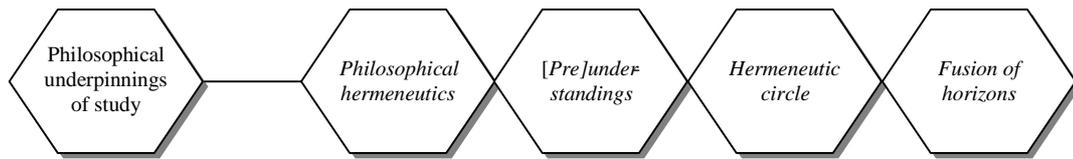


Figure 1:2 Philosophical Concepts that Underpin the Study.

Philosophical Hermeneutics

The term hermeneutics is derived from Hermes, son of Zeus and Maia, who was the god of merchants, thieves and oratory (Pearsall & Trumble, 1996). Hermes carried messages from the Greek gods to mortals and made the messages understandable. By implication, hermeneutics concerns interpreting what a text has to say and on the basis of those understandings, determining what it says about what we might do (Bleicher, 1980). Hermeneutics arose from the practice of exegesis, the critical interpretation of sacred texts in order to determine their divine meaning, which emphasised that specific passages in a text have to be interpreted in the context of the larger whole (Arnold & Fischer, 1994).

According to Schwandt, (1994), philosophical hermeneutics itself developed from hermeneutical theory during the middle and late twentieth century, largely in response to Heidegger's (1949/1962) *Being and Time* and Gadamer's (1960/1989) *Truth and Method*. Philosophical hermeneutics' fundamental departure from both exegesis and hermeneutical theory is that determining the original meaning intended by an author is held to be impossible. Hodder (1994) argued, for example, that there is no "original" or "true" meaning outside the text's specific historical context. From this perspective, attempting to retrospectively understand what a text meant in its day would be misguided. Accepting this, philosophical hermeneutics views understanding as a practical task, in the course of which the researcher or interpreter develops fresh insights as a text is read and reread in a different context or from a different perspective. This view is closely aligned with a history of ideas approach which emphasises that researchers reinterpret literature from the perspective of how it might inform understanding of the idea at the heart of their investigation (Lovejoy, 1936/1983). Also similar is the understanding that the new insights

generated from the analysis may go beyond those the author intended or realised (Arnold & Fischer, 1994).

Denying the possibility of reaching an objective understanding of the original intent of an historic text is somewhat contentious, however. For example Bevir (1999), in his examination of the logic of a history of ideas, argued that the conviction that original meanings cannot be recovered is based on “an untenable ideal of pure perception” (p. 3). As he pointed out, “we cannot grasp anything as it is” (p. 3). In this respect, he asserted, the hermeneutic meaning of a text written in a different time and place is “no different from any of the other objects of which we have knowledge” (p. 3). Notwithstanding Bevir’s assertion, comprehending the original or objective meaning of text is not the purpose of this study and no claim of recovering original meanings is made. Rather, consistent with philosophical hermeneutics and the early proponents of histories of ideas, both contemporary and historic works are interpreted from a new perspective, viz. the relationship between objects and identity. Consequently, the new insights gained are seen as arising from the analysis of the literature, rather than reflecting the original authors’ views.

The ultimate purpose of both hermeneutic interpretation, and a history of ideas, is to achieve a new understanding of oneself in relation to the text and to discover new possibilities for action through self-reflection. The intention is that the interpreter comprehends “new possibilities of what it is to be a human being” (Arnold & Fischer, 1994, p. 56). Similarly, the intention of this study, as previously identified, is to suggest ‘new possibilities of what it is to be an occupational therapist’. This is a project that can never be completed, because the ontological position of philosophical hermeneutics is that the interpreter is continuously coming into understanding, rather than reaching a final and objective truth. Nonetheless, a change or expansion of the understanding of the interpreter can be observed (Ricoeur, 1981), but this understanding may be contradictory and will always be socially embedded (Hodder, 1994).

Acknowledging that the ideas arising from such an analysis may lack overall coherence and that they must be interpreted in context seems to imply that there are

no objective criteria by which the quality of hermeneutic analysis may be judged. Arnold and Fischer (1994), however, identified the author's command of the literature, and the coherence, clarity, persuasiveness, and insightfulness of the interpretation as critical measures of excellence. Similarly, the quality of the reasoned argument has been identified as the measure of a history of ideas (Wilcock, 1998), and will be one way in which the quality of this study may be gauged, along with the utility of the new insights generated by the study for occupational therapy practice.

As well as aligning with the intent of this study, and clarifying how its quality may be judged, philosophical hermeneutics encompasses several concepts that may usefully inform the research process. Thus, while neither philosophical hermeneutics nor a history of ideas prescribe the research method, the concepts of [pre]understanding, the hermeneutic circle, the fusion of horizons and that language mediates understanding are identified as usefully guiding interpretation. These concepts are discussed below.

[Pre]understandings

Within philosophical hermeneutics, it is acknowledged that by virtue of existing in a cultural context researchers come to their subject with prior understandings or [pre]understanding, which is also referred to as prejudice or pre-judgement (Gadamer, 1960/1989). One's [pre]understanding is an accumulation of culturally situated beliefs, theories and ideologies, historical events, institutions and practices, myths and metaphors. Such understandings include any critical perspectives that the researcher brings to the research, such as sensitivity to sexism or ethnocentrism. Moreover, just as the researcher is culturally situated the subject of the study exists in a cultural world. This means that the interpreter and the subject of the interpretation are linked by a taken for granted tradition of ideas that is ordinarily not noticed and not made explicit, but that precedes any attempt at interpretation. Heidegger referred to this relationship as 'being-in-the-world' (Heidegger, 1949/1962).

Researchers' [pre]understanding is viewed as enabling the analysis because it helps them to make sense of events, objects, people's actions, and the meaning of written material by providing a basis for recognition and comparison (Gadamer, 1960/1989). While it is acknowledged that each person's [pre]understanding will have limitations, hermeneutic philosophers advocate actively drawing on prior understandings as a starting point for interpretation and for developing a coherent interpretation of the events, objects, actions or text that is being examined. Viewed from this perspective, the notions that I recognise as illustrating the relationship between objects and identity say something about my prior beliefs, attitudes and knowledge about the relationship. As well as familiar notions, from a philosophical hermeneutics perspective anything that is perceived as contradictory, lacking clarity, or unfamiliar challenges the interpreter's [pre]understanding and becomes a stimulus for refining understandings in order to construct a coherent account of things, actions, events or text that is free of contradictions and that fits accepted theory (Hodder, 1994).

The following excerpts from Steinbeck's (1939) classic novel, *The Grapes of Wrath*, and the analysis that follows, illustrates the application of the notion of [pre]understanding to interpreting the identity meanings of the objects that are central to this story.

In the little houses the tenant people sifted their belongings and the belongings of their fathers and their grandfathers. Picked over their possessions for the journey to the west. The men were ruthless because the past had been spoiled, but the women knew how the past would cry out to them in the coming days. (p. 117)

The women sat among the doomed things, turning them over and looking past them and back. This book. My father had it. He liked a book. *Pilgrim's Progress*. Used to read it. Got his name in it. And his pipe - still smells rank. And this picture - an angel. I looked at that before the fust three come - didn't seem to do much good. Think we can get this china dog in? Aunt Sadie brought it from the St. Louis Fair. See? Wrote right on it. No I guess not. Here's a letter my brother wrote the day before he died ... No, there isn't room. How can we live without our lives? How will we know it's us without our past? (p. 120)

I readily identify with the women's need to carry with them the objects that hold memories of people significant in their lives, even when the objects are repugnant, such as the rank pipe. I understand using objects as a personal biography of the triumphs and tragedy in their lives, and a sense of being incomplete, forgotten or misplaced without them: "how will we know it's us?" In Steinbeck's description I recognise the power with which objects evoke emotion, giving a sense of self as attached to others, and the strength derived from knowing who you are when facing an unknown future. I perceive Aunt Sadie's irreverence, making the china dog her own by writing on it. And I notice the prominence of objects associated with men in Steinbeck's tale, interpreting that as an artefact of a male author for surely women hold most dear things from their mothers and grandmothers? On the other hand, the men's ruthless throwing away of objects that attach them to a spoilt past is more difficult for me to interpret. Is this a stripping of their old identity, a sort of purging that signals a fresh start? Is it anger or defiance over the things that spoilt the past? Is it sheer practicality, the amount to be carried whilst simultaneously carrying the responsibility for their wives and children? Or don't men feel the things the objects mean to the women? Reflecting on these questions, in relation to this and other texts, gave a sense of recognition to ideas I later uncovered within psychology and consumer research. These confirmed that men value more highly objects that signify possibilities for action than those signifying relationships, while also suggesting that people actively discard objects associated with the past in the process of remaking their identity. Such processes might be accompanied with regret, however, since something of ourselves adheres to even unwanted objects.

The Hermeneutic Circle and Language Mediating Understanding

As well as actively using prior understandings to inform the analysis, the notion of a hermeneutic circle suggests a strategy to develop a coherent understanding of the views or ideas presented by different authors. This coherence is achieved through a process of repeatedly moving between separate pieces of text and the broad body of professional and popular literature included in the analysis. This is a process of seeking to understand how different parts of the literature inform the developing understanding of its overall meaning. Gradually an integrated and comprehensive appreciation of the text, and all its parts, is built up. This process of analysis is

referred to as an iterative spiral of understanding, or as the hermeneutic circle of progressively coming into understanding (Schwandt, 1994).

An example of this process is how my knowledge of the sociological notion of objects as status markers helped to inform my understanding of the philosophical basis of the relationship between objects and identity. One discussion that employed the notion of status was Maynard's (1994) interpretation of an 1840 portrait of the newly wedded Mrs Alexander Sparke, which depicts her "dressed in a sparkling white, lace-trimmed evening gown ... [and] weighed down by a veritable storehouse of jewellery as a symbol of her husband's social position" (p. 53). In the context of colonial Australia where the portrait was painted, Maynard explained that women's attire affirmed their husbands' status by making apparent the social distance between their wives and lower class, convict and aboriginal women. This distance was constituted in terms of their superior moral worth, allegiance to British mores, and the distance they enjoyed from the darker side of life in a penal colony. In identity terms, Mrs Sparke's attire can be interpreted as both claiming and reflecting a certain social identity. Read alongside passages like Steinbeck's *Grapes of Wrath*, broader perspectives became apparent. Identity is both a social statement, one's position relative to others and to societal norms, and very personal. We might recognise, for example, that while Steinbeck's women worry about how they will know who they are without their possessions, Maynard's colonial ladies wear a constant reminder of others' expectations of who they will be. Both Maynard and Steinbeck's work suggests that objects represent identity to ourselves as well as others. This insight stimulated further analysis of Maynard's description of colonial fashions, raising the question of whether Mrs Sparke's clothes accurately reflected her self-image. This issue of the accuracy with which objects represent individuals' identity, to themselves and to society, became important to recognising the rationalist philosophical roots of the relationship we perceive between objects and identity.

As well as this cyclic layering of interpretation, philosophical hermeneutics encompasses the awareness that language mediates understanding, sensitising people to certain issues and not to others because only a limited range of

awarenesses have been encoded into words. This notion has relevance to Gadamer's (1960/1989) concept of [pre]understanding, because any such understandings are mediated by language, which both shape and constrain our experiences. Accordingly, the limitations of language imply that any interpretation is necessarily limited. At the same time, the lack of precision inherent in every language suggests that multiple interpretations are possible and that no interpretation can claim to be final. Rather, consistent with everyday experience, there is 'more than one side to every story' and all understanding comes from a particular perspective (Madison, 1989).

For these reasons, philosophical hermeneutics incorporates semiotic analysis, which is a careful reading of the language used in the text and any other signifiers, such as pictures or diagrams, in an attempt to understand the perspective taken by the author. For example, in the excerpt from *The Grapes of Wrath*, the women "look past" the objects "and back". This suggests that it is not the objects themselves that are important, but what they mean, where those meanings are rooted in the women's memory of the past. As well as attending to language use, Kurzweil (1980) suggests that philosophical hermeneutics has an element of structural analysis, particularly focusing on oppositional relationships such as masculinity and femininity because of what they reveal about the way the author's thinking is organised. Again, the excerpt from Steinbeck serves as an illustration, clearly contrasting male and female perspectives. While these semiotic and structural aspects of a hermeneutic approach are useful analytic strategies, they are not the core of hermeneutical philosophy in that explaining the semiotic or structural elements of the text is not the endpoint. Similarly, they were not the primary analytic strategies in this study, but were informative reminders of what to attend to in the literature that was analysed.

Fusion of Horizons

A final informative notion is Gadamer's (1960/1989) fusion of horizons. Gadamer proposed that each person has a "horizon" of understanding. This refers to the perspective from which individuals view the world, make judgements or assumptions about what is possible or important, and interpret the meaning of actions or events. This unique, personal perspective is informed by all of the

influences that have made that person who they are, including the social, political and historical context in which they live. Such a notion suggests that any interpretation is just that, one interpretation among many possible interpretations, the validity of which can only be appraised in terms of its plausibility. It also suggests that other, potentially conflicting social, political, or philosophical beliefs and values to which people have not yet been exposed are over the horizon of their understanding.

Within philosophical hermeneutics, the interpreter's initial and limited [pre]understanding is understood to be his or her horizon. This horizon is challenged through the processes of semiotic and structural analysis, and over the course of iterative examination and re-examination of the text. As new understanding is reached, the horizon of understanding moves. Fusion of horizons is achieved when the horizon of the interpreter encompasses the discerned horizon of the text, and a new understanding of self, in the form of reflective insights is generated.

One of the perspectives, or horizons that shaped this study is that people are primarily meaning makers. That is, it is assumed that the fundamental nature of being human is to make and express meaning (Crabtree, 1998a). As Kegan (1982) explained, "it is not that a person makes meaning, as much as that the activity of being a person is the activity of meaning-making" (p. 11). Furthermore, individuals make meaning against a background of social tradition that shapes their perceptions (Bevir, 1999). Therefore, as Kegan and others have argued, there is no experience, feeling, thought, or perception independent of the meaning-making context in which it becomes an experience, feeling, thought or perception. People literally make sense, and when we fail to make sense, to compose a meaning of our experience, we experience a loss of our own composure.

From the perspective that the meaning people make is influenced by their context, truth is recognised as local and relative rather than absolute. Nonetheless, truth is recognised as culturally situated such that individuals with a shared cultural heritage will apprehend commonalities of meaning. Accordingly, a central assumption of

this study is that the identity derived from object use at the turn of the second millennium, in societies with a predominantly British heritage, is different to that in other periods of human history and in other cultural traditions. This notion of historical situatedness has been termed the “historical specificity of the self” (Casey, 1995, p. 24). Consistent with any discussion of subjectively experienced meanings, self-reflection, or interpretive processes, the ontological position is that reality is a human construction (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Accordingly, this study does not seek to develop generalizable laws or value neutral truths. Rather, as Deegan (1987) suggested, the purpose is to uncover the culturally based themes and meanings that inform people’s identity as object users and to present these as a working hypothesis that will require ongoing reconsideration. The study is contextualised within the Western philosophical heritage and culture as it is reflected in books and journals published in Australia, Britain, New Zealand and North America, and the political and professional realities that shape life in New Zealand, where it was undertaken. It is to the professional realities that provided a context for this study that the discussion now turns.

Professional and Theoretical Contexts of the Research

An important professional issue in relation to this study is which knowledge it might draw from and who the findings might relate to. From a Western perspective, informed by the tradition of positivist scientific inquiry, knowledge consists of verified hypotheses that are considered to be fact (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Who may access the facts does not generally arise as a philosophical or ethical question. Rather, knowledge is considered to be the cornerstone of progress. It is assumed to benefit all people by putting an end to ignorance, superstition and suffering and leading to a better, higher or more advanced state (Braun, 1995; Postman, 1993). Where restrictions on access or ownership of knowledge exist, they are primarily at a political or commercial level.

In the New Zealand context however, as explained in the preface to this thesis, the traditional Maori view of knowledge and who might access it is different. A further culturally based difference between Maori and Pakeha relates to how Maori define, construct, record and transmit knowledge (Bishop, 1996). From a Western

perspective, recording information in writing ensures it can be accurately recalled for later reference. Information considered important is carefully recorded in documents such as the minutes of meetings, verbatim records of court proceedings and legally binding agreements such as written quotations and wills. Societies with an oral tradition such as Maori however, have considered some information too important to commit to paper, where it is open to misinterpretation and misappropriation. Moreover, accessing knowledge held by other groups or considered privileged within that group raises issues of power and control. In this regard, Maori have identified concerns in relation to how research is initiated, who benefits, and issues around representation, legitimisation and accountability of research processes and findings. Acknowledging these concerns, the focus of inquiry of this study is sensibly confined to Pakeha people and their concepts and philosophies.

The group of which I am part is the community of occupational therapy scholars working and publishing in Australasia, Britain and North America. This group operates within a Western paradigm, where research ventures are expected to position themselves in relation to the thinking that has informed them. One theoretical assumption of the study, and one that is common to philosophy, theology, literary criticism and psychology, is that people constitute their own experience (Fingarette, 1963). Two distinct perspectives on this meaning-making process are apparent in the literature. English speaking philosophers and psychologists have described the individual construction of logical, reliable, and predictive explanations of what events mean. Their Continental counterparts have addressed questions of a more existential nature, concerning the meaning of life, what one should strive to be, and what is worth committing to. This study encompasses elements of both in that it is concerned with the explanations psychologists, sociologists, anthropologists, consumer researchers and others have given for the relationship they perceive between objects and identity.

As well as these general perspectives, several bodies of knowledge have specifically informed the study. The first is the discipline of occupational science, which first emerged at the University of Southern California, in the United States. As well as

this, humanistic psychology offers informative theoretical perspectives, and sociological interactionism provides a framework for understanding the process by which objects are ascribed meaning and by which those meanings change. These theoretical perspectives are now discussed.

Occupational Science

First mooted in America in 1917 as an objective of the National Society of Occupational Therapists (American Occupational Therapy Association, 1967), occupational science is only now emerging as an academic discipline. Promoted by Elizabeth Yerxa and her colleagues, occupational science is defined as the systematic study of people as occupational beings (Yerxa et al, 1989). Its purpose is to study the substrates, form, function and meaning of occupation (Zemke & Clark, 1996). The central assumption of occupational science is that occupation, defined here as the ordinary and familiar things people do (American Occupational Therapy Association, 1995) which occupy time and organise space and resources (Fisher, 1994), is the means by which people experience meaning and satisfaction, meet their needs and flourish (Wilcock, 1993). Having access to a range of occupations through which to achieve this is framed as an issue of occupational justice (Wilcock, 1998). While still in its infancy, occupational science is influential within occupational therapy and is recognised by many as the science that underlies and informs practice. This study comes under the umbrella of occupational science in that it concerns the identity meanings people derive from the objects they use in their day-to-day occupation.

Occupational science can be characterised as interdisciplinary, crossing the boundaries of the social sciences (Yerxa, 1993). It conceptualises people as cultural and social actors, whose actions are shaped by their historical, cultural and social context. It is concerned with 'the drama of everyday life,' including the ways people's lived experience is shaped by factors such as age, gender and social role (Zuzanek & Mannell, 1993). It is also concerned with people's values, the meaning and symbolism of human activities (Hannam, 1997), and with ritualistic aspects of human performance (Moore, 1996). It includes a developmental perspective (Pierce, 1991), and shares the concerns of critical theory, noting that political realities

favour some and dispossess others (Farnworth, 1998). As stated, this research falls within the sphere of occupational science, in so far as it is concerned with what, how and why people 'do', but relating specifically to the ways people use objects to negotiate identity.

Humanistic Psychology

A further theoretical orientation with which the study aligns is humanistic psychology, which is centrally concerned with the human search for meaning in life (Klinger, 1998; Maddi, 1998). This quest for meaning is assumed to be bound up with intentionality and purpose, which Klinger identifies as "an inexorable result of the way the human brain is organised" (p. 27). Because "the human brain cannot sustain purposeless living" (Klinger, p. 33) people endeavour to make sense of what happens to them as serving some worthy purpose. Human intentions, purposes or goals include seeking to attain something, but also keeping, restoring, doing, avoiding, escaping, getting rid of, attacking, and finding out more about something. This study aligns with humanistic psychology in that it focuses on the human purpose of creating and expressing an identity, and how this is achieved through attaining, keeping, restoring, using, and finding out about objects people wish to make, have or use, and avoiding, neglecting, discarding, rejecting, and perhaps destroying those which are not wanted.

A key assumption of humanistic psychology is that individuals' personal sense of meaning determines their everyday thoughts, feelings and actions, and leads to distinct views of self and the world. In particular, the decisions people make, such as accepting a job or selling their home, are viewed as impacting personal meaning. The larger the decision, the greater the impact. However, an accumulation of smaller decisions, such as deciding to make a table, learn how to use an automatic teller machine, or sell an old bicycle also influence personal meaning. It is suggested that the importance of these decisions may be determined by whether they expose the person to new experiences or maintain the status quo (Maddi, 1998).

A further assumption is that, to the extent that objects, self and identity provide meaning and purpose, achieving or failing to achieve goals may elicit strong emotions. In the context of humanistic psychology, emotional responses are understood to arise automatically from certain stimuli, such as the sensation of falling or the sound of your mother's voice, or as a result of the sense individuals make out of what is happening. Emotional responses include the 'primary' emotions of joy, fear and anger; self-conscious emotions such as pride, shame, guilt and embarrassment (Klinger, 1998); and perhaps, "wonder, awe, humor, aesthetic appreciation, and the sense of understanding something or having achieved something" (Klinger, p. 31), which have been little investigated. Each of these emotions may be experienced in relation to creating and expressing self and identity by making, having, using or being associated with objects.

Symbolic Interactionism

The final theoretical perspective identified as informative is sociological interactionism, typified by Blumer's (1937) theory of symbolic interaction, which provides a conceptual context within which the relationship between people's subjective experiences and their behaviour may be understood. The symbols Blumer refers to are the meanings held by concrete entities, such as other people and objects, as well as the symbolic meanings of events, language, gestures and signs (Woods, 1992). The interaction refers to social interaction or communication, which Blumer (1969) identified as the source of the symbolic meanings held by people, objects, events and so on, as well as the interpretive processes by which individuals understand their experiences. The essence of symbolic interactionism is that people act towards these things on the basis of the symbolic meaning they hold (Blumer, 1969; Mead, 1934). In relation to this study, symbolic interactionism suggests a mechanism by which identity meanings of having and using specific objects might arise, and how such meanings might change over time.

Strauss's (1993) recent examination of the sociological interactionism also informs this study by placing interaction in the context of human action, which he defines in

largely occupational terms.¹ Strauss points out that both interactions and self-reflection may generate new meanings or maintain and alter old ones. He argues that “humans develop selves that enter into virtually all their actions” (p. 25), and as a consequence, that “problematic interactions frequently bring about a process of identity change” (p. 44). Within the context of this study, Strauss’s work provides an interpretive framework that adds to the explanation of the interaction between people’s identity and the objects they have and use. Firstly, Strauss’s linking of self and action supports the central concept of this study, which is that people’s interactions with objects might develop, maintain or alter their concept of self and their identity. Further, Strauss’s notion that problematic interactions more frequently cause a change in identity than non-problematic interactions provides a rationale to explain why many routine or mundane interactions with objects have little identity impact whilst others profoundly affect identity. An example might be washing the dishes, which is most times experienced as mundane, versus the change in identity associated with going to work sporting a new engagement ring or loosing a lifetime’s possessions in a house fire.

Strauss proposed two further concepts relevant to this inquiry. The first is the notion of biographical projection, whereby individuals infer the impact of an event on their identity. An example might be imagining the different impression people might form of us driving the expensive car we plan to buy, instead of our current, aging vehicle. The second notion is biographical management, which is a process of actively managing the identity we communicate. This process might be exemplified by actively seeking to establish one’s identity by orchestrating the objects others associate with us, such as wearing our good clothes when we wish to make a good impression. It is important to note, however, that while the concepts and processes of symbolic interactionism provide a framework to explain the mechanism by which

¹ Strauss (1993) states that “the actions that interest social scientists are not the relatively momentary, infrequent, or inconsequential, such as the swatting of an annoying fly, or random and relatively aimless movements. The actions that interest us generally are patterned, repetitious, and meaningful to the actors themselves” (pp. 33-4). Strauss characterizes actions as both carrying and generating meanings, being located within systems of meanings, having experiential, emotional and symbolic components, and being characterized by temporality. In addition, he identifies that actions may have goals which are specific, singular, and long standing or unclear, multiple and changing. Finally, he posits that people’s actions contribute to the development of self and may change the course of who people become over their lifespan.

objects are attributed meaning in relation to identity, this study in itself was not guided by symbolic interactionist methods.

Having addressed the philosophical, professional and theoretical orientation of the study, the discussion now shifts focus to address the process of the research and its guiding assumptions.

The Researcher and the Research Process

In all interpretivist research, and all interpretations of culture, the researcher is the primary research tool. As such, I am undoubtedly limited by my own horizon of understanding. While Heidegger asserts that researchers cannot transcend that horizon, they must work to make it transparent (Dreyfus, 1991). It therefore behoves me to identify myself as a New Zealand Pakeha², and middle-aged female academic with highly developed tendencies to covet and acquire objects. New Zealanders from south of the Bombay hills will find it significant that I live in Auckland and am part of the cosmopolitan lifestyle that implies. Those versed in Maoritanga³ will be more concerned with my roots as the only daughter of an immigrant British nurse and accountant father, who was the son of a fourth generation New Zealand family originating in Cornwall. My place of origin is the Hutt Valley, with its flood prone river and the surrounding Rimutaka ranges.

While a research endeavour such as this inevitably challenged and expanded my horizons, the standpoint from which I am able to undertake any interpretation is mediated by my life experiences, which are culturally situated in the Western world. This reality supported the need to limit the study to the Western philosophies that inform the ways identity is affected by objects. Nonetheless, I am in agreement with Husserl's assertion that researchers must move beyond their own assumptions and everyday meanings, which demands openness to new ideas and doggedness in making some sense of them. I acknowledge, however, that I have in no way

² A non-Maori New Zealander. While this term originally referred to the peoples who colonized New Zealand in the 19th Century, it is now generally used to refer to people of Caucasian origin who identify as New Zealanders.

³ The term Maoritanga refers to the collective knowledge of Maori culture.

transcended the fact of a life view rooted in Western presumptions about the nature of the world and humanity, and reject the possibility of achieving such transcendence. In Lyotard's (1984) terms, I can only speak as the contingent historical self I find myself to be.

Research Process and Trustworthiness

Having introduced myself, one of the final tasks of this chapter is to outline in a little more detail how the study was conducted and how its trustworthiness might be judged. The literature selected to inform the analysis was guided by an understanding of the intent of a history of ideas, which is to investigate ideas that are widely accepted within society. These ideas are likely to reflect cultural assumptions which, to paraphrase George Boas (1969, p. 160), have become so commonplace that people use them without recognising it. They exist "in the collective thought of large groups of persons, not merely in the doctrines or opinions of a small number of profound thinkers or eminent writers" (p. 19). Furthermore, as Bevir (1999) explained, "the history of ideas relies on the concepts of ordinary language to describe beliefs, actions, and the like" (p. 16) rather than the specialised languages of professional groups. These concerns suggest that even though the purpose of the study is to inform occupational therapists, it needed to start from a broad base of literature and reach further than academic and scholarly literature. Accordingly, the analysis included both a broad range of interdisciplinary knowledge and popular literature, in order to capture everyday concerns and perceptions and to ensure that it was not unduly shaped by professional and theoretical perceptions of what is interesting, important and researchable, or by editors' perceptions of which manuscripts contribute to existing knowledge and which do not (Bishop, 1984; Lock, 1985; McGinty, 1999). Examining commonplace ideas and beliefs is not straightforward, however. Firstly, as Nachbar and Lause (1992) explained in regard to studying popular culture, examining ideas that are current in one's own culture is difficult because of their very familiarity. Assumptions that are taken for granted are easily over looked. By extension, examining what people have written about things that are familiar to them is subject to the same challenge, which is that things taken for granted may not be expressed.

Hermeneutical philosophy notions of [pre]understanding and its linguistic analysis strategies were useful in this regard.

Guided by these general understandings, I faced the problem of how to conduct the analysis. Lovejoy and the other original proponents of the history of ideas were largely silent about their methods, so offered no specific guidance. More recently a number of research methods have been proposed and defended as the most dependable way to conduct a history of ideas, including strategies that purport to recover the original meaning of the text (Bevir, 1999). Ultimately, however, interpretive research is a creative process that can be conducted in any number of ways. In this study, the interpretive strategy I developed involved reading around relevant schools of thought, such as Romanticism, to gain a general understanding. This process was guided by two key questions suggested by Bevir. These were, firstly, what a text means, and secondly, why people adopted those beliefs. This process informed a closer reading of selected primary texts, which involved iterative comparison between sections of text in the context of the larger discourse, to analyse their meaning. My prior understandings provided an initial point of interpretation (or puzzlement), which was challenged or clarified as the new understandings reached through reading and reflection expanded my horizon. Since the intent of this study is to inform practice, the overall stance taken towards the literature and the insights it generated was to discern the contemporary relevance of the uncovered beliefs and constructs.

The trustworthiness of my interpretations might be judged in relation to four criteria suggested by Hodder (1994). That is, its coherence, meaning the extent to which the conclusions drawn follow from the premises made and do not contradict each other, as well as the degree to which the interpretation fits accepted theory; the correspondence between the interpretation and the data, meaning how well the data cohere within the theoretical argument proposed and how well the argument is supported by the data; its fruitfulness in suggesting new lines of inquiry or new perspectives; and by the credentials of the author and subsequent supporters of the interpretation. These criteria have been addressed in the process of this research, and will be revisited in the final chapter.

Outline of the Thesis

It finally remains to outline how the rest of the thesis is organised. As identified at the beginning of this chapter, this study has three parts. The first is an interpretive analysis of contemporary literature to identify notions of identity in relation to objects which seem natural and inevitable to Western people and which guide their actions. Specifically, the focus of this analysis is on the ways people understand who they are, how to become the person they want to be, and their place in the social world in relation to the objects they have and use. This analysis is necessary because, although it seems clear that we do perceive a relationship between objects and identity, the nature of this relationship is taken for granted rather than clearly known. The results of this analysis are presented in chapters two and three. Chapter two further addresses what objects and identity mean, and chapter three presents the analysis of contemporary literature.

In the second part of the study, the philosophical origins of people's assumptions about the relationship between objects and identity are traced. In this stage, the analysis shifts from contemporary to historical perspectives, so that an understanding of the history of the ideas that shape contemporary thinking can be developed. This requires analysis of primary sources, that is literature written at the time influential perspectives emerged, and focuses on rationalism and Romanticism. These are discussed separately in chapters four and five. The understanding achieved from this process then forms the foundation for the third part of the study; an analysis of the early occupational therapy literature to discern the ways therapists addressed the relationship between objects and identity at that time, and an interpretation of the implications for contemporary practice. This analysis is presented in chapters six, seven and eight. Chapter six sets the scene by providing an overview of practice, and then chapters seven and eight present a rationalist and a Romanticist analysis respectively. In addition, chapter eight describes the conflict that existed between rational and Romantic views of objects and identity at that time. The final chapter includes an overview of the study, considers its limitations, and draws conclusions about its trustworthiness and implications for contemporary practice.

Chapter Two

Perspectives on Objects and Identity

The purpose of this chapter is to explore what is meant by the terms ‘object’ and ‘identity’, before considering in detail the relationship between them. This exploration is necessary because, although both words are familiar and unproblematic in their everyday use, each can be viewed from a variety of philosophical, theoretical and practice perspectives. Some of those perspectives are highly relevant to this study; others are less relevant or not applicable. This discussion, therefore, seeks to elucidate the view taken within this thesis. To begin, the term ‘object’, as it is used within this study, is differentiated from Sartre’s transcendent objects, Freud’s object relations, and the objects of reference or object symbols referred to in language training contexts. As depicted in Figure 2:1, the discussion then addresses the meaning of having and using objects. It moves on to consider concepts of identity and finally summarises the discussion to that point.

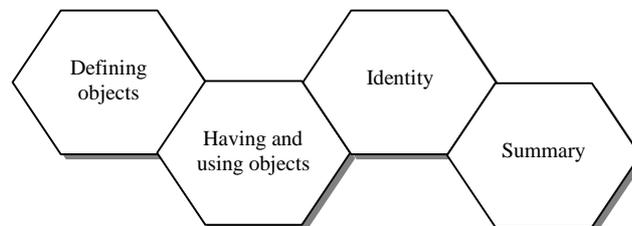


Figure 2:1 Progression of the Discussion in Chapter Two.

Defining Objects

Consistent with the Oxford English dictionary, which defines objects as discrete material things “that can be seen or touched” (Pearsall & Trumble, 1996, p. 1002), the objects referred to in this study have a physical presence. Furthermore, objects are understood to be things that may be sought or have actions or feelings directed towards them, as in being the object of attention. This section of the discussion

explores firstly the physical reality of objects, including the ways they are used, and then considers the ways people have thought about them. The progression of the discussion in this section is summarised in Figure 2:2.

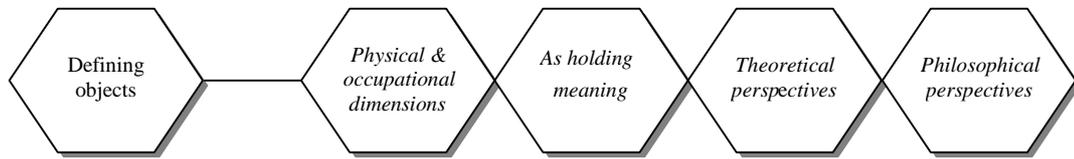


Figure 2.2 Progression of the Discussion about Objects.

Physical and Occupational Dimensions

As physical entities, objects may be categorised according to whether they are naturally occurring, such as the smoothed pebbles of New Zealand's west coast beaches; shaped by human action as in a traditional Maori *mere* (war club)⁴; or the product of complex technologies, such as a portable CD player. The study is also informed by the ways objects have been categorised by a range of authors. They have been described in terms of their abundance or scarcity (Barris, Kielhofner, Levine & Neville, 1985), and their historical development and pattern of adoption by people around the world (Braudel, 1987; Brown, 1989; Pounds, 1989). They have been grouped into categories according to whether they are durable, or consumable as in an authentic Indian curry (May, 1996), practical or decorative (Cheal, 1988), precious or mundane, or as assets or liabilities. In addition, objects are commonly separated according to ownership, as possessions or property - mine, yours, ours or theirs (Dittmar, 1992). Objects have also be analysed in terms of their physical characteristics and chemical makeup, such as their weight, texture, colour, whether they are flammable, malleable, or biodegradable - all of which may influence how a particular object is used (Hocking, 1994b).

Objects may also be considered from an occupational perspective, including how, when and by whom they may be used, and for what purpose. Objects may be

⁴ Maori war club, the most prized of which were ground and polished from Moa (an extinct, flightless bird resembling an ostrich) bone or *pounamu* (New Zealand greenstone/jade)

important to people because they provide transportation, as in a bicycle, support engagement in occupation, such as sporting equipment, or provide enjoyment or entertainment. Objects can also be viewed from the perspective of the capacities people must have to use them, such as having sufficient strength to lift an object, and providing opportunities to develop object manipulation skills and mastery over the physical environment (Pierce, 1991). In a slightly different occupational mode, objects have also been characterised in terms of their interactional properties, including the ways they are physically manipulated when used, the purpose they serve and how they function (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980).

As Holding Meaning

The focus of this study, however, is not on objects as physical, technological, historical, durable or consumable entities. Rather, the present study is concerned with people's perception of who they are and who they might become, and the ways in which the objects they have and use support or undermine that identity. Some of the objects people have or use may hold little meaning in relation to identity. The coffee cups used on a daily basis within a workplace may be an example. Other objects may hold multiple meanings, such as a car that symbolises masculinity, freedom and financial success. Further, as Belk (1988) asserted, "only a complete ensemble of consumption objects may be able to represent the diverse and possibly incongruous aspects of the total self" (p. 140).

As outlined in chapter one, viewing objects as meaningful expressions of identity is consistent with symbolic interactionism, which posits that things - including physical objects, hold meanings for people. In the context of this study, it is the meanings objects hold in relation to identity, and the ways people use objects to create or maintain an identity and to interpret the identity of others that is the focus.

The occupational therapy literature provides an example of a group of people acting towards things based on meanings related to their professional identity. It involves the way Australian occupational therapists in the 1950s and 1960s responded to the development of assistive devices (initially termed 'self-aids'). A study by Hocking and Wilcock (1997) found reports of therapists organising professional and public

displays, travelling to the USA on study trips, and compiling bibliographies of information about the 'latest' devices and their design and application. As recently as 1979, an award to encourage the design of adapted equipment was established. This intense activity was fuelled by a belief that skill in the design and fabrication of aids and assistive devices would change public perceptions of occupational therapy as virtually synonymous with crafts and establish occupational therapists as rehabilitation specialists.

Theoretical Perspectives

Several theoretical perspectives on objects are potentially relevant within this study. From an anthropological perspective, objects are viewed as cultural artefacts. In visual anthropology, for example, the placement of objects relative to each other and within people's living spaces is understood to reveal cultural patterns and values such as people's drives and aspirations, interests, literacy and attitudes towards the material world (Collier & Collier, 1986). In the related field of sociology, objects have been viewed from the perspective of status. Here, for example, different styles of decor have been associated with achieved and ascribed status of individuals (Laumann & House, 1969), and textiles and clothing have been noted to "constitute and consolidate social differences" (Bowie, 1993, p. 138). Scholars of material culture have interpreted objects as a reflection of cultural values, technology and craftsmanship, trade patterns, changing social customs (Mayo, 1984), and class (Cohen, 1984).

Less relevant within this context is Freud's psychoanalytic theory of 'object relations', which incorporates the notion of 'objects of attachment'. This concept refers to a mental representation of person(s) or thing(s) that are the source of intense libidinal gratification (Freud, 1905/1962). The theory of object relations, rather than elucidating people's interactions with actual, physical objects, highlights how interactions with others are based on mental images that are ultimately rooted in the needs of the psyche (Rochberg-Halton, 1984). A related notion, transitional objects, refers to the blankets, dolls, teddy bears or other toys to which some children become firmly attached. From a psychoanalytic perspective, transitional objects are viewed as providing libidinal gratification and serving as substitutes for

the mother's breast, whilst also symbolising separation from the mother which is perhaps the first step in developing a sense of self (Lasch, 1984). In the context of this study, it is recognised that physical objects may provide gratification or symbolise our relationship with others. Nonetheless, the term object is not used in the psychoanalytic sense within this study despite the fact that some occupational therapy theorists have incorporated psychoanalytic concepts into their understanding of individual's interactions with objects (See for example Fidler & Fidler, 1963; Fidler & Velde, 1999; Mosey, 1970).

A final, practice based concept is 'objects of reference' or 'object symbols', which refers to the familiar, real-life objects used to assist deaf-blind children to associate objects with occupations. Identifying objects in relation to occupations is considered to be the first step in learning to use symbols such as Braille to aid memory, gain information or to communicate intentions or desires (Park, 1997). Although objects of reference are physical objects, their meaning is confined to being a tool for learning. Because no identity meanings are intended, this concept has little relevance to this study.

Philosophical Perspectives

As well as these theoretical perspectives, objects have been the focus of philosophical inquiry. Since Descartes (1596-1650), the nature of that inquiry has been whether the physical world of objects can be proved to exist (Dreyfus, 1991). Descartes, who is often called the father of modern philosophy, regarded his own conscious experience as the only thing of which he could be sure. From that starting point he argued, amongst other things, for the reality of the physical world. In a similar vein Kant (1724-1804), widely regarded as the greatest modern philosopher, was concerned with whether people can accurately perceive objects and other phenomena, which he termed *Das Ding-an-Sich* (the Thing-in-Itself) (Kant, 1781/1968). Kant's assertion, in essence, was that people can never directly experience things because objective reality is beyond the grasp of human perception.

Similarly, existentialist philosophers such as Husserl (1859-1938) and Heidegger (1889-1976) argued that people apprehend a world of phenomenological appearances in which objects are endowed with meaning and personal significance that is at least as real as the world of objective facts (Maze, 1983). Because of the intrusion of personal meanings, they considered all perceptions and understandings of objects to be inherently inaccurate (Macrone, 1995; Solomon & Higgins, 1997), notwithstanding Heidegger's acknowledgement that a world of nature and everyday objects exists irrespective of people's ability to make sense of it (Dreyfus, 1991). In seeking to understand the relationship between objects and identity, it is the perceived properties and meanings of objects that are important in this study, regardless of how accurate or inaccurate those perceptions may be.

A final philosophical perspective that it is important to acknowledge is Sartre's notion of transcendent objects (1943/1956). Sartre, a French existentialist philosopher (1905-80), devised the philosophical practice of treating thoughts as if they were objects in the world in order to examine them. While the transcendent object the philosopher is thinking about may be an actual object, this practice of separating an object from its context is inconsistent with considering the ways people act towards actual material objects in order to construct and communicate identity. Accordingly, within this study the term object does not encompass Sartre's transcendent objects.

In summary, within this study objects are viewed as physical things that may be naturally occurring, shaped by human action or the product of technology. They may be scarce or common, widely adopted over the course of human history or newly developed, and their use and usefulness will be shaped by their physical properties and chemical makeup as well as by issues of ownership, value and symbolic meaning. The symbolic meanings an object holds will incorporate socially and culturally defined values and aspirations, as well as societal differences such as status and ethnicity. In addition, our actions and feelings towards objects will be shaped by occupational considerations, such as how and when things might be used and for what purposes, and the capacities, skills and knowledge required to master specific objects. It is also acknowledged that people's understanding of objects is

inherently inaccurate because we can never directly experience things. Rather, our understanding of objects and actions towards them are shaped by the meanings they hold. Those meanings arise from social interaction as well as the subjective experience of having and using objects, including the ways others respond towards us having or using those objects. The particular meanings of interest within this study are identity meanings.

Having examined the everyday, theoretical and philosophical underpinnings of how objects are conceptualised within this study, the discussion moves on to what is meant by having and using objects.

Having and Using Objects

The Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists (1997) has proposed that any interaction with the physical world can be conceptualised in terms of thinking, feeling and doing. Teasing out the ways people think and feel about objects, and what we do with them reveals a surprising diversity of interactions. Thinking about the objects people have and use might include perceiving, naming, categorising, examining, designing or imagining objects. Thinking also involves learning to use objects, having a sense of ownership of particular objects, understanding how an object works, and remembering and referring to objects. People also think about objects metaphorically, as in the derogatory phrase ‘thick as a brick’ (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). Doing things with objects includes making, acquiring, giving, collecting, using, donning, maintaining, consuming, disfiguring or destroying, and discarding objects as well as offering them to a deity. Making objects may involve discrete actions such as cutting, sewing or sawing, welding, polishing, grinding or gluing, mixing, frying, grilling or boiling, dying, bending or folding objects. Other interactions with objects may involve all of these actions, as well as sorting, sealing, dusting, burning or freezing, crushing, watering, painting, hanging or mounting, throwing, washing or wiping, greasing or oiling, and walking or sitting on objects. Finally, objects themselves or the meanings they hold for an individual may elicit feelings ranging from delight, wonder, longing, satisfaction or disinterest, anxiety, confusion, jealousy, or disgust. As well, objects arouse feelings of appreciation or dislike, concern about whether others will appreciate or dislike the object we chose

for them, feelings of being beholden or indebted to others for the gifts they give us, and confidence or anxiety in relation to one's ability to use an object. The assumption underlying this study is that what people do with objects and how they do it, what they think about objects and which they desire or reject, and the meanings objects hold as well as the feelings they elicit are influenced by and in turn influence individual identity. It is to the notion of identity, and how identity relates to a sense of self that the discussion now turns.

Identity

Identity can be defined as the “condition of being a specified person” (Pearsall & Trumble, 1996, p. 702). The simplicity of this definition perhaps belies the significance of having a particular identity, which has been described as people's deepest, most profound reality (Rose, 1996). Identity is a culturally relative experience, however, and this notion is explored below because it has implications in relation to whose identity is addressed within this study. Then, as stated at the beginning of the chapter, the discussion proceeds to an examination of the philosophical assumptions that underpin Western identities. Next, changing perceptions and experiences of identity in the second millennium are considered in relation to the transition from modernism to post-modernism. Having viewed identity from these broad vantage points, it is then discussed in terms of how identity is developed, the elements that make up Western identities, and subjective and objective experiences of our own and others' identity. See Figure 2:3 for an overview.

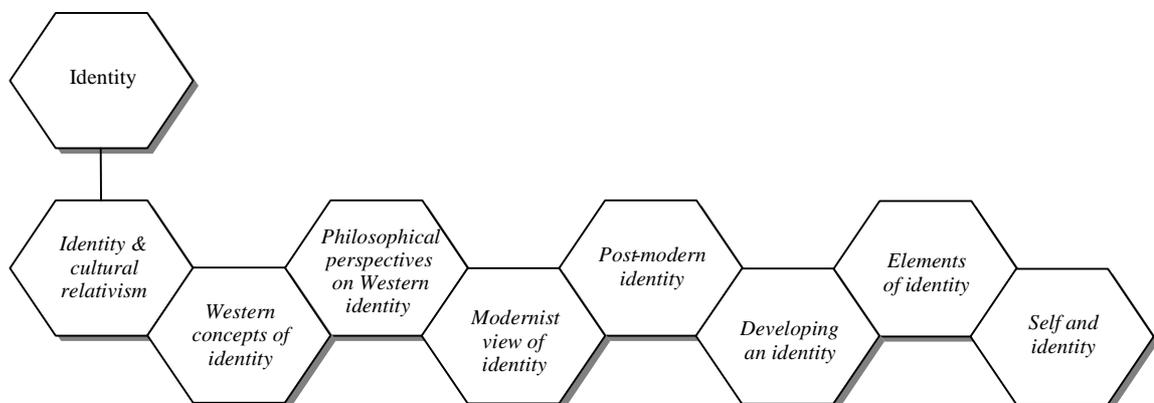


Figure 2:3 Topics Addressed in Relation to Identity.

Identity and Cultural Relativism

A broad assumption underlying this research is that the way people perceive and interpret their experience is shaped by their cultural context, and in particular by the philosophies developed within that culture over the course of history. Specifically, it is assumed that the ways people living in the Western world use objects to construct and express their identity are informed by philosophical assumptions inherent in their cultural heritage. Making such an assumption is problematic, however, because there is debate about whether what is meant by identity is universal or culturally relative. That is, whether people in different places apprehend and experience identity in the same or different ways, and if they do experience identity differently, whether that difference is at a local or cultural level.

At one extreme, interpretivist researchers might deny a global perspective on identity, suggesting instead that because humans are situated beings who exist in a limited and localised geographical space, their identity will be situated and local (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). In this case, the validity of attempting to identify common philosophical underpinnings of the diverse ways Western people use objects to create and sustain identity would be called into question. No literature putting the case for identity defined at an entirely local level was located, however, so that whilst it is acknowledged that some experiences are locally constructed and understood, identity does not entirely seem to be one of these.

At the other extreme some anthropologists have recently argued against the notion of cultural relativity on the basis that modernism, post-modernist critique, capitalism, and American consumer goods are now ubiquitous. This implies a commonality of cultural values, viewpoints and experiences such that 'the Western experience' is no longer restricted to particular cultural groups (Rowlands, 1996, p. 189). In this regard, the globalisation of ideas, practices and values originating in the West, and the resultant loss of diversity of lifestyles, languages and traditional cultural practices, is undeniable. The question in relation to this study, however, is whether globalisation has resulted in a uniformity of people's understanding of identity and their relationship with objects.

Some relevant evidence against the suggestion that globalisation has already eliminated cultural differences comes from research into the process of adoption of new technologies (Braudel, 1987; Brown, 1989; Pounds, 1989). Rather than being viewed as they were in the country of origin, research has suggested that imported ideas, practices and objects are reinterpreted from the perspective of the colonised culture. In addition my impression, based on experiences in countries of vastly different cultural traditions such as Thailand, Taiwan and various islands of the South Pacific is also of deeply rooted philosophical and lifestyle differences, which encompass different attitudes towards objects.

Further specific support for the notion of cultural relativity of identity comes from Kondo's (1990) compelling story of attempting to integrate into a Japanese community and workplace. Kondo, an anthropologist of Japanese descent who was raised in America, experienced what she described as a challenge to her sense of self in relation to Japanese social expectations. Two aspects of this experience are particularly relevant in the context of this study. The first is that Kondo was wholly unprepared for and almost overwhelmed by the experience of forging a new, 'Japanese' self. She concluded that in contrast to the way identity is understood in America, in Japanese society "you are not an 'I' untouched by context, rather you are defined by the context. One could argue that identity and context are inseparable, calling into question the very distinction between the two" (p. 29). This conclusion, and the extent to which Kondo was unprepared for the socially defined identity of Japanese people, reveal the taken-for-grantedness of her culturally embedded understandings of the nature of identity.

The second aspect of Kondo's story that is relevant here is that her transition to a communal, Japanese identity was, at least in part, signified and experienced in relation to objects. One of Kondo's hosts, for example, confided that she could only have welcomed someone of Japanese descent to stay in her home, as only they were genetically capable of adjusting to sleeping on the floor on a tatami mat (futon). As Kondo took on a Japanese identity she indeed learned to sleep on a futon on the floor. She also came to perceive her neighbours' offer of airing her futon on their laundry pole as an expression of sensitivity and caring within a communal setting,

rather than the meddling and breach of privacy these actions might represent in individualist societies. This was not, however, an easy transition. Kondo experienced what she termed a “fragmentation of self and the collapse of identity” (p. 15) and notes that at this point she returned to America for a month in order to “reconstitute myself as an American researcher” (p. 15).

Kondo clearly experienced that her American identity was not the same as a Japanese identity. Rather, she concluded that identity is a culturally embedded concept. Accordingly, whilst it is acknowledged that globalisation has resulted in increasing uniformity of cultural values such that concepts of identity may converge over time, the cultural relativity of identity is accepted. That is, it is assumed in this study that Western concepts of identity are substantially different to notions of identity held in other cultures. Equally, the notion that identity may be entirely local and specific has been rejected in favour of the assumption that Western people have some shared understanding and experience of identity that is culturally embedded. This conclusion is not unique to this study, as evidenced by the many eminent scholars who have examined the Western identity (cf. Rose, 1996; Taylor, 1989). On this basis, whilst cross cultural examples may at times be employed within this thesis to provide a point of comparison, the principal focus of this study is on the analysis of Western understandings of the relationship between objects and identity and the philosophies which inform those understandings.

Western Concepts of Identity

As described, this study is based on the assumption that there are commonalities in how people perceive the relationship between objects and identity. In the modern, liberal democracies that make up the Western world, identity is construed in terms of individualism, liberty and autonomy (Lukes, 1973). Indeed Parry (1984) argued that the assumption that individual freedom and autonomy have greater value than social interdependence is fundamental. Accordingly, each individual is regarded as a self-contained whole (Manstead & Hewstone, 1995), and identity is taken to be what Sabat and Harré (1992) termed “a personal singularity” (p. 444). That is, people in Western societies apprehend individual rather than collectivist identities.

Although individualism has somewhat different connotations in different contexts (Outhwaite & Bottomore, 1993), it may be generally defined as “believing and behaving as if one’s efforts and goal attainments are unrelated to or independent from the efforts towards goal attainment of others” (Corsini & Ozaki, 1984, p. 198). In the context of Western cultural assumptions of individualism, whereby each person is a free, autonomous self, we use objects to understand, experience, and invent an individual sense of self and identity. Thus the primary assumption that Western people make is that the objects we have and use reflect our individuality; what kind of person we believe ourselves to be, the particular skills and allegiances we have, our particular place in society. Having and using objects is a means of displaying our distinctiveness (Cohen, 1994).

The extent to which we take the individual basis of identity for granted is illustrated in the following excerpts, drawn from popular literature. In each, the protagonist responds to desired or repugnant objects on an individualist basis. The main character in Carol Shields’ (1993) novel *Mary Swann*, for example, introduces herself thus:

As recently as two years ago, when I was twenty-six, I dressed in ratty jeans and a sweatshirt with lettering across the chest. That’s where I was. Now I own six pairs of beautiful shoes, which I keep, when I’m not wearing them, swathed in tissue paper in their original boxes. Not one of these pairs of shoes costs less than a hundred dollars.

Hanging in the closet are three dresses (dry clean only), two expensive suits and eight silk blouses in such colours as hyacinth and brandy. Not a large wardrobe, perhaps, but richly satisfying. (p. 1)

This is a story of a young woman’s change of image, signified by her personal clothing and evaluated in terms of personal satisfaction with her new identity as a well-groomed businesswoman. At the other extreme, Frank McCourt in *Angela’s Ashes* (1997) agonises over whether or not to wear the shoes his father has ‘fixed’ by nailing pieces of old bicycle tyre to the sole:

There are six or seven barefoot boys in my class and they don’t say anything and I wonder if it’s better to have shoes with rubber tyres that make you trip and stumble or to go barefoot. If you have no

shoes at all you'll have all the barefoot boys on your side. If you have rubber tyres on your shoes you're all alone with your brother and you have to fight your own battles. I sit on a bench in the schoolyard shed and take off my shoes and stockings ... (pp. 115-6)

The issue Frank faces is which identity is preferable - to be one of the poorest of the poor, one of the barefoot boys or to be someone who is ridiculed. Important in this context is that it is Frank's decision and actions that will determine his identity. He alone bears the agony that whatever his decision, he will be shamed by his bare feet or by his shoes.

A further illustration comes from Griffin (1995), in her essays on ecology, gender and society. Griffin tells stories of moving her dying mother's possessions with her into the convalescent home because their presence "made her [mother] feel more of a piece" (p. 147); the red shoes she "wanted with the hot desire of a child" (p. 161) which "became so much a part of me I forgot I was wearing them" (p. 164); and her grandmother's monumental efforts to make her china, perfume and waxed floor perfect to compensate for not having pursued her burning ambition to become an actress. In each story, identity is experienced in relation to personal objects, which made the protagonist 'feel more of a piece,' became 'part of me', or compensated for a forsaken identity. Implicit in these stories is an individual identity experienced in relation to coveted personal objects rather than in communal terms.

Notions such as individualism and choice (Lukes, 1973), freedom and individual rights have become infused into contemporary Western conceptions and experience of selfhood and identity (Rose, 1996; Taylor, 1989). Rose argued, for example, that individuals "are not merely 'free to choose', but *obliged to be free* ... Human beings must interpret their past, and dream their future, as outcomes of personal choices made or choices to make" (p. 17, emphasis original). The outcomes of these choices, according to Rose, are perceived as expressions of personality through which we discover, realise, invent, craft or reform an identity as "we consume commodities, act out our tastes, ... [and] display our distinctiveness" through the things we own (p. 1).

The notion of being obliged to be free is consistent with Baudrillard's (1988) critique of modern consumption practices. Baudrillard claims that consumers actively create a sense of identity through their purchases, and moreover that this is an absolutely necessary process because identity is no longer accorded to individuals on the basis of membership of a specific economic class or social group. Indeed, he claims, the construction of individual difference is the essence of modern consumer societies. Similarly, Warde (1997) concluded that people "must invent and consciously create a personal identity" (p. 10) and that this requirement to create our own identity is largely exercised through consumer choices. McCracken (1988), a consumer researcher, has also argued that the processes of acquiring and divesting objects are part of a deliberate and continual effort to create and sustain a unique identity. He explains that "one of the ways individuals satisfy the freedom and responsibility of self-definition is through the systematic appropriation of the meaningful properties of goods" (p. 88). For these authors, an inextricable link between identity and object acquisition and use is evident.

In addition to illustrating individualist notions embedded in Western identities, a central theme of the discussion has been the notion of identity as construed, realised, invented or crafted through interactions with objects. Frank McCourt's identity is construed as impoverished either with or without his ruined shoes. Kondo realises an identity as Japanese as her attitude towards her neighbours' offer to hang out her futon changes. Griffin invents an adventurous persona, symbolised by her coveted red shoes. Mary Swann uses tasteful, exclusive clothing to craft an identity as a successful and confident businesswoman. Furthermore, through their interactions with objects, these characters have the potential to bring into being some new aspect of identity, or to invent themselves anew. In this way, they demonstrate that modern Western identities are conceptualised as a fluid construction or ongoing project, rather than as a finite or fixed entity.

To summarise the discussion to this point, it has been proposed that identity constitutes a profound reality of everyday life, and that this lived reality is culturally relative. Commonly identified features of the Western identity are its individualistic nature with its embedded values of autonomy, choice, freedom and individual

rights. In this context, identity is an expression of individual personality and an outcome of personal choices. In modern consumer societies this individual identity is realised, at least in part, through objects. The origins of these notions will now be explored.

Philosophical Perspectives on Western Identity

The philosophical origins of Western notions of identity can be traced to traditional societies where, according to historians and anthropologists, identity was determined by birthright, a fixed system of social roles, and religious and other sanctions. The sumptuary laws of thirteenth to seventeenth century Europe are an example. Designed to ensure that individual's identity could be recognised at a glance, these laws regulated the use of clothing and adornments associated with high status families and official office, and limited the ownership of valuable goods. One's identity as a tribesman, a peasant or a member of the nobility was considered stable, and not subject to reflection, discussion, or re-negotiation (Kellner, 1992). Notions of identity as part of a stable social order were, however, challenged by the ideas that took hold during the Enlightenment and by Romanticism.

The Enlightenment was a European intellectual movement of the late 17th and 18th centuries that had two pivotal themes that influenced, among other things, how identity is conceptualised in the West. These were reason and observation. The application of reason to solving the philosophical and practical problems of the day is epitomised by Galileo, Descartes, Hobbes and Newton. The importance of observation in determining what was true was emphasised by philosophers such as Bacon, Locke and Hume. Gergen (1991) argued that the significance of these notions in relation to identity lies in their shared emphasis on the power of the individual to discern the truth and to choose appropriate actions accordingly. Individuals were thus freed to discover and affirm their own innate, yet fundamentally unchanging identity. In the context of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, this view of self directly challenged the authority invested by the 'divine right' of kings, and religious leaders' claims of 'divine inspiration'. The Enlightenment view, of individuals as skilled observers able to apply reasoning to practical as well as political quandaries, remains influential. This is evident in the

Western commitment to democratic leadership, science, and belief in the benefit of a broad education. It is also evident in pejorative terms such as ‘bird-brained’, ‘irrational,’ ‘feeble-minded’, which underline the lack of value placed on those deemed unable to exercise reason. The Enlightenment identity, then, is an educated and thinking individual who lives out and affirms his or her identity through action. The notions of affirming one’s own identity and taking action accordingly can be discerned in Mary Swann’s replacement of her wardrobe of jeans and sweatshirts with pricey business suits and silk shirts (Shields, 1993) and in Frank McCourt’s decision to remove his shoes and socks and become one of the barefoot boys (Mccourt, 1997).

The supremacy of reason and observation was itself challenged by Romanticism, an alternate vision that became popular in some sectors of society during the latter stages of the Enlightenment and extended into the nineteenth century. In contrast to the sensible, calm and rational identity espoused by Enlightenment thinkers, the Romantics’ view of identity was complex and dynamic. In what has been termed the “romanticist drama of personal depth” (Gergen, 1991, p. 57), poets such as Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron and Shelley, as well as painters, musicians and noble men of this period played out the Romantic notion of the primacy of the individual. They portrayed individuals struggling to come to terms with the passion, irrationality, profound love, desire, inspiration or great creativity which welled up from the inner reaches of their mind or soul. The Romantics valued moral decision making and creative inspiration, praised expressions of passion and the abandonment of the mundane, and held acts of heroism and genius in awe. They also fostered a belief in love as the bedrock of intimate relationships, family life and friendship, and left a modern day legacy of giving romantic gifts to one’s beloved that both celebrate the giver’s feelings of love and symbolise the receiver’s uniqueness. Romantic gifts, acquired spontaneously with little thought to cost and no expectation of receiving a gift in return, are a specific instance of objects being used to acknowledge the unique identity of another (Belk & Coon, 1993). The Romantic identity, then, is characterised by creativity and emotional expressiveness, exploration of the self, and sometimes by seeking extreme experiences. Western identities are generally acknowledged to encompass aspects of both Enlightenment

and Romantic ideals, being at different times and in different measures both coolly rational and lifted above the mundane in moments of passion or heroism.

Modernist View of Identity

Perhaps due to the rise of empiricist science and the abundance of consumer goods made available by technology, the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century saw the emergence of the modernist worldview. Reminiscent of the Enlightenment, the modernist perspective is characterised by the rationality and systematic observation of scientific method, logical decision making based on evidence, and in relation to objects, a focus on utility (Gergen, 1991). Social commentators such as Braun (1995) and Saul (1997) have added that modernity is typified by the quest to identify the essence of human concerns - political processes, illness, communication, aesthetic taste, and so on. It also encompasses the grand narrative of progress, which assures us that a better life or better society will arise from organised human endeavour, particularly in the economic and technological spheres. At an individual level, the notion of progress underlies the assumption that our children will do better or achieve more than ourselves, including owning more and better quality possessions.

What constitutes a modern view of identity, however, is problematic. One perspective, held variously by Marx, Durkheim, and Weber is that identity is historically, culturally and socially patterned by institutional processes. Thus, Marx (1846/1983) pointed to the influence of the dominant mode of production and social organisation on human character. Almost a hundred years later, Durkheim (1933/1984) posited that industrialisation would give rise to a new person, one increasingly freed from the constraints of traditional society to pursue higher and moral self interest, linking the phenomenon of specialisation of labour to increasing individualism. Weber (1930/1958) identified the Protestant religious foundations of the industrialised capitalist self, which Casey (1995) found to be still evident in managers in a progressive multinational organisation in the 1990s.

An alternate perspective promoted most notably by Mead (1934), Goffman (1961) and Berger and Luckman (1966) emphasises the social construction of self. From

this perspective the constructed nature of identity is acknowledged, with Mead in particular identifying that interaction with others nurtures the development of self, since interaction stimulates reflexivity. Also acknowledged is the individual's ability to modify their identity at will by changing their work role or function within the public sphere or family, while still achieving an underlying stability and overall coherence. This is exemplified by Bateson's (1990) book, *Composing a Life*, in which she describes a life course of changing occupations that is typical of middle aged women in present day America, set against a back drop of having a sense of continuity of self. Shield's (1993) character, Mary Swann, who changes identity by changing her wardrobe, is a further example. A somewhat more radical view is that in the same way the Reformation set people free from the secular rule of the church, modernity sets people free to create their own identity. The argument here is that the societal changes brought about by industrialisation, in particular the disruption to village life as people moved to the cities to find work, resulted in established class, family, and gender identity markers being lost. Where people had once been identified by their known relationship to others, the anonymity of city life gave the freedom and necessity of establishing one's own identity. Beck (1986/1992) described this as having to "refer to themselves in planning their individual labor market biographies" (p. 87). That is, identity came to be based on individual life history, and to be focused around ascribed differences and inequalities such race, ethnicity, age and lifestyle.

The socially constructed self, proposed by Mead and others, is vulnerable to broad social forces. However, as Sen (1999) reminds us, some aspects of identity, such as racial or ethnic origins are not open to choice. He cites the particular meanings ascribed to being Jewish in Nazi Germany or being an African American facing a lynch mob in the southern states of America in the early twentieth century as identity meanings not open to individual choice or negotiation. Sen also cites the shift in personal identity that occurred in India in the mid-1940s, when people's identity as Indian or Asian suddenly gave way to sectarian identities as Hindu, Muslim or Sikh.

From a social constructivist perspective, the essence of a healthy identity is the attainment of an independent, differentiated selfhood (Josselson, 1988) that, according to Carl Rogers (1951), is achieved through a process of personal endeavour towards self-actualisation. Drawing on symbolic interactionism, however, British anthropologists have more recently depicted social and personal identity as highly contingent (Cohen, 1994), and ethnographers have described the situated production of identity, and dispersed or multiple identities, as a feature of modernity (Marcus, 1992). This is consistent with Goffman's (1969) assertion that personal identity is an intentional construction whereby people attempt to secure the greatest advantage, or the least disadvantage in their dealings with others. Against the strengthening assumption that identity is intentionally constructed, Kellner (1992) proposed that the 'problem' of identity appears to be how we "constitute, perceive, interpret, and present our self to ourselves and to others" (p. 143) when different groups of people make incompatible claims on us.

In addition to assuming that modern identities are constructed, the pervasive modern metaphor of the machine, which has influenced architecture, artistic endeavour and music, has affected the way human nature is conceptualised. In this regard, Gergen (1991) proposed that identity has been attributed all the hall marks of a well-designed machine, including consistency over time, reliability, and being principled, trustworthy, self directing and self confident. With the shift from mechanical to computer based technologies, the form of the metaphor has shifted in relation to people, from mechanical structures with inbuilt mechanisms and stamped in habits to computers which are hard wired, programmed, and process data (Postman, 1993). A further variation is Zohar's (1990) metaphor of the quantum self in which she adopts quantum physics' fluid and changing particles to depict an enduring sense of self over time, and its energy waves to represent the self in relationship with others. Such modernist views of identity have not gone uncontested, however. Ruthellen Josselson (1987, 1988) and Charlene Spretnak (1997), in particular, have argued that the accepted normative processes and outcomes of identity formation reflect male values of self assertion, self expansion, separateness and autonomy rather than female values of contact, co-operation, and self reliance that grows out of being secure in one's attachments to others.

A further consideration is the notion of future identity. Proposing that people have a concept of who they might be in the future is consistent with the notion of progress, and the future orientation that typifies Western thinking (Parry, 1984). Strauss (1993), for example, proposed the idea of biographical projection, meaning people's perception of what will happen to their identity in the future, and biographical management, "the attempt to shape what happens to identity ... as it evolves" (p. 58). Similarly, Charmaz (1990) suggested that people have a preferred identity, meaning a vision of a future self that is currently unrealised. Such future selves may reflect radical changes in circumstances. Boydell, Goering and Morrell-Bellai's (2000) study of homeless people in Toronto, for example, showed that they envisioned a future 'nonhomeless' identity although most had no concrete plan for how this might come about. In proposing that identity extends into the future and aligns with individual's aspirations, these scholars have accepted the notion that Western people perceive a level of control over constructing their own identity.

To summarise the different philosophical perspectives that inform the modern stance towards identity, the discussion has revealed that identity is a complex concept. While there appears to be reasonable consensus that Western people construct their own unique identity, independent of their family and family circumstances, other key ideas remain more contentious. In particular, whether identity has been conceived in predominantly masculine terms, and whether identity is situational rather than enduring are controversial. Of primary importance in this study, however, is the widely held assumption that a quintessential feature of the modern identity is the sense of agency that arises from an ability to be rational and to make conscious choices. Other key features are a relationship with others conceptualised in terms of independence and that individuals have a sense of continuity or consistency of self and one's point of view. In a context of rationality, the notion that self or identity is explicable in scientific terms is prevalent. Thus, at a personal level, people are viewed as the product of their heredity, biology, psychological makeup, socialisation and so on. At the same time, the legacy of the Romantics to contemporary concepts of identity is asserted in notions of what makes life meaningful, and in modern beliefs about the complex dynamics of

personality, the significance of human endeavour, and the quest for insight into both the essence of oneself and the dynamics underlying one's actions. The modern identity is thus perceived as both constructed and self-reflexive, and subject to creation and recreation at will.

Post-Modern Identity

In modernity, where identity is socially defined in relation to available roles, norms, customs and expectations, the problem individuals face is how to constitute and present themselves to others, and who they wish to become. From a post-modern constructivist perspective, the autonomous, self-constituted identity of modern individuals fragments, and identity becomes highly fluid, transitory, and easily discarded. Rather than coherence, people experience themselves as having serial identities and multiple pasts (Kellner, 1992). Identity is frequently reconstructed (Anderson, 1996) and provisional identities “serve as templates or strategies for self-presentations in *specific* situations” (Langman, 1992, p. 71). Bowlby (1985), for example, drawing from perspectives promoted by Baudrillard, described how:

Like the car he owns, the individual is himself updated with regular new models, altering an identity assumed wholly through the things his money can buy: clothes, cars and so on. The commodity makes the person and the person is, if not for sale, then an object whose value or status can be read off with accuracy in terms of the things he has and the behavioural codes he adopts. (p. 26)

Identity innovation becomes akin to game playing and individuals can consciously experiment with identity through a constant turnover of hairstyles, clothes and behaviour. Where modern identity centred on one's roles, post-modern identities are reconstructed and redefined around looks, leisure and consumption (Langman, 1992; Lash & Friedman, 1992). From this perspective, advertising does more than stimulate consumer demand. It becomes a mechanism of socialisation, suggesting new and desirable identities available for purchase. While this increases people's freedom to trial new identities, it may also lead to lives that are “subject to the whims of fashion and the subtle indoctrinations of advertising and popular culture” (Kellner, 1992, p. 174) which Friedman (1992) termed narcissistic dependency.

While this post-modern view may seem disconcerting enough, post-structuralists claim the very notion of subjective identity is a myth. From this perspective, the post-modern self is fragmented, disconnected and decentred, lacking depth, substance and coherence (Davies, 1991). It is an outcome of the fragmented, disjointed and discontinuous nature of post-modern experience where people are lost in the intensities and vacuities of the moment (Jameson, 1983; 1984). Kellner (1992), however, has argued against this extreme view, citing evidence that the rapidly changing identities portrayed in 'post-modern' texts such as *Miami Vice* have a consistency of form and are connected to coherent cultural values. Rather than identity disappearing from contemporary society, it is reconstructed and redefined. Instead of seeking stability, the post-modern self will accept a new freedom to play with identity, adopting multiple changing images. For some, this will offer opportunities for increased freedom. For others it may lead to a fragmented life, "subject to the whims of fashion and the subtle indoctrinations of advertising and popular culture" (Kellner, p. 174). The predictions of post-modern commentators may not, however, eventuate and may not affect everyone equally. As Kellner and others have argued, post-modernism is an emergent trend rather than a totality, which suggests that traditional, modern and post-modern cultural forms, including forms of identity, co-exist within contemporary society. Also important to note here is that the use of objects to express, consolidate, or change identity remains constant across the description of traditional, modern and post-modern identities, even as the pace and coherence of such change varies.

Developing an Identity

Objects are widely regarded as instrumental in the development of a sense of self (Belk, 1988), in part by providing opportunities to test and challenge skills, and to manage emotions (Fidler, 1999). Moreover, this process continues over the lifespan. Martin (1995), for example, found that differences in worker's views of themselves and in their level of commitment to their field of work hinged on their access to opportunities to learn to effectively use new technologies. It has also been suggested that feelings of possessiveness, of distinguishing what is mine from what is not, are instrumental in developing an identity (Dixon & Street, 1975). A link

between children's toys and the development of gender roles is also frequently drawn. Wajcman (1991), for example, claimed that:

Many children's toys encourage boys to be assertive and independent, to solve problems, experiment with construction and, more recently, to regard the technological aspects of their toys with confidence and familiarity. ... By contrast, 'girls' toys' such as dolls foster different skills which are associated with caring and social interaction. ... Toys are an important part of the differentiated learning experiences between boys and girls. These toys in turn reflect the division of labour between women and men within the family. (p. 153)

In addition, objects may promote the development of aspects of identity which are not socially valued. The resistance of one Amish community to having telephones in private homes, because they would enable private and individual links with people outside the community and thereby foster individualism and pride rather than humility is a case in point (Umble, 1992). Finally, it has been found that as we age, our special possessions increasingly symbolise other people (Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton, 1981), which has been attributed to an age-related widening of the boundaries of self (Rochberg-Halton, 1984).

The suggestion that perceptions of self and identity change over the lifespan is important here, because more traditional notions of identity held variously by Descartes, Kant and Husserl viewed it as something fixed, innate, or fundamentally unchanging. In contrast, the modern perspective is that identity is the product of normal development. As previously described, from this perspective identity is viewed as developing in response to environmental conditions such as parental child-rearing practices, and being subject to predictable transitions, some marked by rituals or forged through rites of passage (Turner & Turner, 1978). In brief, identity, along with a sense of self, is taken to be "a construction derived from a life lived" (Barclay & Smith, 1993, p. 21).

Various scholars have cast this change in identity over time in different lights. Whether one's identity is primarily constituted (Kellner, 1992; Rogoff, Radziszewska & Masiello, 1995), routinely self-created and sustained through

reflective activities (Giddens, 1991), created and regulated by institutions and child rearing practices (Spretnak, 1997), composed (Bateson, 1990), authored (Cohen, 1994), discovered or unfolding, co-authored and authorised by others (Kenyon & Randall, 1997), invented (Rose, 1996), transformed or reformulated (Boydell, Goering & Morrell-Bellai, 2000; Cohen, 1994), self constituted (Kay, 1991), assembled, managed and marketed (Rose, 1990), brought into being by making something (Zohar, 1990), or whether people simply become what they do (Casey, 1995; Wilcock, 1991) is not debated here. Rather, each of these concepts is acknowledged as providing different insights into the interaction between identity and the objects people own and use. In the context of this thesis, what is important is the general acceptance that identity may change over one's life course, as individuals actively construct their identity and in response to external factors.

In an attempt at clarity, the term development is used in this study to signal predictable, normative changes over the lifespan as individuals move through the decades of their lives. Notions of constructing, composing, creating and reformulating are used to indicate conscious and perhaps deliberate processes of seeking or deriving a coherent identity through objects. Unfolding or discovered elements of identity signal the unplanned, unexpected, and serendipitous in human lives. Acknowledging other's role in defining who we are may be better signalled by terms such as co-authoring, while other's view of us in relation to the things we own or aspire to own, create, use or discard may be best signalled by terms such as authorising. The thread uniting each of these explanations of a developing identity or sense of self is the notion of people engaged in activity, making sense of what they do, and in the process making or becoming themselves.

Consistent with Brenner (1985), the stance taken here is that people are self-interpreting and the interpretations people make are constitutive of the self. This perspective is in accordance with the assumption that, at least within Western societies, identity is a self-project (Casey, 1995), meaning that we are responsible for crafting our personalities and improving ourselves. According to Rose (1996), discovering "who we really are" is achieved "in and through activities in the mundane world of everyday life" (p. 17). Similarly, Pierce (1991) pointed to

concepts of self that are developed in relation to learning how to interact with objects. From a consumer perspective, this ongoing improvement has been framed as a process of “continual refurbishment” of the self, in order to “make the self richer, more complex, more appealing, in the same manner that we have learned to think of objects being continually improved in their re-design” (Finkelstein, 1991, p. 129). At a more philosophical level, Nietzsche, Heidegger and Sartre conceived the creation of an authentic self and identity as an existential task (Kellner, 1992), whereby transcending oneself is the essence of being alive (Berman, 1992).

Elements of Identity

Given that people living in the Western world perceive that they, at least to some extent, create their own identity, it is important to discern the elements and nature of that identity. From this standpoint, identity might be considered to be compressed culture, meaning that individuals are implicitly shaped by the culture that surrounds them (Kalekin-Fishman, 2000). That is, as members of a particular culture individuals’ identity will incorporate the language, knowledge, beliefs, art, laws, morals and customs, social rules of behaviour and way of life of that culture. Identity will also be shaped by the psychological norms of the culture, such as how people develop, cope and adjust to new circumstances; prevalent products and technologies; and the philosophies, symbols, ideas and history of the culture within which they live. Furthermore, a person may perceive him or herself to be part of the collective culture, while simultaneously having the identity of being “an Italian, a woman, a vegetarian, a novelist, a fiscal conservative, a jazz fan, and a Londoner” (Sen, 1999, p. 14). In addition, the emergence of new social movements, which have championed the rights of minority groups, have seen what Aronowitz (1992) referred to as a “multiplicity of identities” most notably “people of colour, the handicapped, gays and lesbians” (p. 8). Of particular interest within this study are the ways certain objects have come to symbolise these social identities, although these associations are not always flattering or positive. The stigma surrounding the use of assistive devices, and the adoption of a stylised wheelchair to indicate disability access is one example.

Cultural ideas of relevance here include what kinds of people there are: old and young, rural and urban dwelling, shy and outgoing. Each of these identities can readily be interpreted in terms of objects they might be associated with: the different fashions of elders and youths, footwear of rural versus urban dwellers, unobtrusive or eye-catching jewelery. Within Western cultures, assumptions about the relative worth of different individuals also abound, as illustrated by pejorative labels such as the unemployed, illiterate, or inept, and accusations such as arsonist or thief. Such identities may also carry stereotypical assumptions about access to, mastery of, and criminal tendencies towards objects. National identity in itself may be expressed and preserved in distinctive clothing, household furnishings, flags and banners, and in the ways certain objects are regarded or looked after. Polish women, for example, have been reported to “starch everything, even their sheets” (Leveau & Schnapper, 1991, p. 391).

Gender identity has also been commonly linked with particular styles of clothing, as well as shoes, makeup, automobiles, cooking pots, writing implements, books, desks and chairs (Rose, 1996). In addition, girls and boys toys are commonly cited as contributing to gender differentiation (Vincent, 1991). Social class has also been linked to object use. Veblen (1899/1953), writing at the dawn of the twentieth century, noted that 19th century *nouveaux riches* had copied the tastes of more established wealthy families in order to win social approval. More recently, the trend amongst Western people, particularly since the 1920s, has been to increasingly tailor consumption of objects to achieve social status. Nevertheless, the kinds of objects individuals aspired to and the aesthetic taste they expressed remained a fairly reliable indicator of socio-economic status at least until the middle of the twentieth century (Aronowitz, 1992; Bocoock, 1992). To some extent this may still be true. In 1989, for example, it was found that the objects American trailer-home owners used to decorate and mark the boundaries around their trailer-home reflected their class identity (Belk, Wallendorf & Sherry, 1989). Furthermore, as Bourdieu (1984) suggested, having particular objects such as consumer durables and home furnishings has become not only a means of expressing differences between social groups, it may also be the basis of establishing differences.

As well as social groupings, objects are used to establish identity in relation to social rules. For example, rules relating to erotic versus chaste behaviour are played out in female clothing, as are notions of sex appeal and refinement (Davis, 1991). For example, Bocoock (1992) describes the more openly erotic male imagery of the 1980s that was articulated through clothing and hairstyles. Vincent (1991), on the other hand, reports a French newspaper as approvingly describing a female presidential chief of staff for favouring discreetly coloured but severely styled dresses.

Identity, then, is multifaceted and as the discussion has revealed, objects can be appropriated as expressions of many aspects of identity. As well as national, social and class status, the objects that surround us might reveal our acceptance or eschewal of biologically determined elements of identity, such as age and ethnicity while also, either deliberately or inadvertently, communicating aspects of personality, lifestyle and circumstances. Objects might also convey our acceptance or rejection of social mores, or be actively recruited to support socio-political positions or membership of a majority or minority group within society.

Self and Identity: Inside and Outside Views

As well as having a social function, in the sense that others recognise us as being a particular person, identities are also personal and subjective; the person I think I am. In this final section of the discussion of identity, these objective and subjective perspectives are teased out.

The term identity encompasses the objective, outsider's view of what it is to be a particular person. As discussed, identity includes indelible, biologically determined characteristics, such as age, gender, ethnicity and, if we set aside the contrivances of plastic surgery, physical appearance. Identity also encompasses aspects of birthright, such as nationality, cultural heritage and being endowed with identifiers such as a family name, in addition to more fluid qualities such as individuality and personality. An excerpt from Annie Proulx's *Stone City* (1994) illustrates this outsider's view, while showing that it is not always accurate. The story involves a

new comer who mistakenly interprets a local man's identity on the basis of his appearance and observed behaviour:

At the time I came to Chopping County, Banger was about fifty, a heavy man, all suet and mouth. At first I thought he was that stock character who remembered everyone's first name, shouting "Har ya! How the hell are ya doin'?" to people he's seen only an hour before ... (Proulx, 1994, p. 21)

It quickly transpired that others in the community held Banger in higher esteem for his prowess as a hunter, and because of their knowledge of his circumstances; that he was alone in the world after "his place burned down and the wife and kid was fried right in it" (p. 22). Individuals also describe their own identity in terms of their objective circumstances. For example, the protagonist of *Under the Tuscan Sun: At Home in Italy* describes herself predominantly in relation to her changed marital and financial status:

I had ended a long marriage that was not supposed to end and was establishing a new relationship ... When the flying fur from the divorce settled, I had found myself with a grown daughter, a full-time university job (after years of part-time teaching), a modest securities portfolio, and an entire future to invent. Although divorce was harder than a death, still I felt oddly returned to myself after many years in a close family. (Mayes, 1996, p. 15)

While identity reflects our external reality, however, the philosophical nature of modern Western identities is profoundly inward, meaning that we have a "sense of ourselves as beings with inner depths" (Taylor, 1989, p. x). This inwardness is generally referred to as 'having a sense of self', which connotes the subjectively experienced, internal aspects of a person; it is the view from inside one's own skin looking out. Dictionary definitions of 'self' point to notions of individuality or personal essence but also to being conscious of self, where one's self may be "the object of introspection or reflexive action" (Pearsall & Trumble, p. 1312) and the locus of thought, beliefs and values. Self means experiencing ourselves as unique, not an entity as much as "a site from which a person perceives the world and a place from which to act" (Harré, 1998, p. 3). The conceptions of self that inform

modernity can be traced to William James who in 1890 drew a link between self and objects:

A man's Self is the sum total of all he CAN call his, not only his body and his psychic powers, but his clothes and his house, ... his reputation and works, his lands, and yacht and bank account. All these things give him the same emotions. If they wax and prosper, he feels triumphant; if they dwindle and die away, he feels cast down, - not necessarily in the same degree for each thing, but in much the same way for all. (1890/1981, p. 101, emphasis original)

While we might feel more or less successful according to the vagaries of our circumstances, people from the West generally experience themselves as having boundaries and being coherent, individualised and intentional (Rose, 1996). These certainties may be threatened, however, when we perceive circumstances as beyond our control or in mental illness. Janet Frame's (1980) account of finding her name on the list of patients to receive electro-convulsive therapy vividly portrays this:

One time I read my name there ... What had I done? I hadn't cried or spoken out of turn or refused to work ... There was obviously a crime which was unknown to me, which I had not included in my list because I could not track it with the swinging spotlight of my mind to the dark hinterland of unconsciousness. I knew then that I would have to be careful. I would have to wear gloves, to leave no trace when I burgled the crammed house of feeling and took for my own use exuberance depression suspicion terror. (p. 16)

In this study, concepts of identity and self are both important. It is as a coherent, bounded, individualised and intentional self that individuals possess an identity. Accordingly in this study both terms will be used as appropriate to the objective or introspective nature of the experience or perspective under discussion.

Summary

This chapter has explored in some detail relevant theoretical, philosophical and practice related perspectives on objects and identity. In brief, objects were revealed to be physical entities that people respond to on the basis of the personal and cultural meanings they hold. Some of those meanings relate to how they are used and who might use them. Of particular note is the linkage between identity and

objects that the discussion has revealed. These links include the assumptions people make about individuals' ability to use objects, such as Kondo's futon, based on their cultural heritage. The discussion also revealed that people actively create their identity using objects, by appropriating the meanings they hold, and that the succession of objects we have and use over a lifetime both bring into being and symbolise shifts in identity.

At a philosophical level, both Enlightenment values of being responsible for one's actions and who one might become, and Romantic notions of exploration of the self are played out through objects. Modernist perspectives portray this interaction as having an underlying stability and overall coherence, suggesting a continuity of identity based on a personal life history. Post-modernists suggest serial identities that are easily discarded. Despite these differences, most commentators have recognised that identity processes involve deliberately associating with objects that support our identity claims. In the next chapter, the nature of the relationship between objects and identity is explored.

Chapter Three

The Relationship Between Objects and Identity

In this chapter the assumptions people make about the nature of the relationship between objects and identity are explored. The purpose of this exploration is to discern the philosophical basis of those assumptions. This will enable subsequent chapters to trace the historical and philosophical roots of ideas taken for granted by people living now. The discussion begins by outlining the thinking that guided the selection of literature to review. The issue of culture is then revisited, this time from the perspective of whether the identity meanings that objects hold are culturally specific. Two dialogues that emerged as important are also outlined. These are the assumptions that are about the identity meanings of clothing and the meaning of objects within consumer societies.

Building on these broad perspectives, the themes apparent in the literature are presented. It is suggested that objects are perceived as mirrors of self and identity, and as having the potential to transform people. It is proposed that these distinctly different ways of viewing the relationship between objects and identity arise respectively from rational and Romantic approaches to living. The overall progression of the discussion is summarised in Figure 3:1.

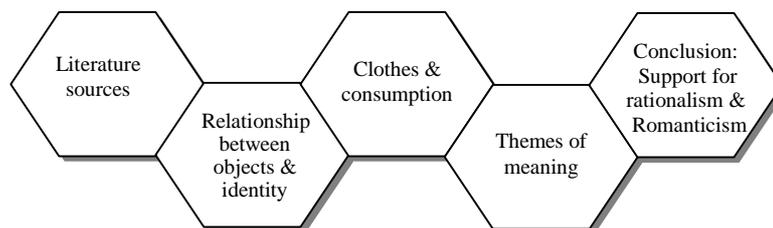


Figure 3:1 Progression of the Discussion in Chapter Three.

Literature Sources

As my ultimate concern is with occupational therapy, concentrating my research on those disciplines typically identified as informing that profession seemed a sensible strategy. Whilst acknowledging that the exclusion of any field potentially loses

valuable information, historical precedence suggests these as the most likely to be rewarding. McColl, Law and Stewart's (1993) categorisation of the disciplines which contribute to therapists' understanding of occupation provided a useful guide, with the exception of those bodies of knowledge unlikely to generate new concepts related to identity, such as biomedicine, anatomy and ergonomics. Accordingly I searched disciplines like sociology and anthropology, and social, developmental, sociocultural and economic psychology. In addition, I looked into the literature of consumer research, which has been recently suggested as providing useful perspectives for occupational therapists (Barber, 1996), and found this a productive field. I also incorporated some material from history, occupational science, disability studies, and occupational therapy itself, as well as the thoughts of critics of modern Western society including Saul (1997) and Postman (1993). An underlying assumption of the analysis is that similar philosophical assumptions will manifest throughout the literature, irrespective of differences in the theoretical context.

As well as focusing on those disciplines recognised as informing occupational therapy, the literature search was largely confined to current literature. This was because the purpose of this analysis was to discern the nature of the relationship between objects and identity rather than when theoretical concepts emerged and how they developed over time. Accordingly, the professional literature selected for analysis was mostly published during the 1990s and early 2000s, but included some earlier material as necessary to capture highly influential ideas or authorities.

In addition, to supplement the professional literature and, in a sense, to contextualise the theoretical notions within contemporary society, various works of popular fiction are included in the analysis. The works included represent a fairly random sample, chosen for its potential to capture commonly held, culturally based ideas likely to be familiar to occupational therapists but perhaps not represented in the professional literature.

The Relationship Between Objects and Identity as Culturally Embedded

The discussion in chapter two revealed that people's understanding and experience of identity varies across cultures. However, those acknowledged differences do not necessarily indicate that the relationship between objects and identity is also perceived differently. Perhaps people in diverse cultural settings use objects in very similar ways, to construct and communicate culturally specific identities. In this brief section of discussion, the possibility that objects hold similar meanings in different cultures, and that people might perceive the relationship between objects and identity in very similar ways is addressed. To test this possibility, a group of studies drawn from consumer research and two studies from anthropological research in Africa are examined.

The consumer research studies selected for discussion compared the level of materialism⁵ of people in various countries (Ger & Belk, 1996), and the meanings favourite possessions hold for people in America, India (Mehta & Belk, 1991), and Niger (Wallendorf & Arnould, 1988). Whereas the American subjects in all three studies had no difficulty identifying a favourite object and explaining its personal significance, people from India most often identified objects that reflected or contributed to the prestige of their family rather than themselves. That is, the meanings objects held in relation to collective identity were more salient than individually focused meanings. Informants from rural Niger, when asked to identify their favourite possession, spontaneously referred to their fields and children, and probing questions were required to elicit a favourite object. The objects finally identified were valued for their exchange value, meaning how much cash they could be converted into, or for their spiritual or magical efficacy. The researchers noted that two of the 45 people from Niger could not be induced to name a favourite object, and concluded that nuances of meaning in relation to individuals, including identity related meanings, were overshadowed by cultural differences.

⁵ The notion of materialism referred to here is the consumer valuing of material possessions, rather than the philosophical position that all that exists is matter, or is wholly dependent on matter for its existence (Urmson & Ree, 1989).

A second example of objects holding different identity meanings in non-Western settings comes from a 1996 anthropology text focusing on African material culture which, the editors claimed, illuminates “the situated ways in which individuals use objects in the construction of identity” (Hardin & Arnoldi, 1996, p. 8). To legitimate this claim, authorities spanning the late 1970s to the early 1990s were cited. One chapter by Ntole (1996) revealed how the Mbala people primarily identify things as belonging to two opposing categories: objects for women versus objects for men, and personal versus communal objects. Virtually all objects in the Mbala’s world could be classified this way: they were either communally or individually owned, and used exclusively by men or women. While these ways of classifying objects are familiar to Western people, they are not the primary ways in which differences between objects are conceptualised. Ntole’s findings support Mehta and Belk’s assertion that objects might signify communal rather than individualist identities, whilst also illustrating how objects in that culture signal individual’s identity as male or female.

In the same text, Drewal (1996) examined devotees’ practice of placing Western objects not used in their daily lives, such as cosmetics, plastic flowers and cutlery, on the shrine of Mami Wata (an exotic African water spirit). He found that in doing so, they transformed the uses and meanings of the foreign objects to suit their devotional purposes. Drewal suggested that through this process, devotees were not so much rejecting their own identity as African people as reworking definitions of themselves in relation to the deities.

What these examples illustrate is that objects, and the relationship between identity and objects are mental constructions that vary markedly across cultures. On a day-to-day level, this implies that people in different places apprehend and experience identity, objects, and the relationship between them in different ways. Recognising the relativist nature of these central components of the study adds further support to the decision to restrict the study to the Western experience of using objects for identity purposes, and seeking to uncover the underpinnings of the assumptions people make about objects and identity within the Western philosophical tradition. Furthermore, consistent with employing a history of ideas methodology, the

research is seeking not differences but the core cultural concepts that shape people's understanding of the relationship between objects and identity. Because of this, whilst cross cultural examples are at times included to provide comparisons which reveal taken for granted understandings, the principal focus of this study is on the analysis of Western understandings and the philosophies which inform them.

Extending this debate, the applicability of the findings of this study to occupational therapy practice in non-western settings may also come into question. As identified by Kielhofner (1992) and Wilcock (1998), amongst others, occupational therapy's genesis as a discrete profession was in a Western context imbued with Western philosophies. The synchronicity of the central concepts of occupational therapy with other philosophical traditions has not yet been established even in relation to the ways occupation itself is conceptualised (Nelson & Jonsson, 1999). It is entirely possible that occupational therapists from non-western backgrounds may understand and address the relationship between objects and identity in very different ways. This consideration further supports confining the search for informative literature to publications from North America, Britain and Australasia.

Clothes and Consumption

In Western societies, two perspectives seem to dominate the discussion about the relationship between objects and identity, to the extent that they warrant separate discussion. These are the notion that our clothes reveal the kind of person we are, and the extent to which the relationship between objects and identity is managed and manipulated within consumer societies.

Perspectives on Clothing

The assumption that clothing signifies identity is not peculiar to Western cultures. The use of exclusive fabrics or garments, jewellery or insignia to signal social identity has been widely acknowledged in diverse cultural settings (cf. Bowie, 1993; Braudel, 1987; Leone & Shackel, 1987). Neither is this a new insight. Sennett (1976), for example, noted that eighteenth and nineteenth century bourgeoisie employed clothing styles and general demeanour as a means of controlling the impressions others formed of them. However a subtle shift in the meaning of

external appearance has been identified, at least in Western societies, with clothing coming to signify personal attributes and self-produced rather than inherent identity. Moers' (1978) description of the emergence of dandys in the early nineteenth century Regency period typifies this change. At a time when an individual's fate could depend on their political allegiances, dandys adopted a style of clothing calculated to distance them from ancestral wealth and the aspirations to power this might imply. George 'Beau' Brummell (1778-1840), in particular, is cited as an individual who attained a self-styled, and self promoted identity by virtue of his carefully tailored appearance and conspicuous consumption rather than an inherited political, aristocratic or employment status.

The link drawn between clothing and identity has been so abiding that in the twentieth century Montages attempted to extend physiognomy (the analysis of people's physical features to discern their character) into the study of people's clothing and bodily adornments. His contention was that "human emotions pass 'voluntarily or involuntarily' into the texture of clothes as they are worn" and that "the more clothing we possess the more opportunities there are for our emotions to express themselves and, conversely, the less clothed we are, or the less fashionable we are, the less we have to express" (Finkelstein, 1991, p. 42). While Montages' attempt to turn assumptions about clothing and identity into a science were not successful, the dialogue about this relationship has continued. More recently, attention has turned to the question of whether people reveal their true identity through the clothing they wear, or use it as a mask or disguise. While the answer to this conundrum is unclear, clothing does appear to actively shape societal perceptions of the human body and bodily aesthetics. Hollander (1980), for example, pointed out that "the tight-laced waist, the periwigged head, and the neck collared in a millstone ruff, along with flattened breasts and blue-jeaned legs, have all been [viewed as] comfortable, beautiful, and natural in their time" (p. xiii). That is, fashion codes become accepted as a natural reality.

Perspectives on Consumer Societies

In twentieth century post-industrial contexts, discussion about using clothing and other material possessions to create oneself and shape one's life is cast in economic

terms. From this perspective, people are viewed as consumers with a continual desire to purchase new products. That is, individual's interests are aligned with the need to constantly expand consumption in order to maintain the national budget and sustain employment levels (Finkelstein, 1991; Rose, 1990). People's ability to use objects to style their own identity had been vastly increased by the industrialisation of the nineteenth century. That was because mass production made commodities such as clothing cheaper and more available to ordinary working people, and because merchants and factory owners accumulated wealth and were able to purchase the high quality goods that were previously the domain of the nobility. This trend accelerated from the 1920s as workers' salaries increased, and identity became increasingly linked to status symbols such as new cars and appliances. Despite this, consumption patterns and aesthetic taste remained consistent with social class, as determined by employment categories, until suburbanisation broke down class boundaries in the late 20th century (Aronowitz, 1992).

The outcome of these social and economic changes was that the ownership of objects came to signify individual character, accomplishments and social mobility. In contemporary consumer societies, notions of freedom are reinterpreted as the freedom to realise one's potential and dreams. Choice and self-expression are exercised through purchasing products and services and simultaneously, assembling, managing, and marketing oneself (Lasch, 1984; Rose, 1990).

Consumerism, however, has been critiqued from a variety of perspectives. Key amongst these is the notion of conspicuous consumption, a term coined by Veblen in 1899. He was referring to those elite members of society who marked their superior status through highly visible and wasteful displays of high-cost, luxury possessions (Dittmar, 1992; Ewen, 1988; Macrone, 1995; Veblen, 1930/1953). The term is now widely used to describe any excessive display of material wealth, and to connote the hedonistic or narcissistic pursuit of happiness through material goods. This selfish pursuit of consumer products is seen as a moral lapse that threatens to undermine the value of work and family life, by eroding the Protestant ethic of working hard and deferring gratification. As well as these direct identity implications, the widespread adoption of modern appliances has been blamed for

undermining self reliance and autonomy by increasing people's dependence on equipment such as washing machines and "the elaborate energy system required to run these and innumerable other appliances" (Lasch, 1984, p. 43).

As well as being dangerously self-indulgent, consumerism has been criticised as undermining democracy. Social commentators have warned, for example, that personal choices and commitments are manipulated to achieve political and economic goals through the advertising and marketing of goods and life-styles (Rose, 1996). This perspective paints people in Western societies as choice-makers in a manipulated market (Cohen, 1994) where "the desire for freedom, [and] the freedom to desire" (Ewen, 1988, p. 103) becomes perverted into promises products cannot fulfil. The promises made to possessors of an American Express gold card are illustrative:

'You will be seen. You will be noticed. The symbols you display, your most valued possessions, will permit you to stand apart from the crowd. You will be noteworthy and honoured. You will be someone. You will have "joined the select group".' Only the faint remnant of perforations – at the top and bottom edges of the personalised letter – suggest that this promise of individual identity is being made, simultaneously, to a mass of others. (Ewen, 1988, p. 71)

In making false promises about the sense of self and identity people might achieve through objects, consumer societies manipulate people and render their choices trivial. Moreover, the freedom and responsibilities of democracy are debased as people exercise choice over products (Lasch, 1984), rather than exercising the responsibilities of citizenship (Saul, 1997).

Other commentators, however, have proposed a more hopeful interpretation. Some point to the rise of non-materialistic forms of self-fulfilment and post-industrial values of conservation (Rose, 1990). Others propose that using objects to create and express self is an adaptive response to Western society's constant demand to create an identity. From this perspective people are viewed as empowered, manipulating objects and how objects are used to achieve social goals. An example of this might be the changes in women's clothing that accompanied and perhaps stimulated

women’s liberation (Ewen, 1988). Rather than slavishly expressing themselves through fashion, people are seen to appropriate fashions and make them their own (Shields, 1992), resisting market driven styles as they author themselves (Cohen, 1994).

While such critiques are not the primary focus of this thesis, they provide a backdrop of understanding and illustrate the extent to which people living in Western societies take for granted that there is a relationship between their identity and the objects they have and use. Just what this relationship signals is the subject of the next section of discussion.

Themes of Meaning

In the process of analysing the wealth of literature reviewed, two distinct themes of meaning about the ways people use objects to create and express identity became apparent. See Figure 3.2.

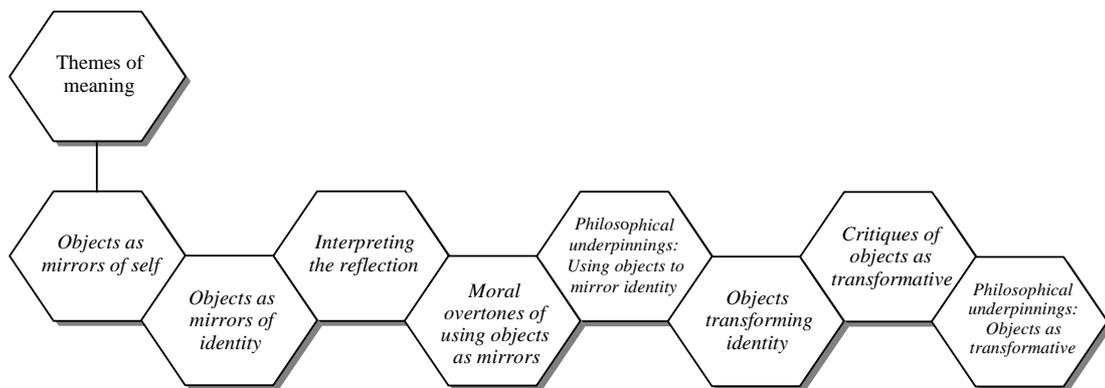


Figure 3:2 Topics Addressed within Themes of Meaning.

The predominant theme is *objects as mirrors*, mirroring self and reflecting identity to others. A second strongly evident theme is *objects as transformative*, lifting us to a higher level and making us more than we were. These themes are described in detail here, using illustrative excerpts from the literature, along with an interpretation of their respective philosophical roots in rationalism and Romanticism.

It is important to note that this interpretation is at variance with the conclusions I drew at an earlier stage in this study (Hocking, 2000). The philosophical underpinnings of one theme, objects serving as mirrors of identity, that are described here are somewhat different than was proposed at that time. Where I had previously identified this perspective on the relationship between objects and identity as having its roots in religious ideals of Stoicism, with its idealisation of inner serenity and self-denial, my understanding has since shifted. While moralistic overtones towards having and using objects are still acknowledged, this perspective on its own did not adequately account for people's positive experiences of gathering objects to themselves in order to display their identity to advantage. As subsequent research has revealed, the calculated way in which people acquire, retain, and discard objects in accordance with the identity meanings they reflect, points to an ongoing, fundamentally rational process.

Objects as Mirrors of Self

People use mirrors, most commonly, to see themselves. This self-examination has been coined a "looking glass measure of self" (Dittmar, 1992, p. 99). Just as real mirrors reflect our observable physical features, the objects we associate with ourselves reflect our attitudes, values, personal qualities, relationships and achievements. As McCracken (1988) concluded, "surrounded by our things, we are constantly instructed in who we are and what we aspire to be" (p. 124). Indeed, in the sense that 'clothes make the man', people's personal clothing might "actually create [the] conscious self. You are what you wear" (Hollander, 1980, p. 444), and what you wear is "inseparable from the self" (p. 451). The strength of this assertion suggests that for many people, our clothes and other meaningful objects will be an intimate, rather than a distant mirror of self.

As well as reflecting who we are in the moment, our accumulated personal artefacts record and reflect our close relationships and unique personal biography, objectifying our past, present and future. They "weave a lifetime story of self and relatedness to one's world" (Fidler, 1999, p. 37). Personal photographs and souvenirs are the objects most commonly identified as being the repository of memories (Belk, 1990; Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton, 1981; Gordon, 1986),

but in fact all of the objects with which we have a personal association may symbolise the self, as the following excerpt illustrates:

... souvenirs and bottle caps and trophies and photographs and baseball cards and sea shells and coin collections – things that have symbolic value in their own right (coins), things that have the capacity for stimulating pleasant memories, and things that reinforce a treasured mythology of the self, things that revivify a former version of a self overlooked in the press of the daily and present self ... (Tooley, 1978, p. 174)

Objects such as these give a sense of continuity of self and provide “support as we confront an uncertain future” (Belk, 1990, p. 670). They capture an image of us as beings with a particular history of developing will, emotion, intellect and desire (Rose, 1996). Older people especially have been found to use objects as an illustrated history, as their opportunities to reaffirm themselves decrease due to loss of employment, shrinking social networks and physical deterioration (Dittmar, 1992).

As well as these enduring objects, those we consume can reflect our self-image. For example May (1996), a human geographer, identified that young professionals living in an inner suburb of London “distance themselves from other social groups” (p. 57) through their preference for Thai, African, West Indian and other exotic cuisine. He claimed:

The symbolic meaning of goods means that one’s consumption habits have always been a way of distinguishing one’s self from others, even if the product itself is not particularly expensive. What we buy and how we use it allows us to say something about who we think we are and display those characteristics to those around us. (p. 58)

May takes for granted that food has symbolic as well as material meanings, proclaiming that food preferences reveal ‘who we think we are,’ our self. In fact, he found that distinguishing self from others was one of the symbolic meanings of the food preferred by his informants. By eating exotic food, in a sense consuming the world on a plate, May claims these urban professionals have an image of

themselves as leading an alternative lifestyle, being interested in other cultures, and supporting anti-racism.

In keeping with the notion that the objects that surround us reflect our image of our self, people have been found to actively select things that fit or enhance their self-image and to neglect or discard those that don't (Belk, 1988). This dynamic process of selection and shedding influences the fate of gifts we are given (Kleine, Kleine & Allen, 1995) and what we are likely to purchase (Beng, 1992). In this regard, an Art Director of a major advertising agency in London is quoted as saying "I think all things say something about you. It might be 'I don't care' or it might be 'I think I'm wonderful – take a look at me', but I think everyone finds their balance by buying the things that reflect them best" (Barley, 1989, p. 45). Finding just the right objects to reflect us well is a complex business however. Given everything the process is likely to involve, Bowlby (1985) speculated that 'Just looking' - the stock phrase shoppers use as they hesitate over a purchase, allows time for reflection about whether the item is what they want, and what they want to be. The suggestion that we pause to consider whether an object would accurately and favourably reflect us is lent further support by the finding that self-gifts, those things we buy to reward or bolster ourselves, reinforce our ideal rather than actual self (Luomala & Laaksonen, 1997).

Objects as Mirrors of Identity

As well as using mirrors to look at ourselves, we use them to see how we will look to others. The notion that personal appearance reveals identity is widely held, as is evident from the range of ways individuals are exhorted to change how they look through dieting regimes, fitness programmes, and plastic surgery. Furthermore, the assumption that appearance reflects identity extends to the objects people associate with us. Just as the things that surround us reflect our self-image, so they provide a mirror in which others can view our identity (Kenyon & Randall, 1997).

Clothing

Given the long-standing assumption that what we wear reveals our identity, it is not surprising that it has been described as a “kind of second skin that embellishes the self we present to others” (Belk, 1993b, p. 52). As Beng (1992) described:

The absence of a stringent dress code reinforces the donning of clothes as an act of self-expression, including the choice to suppress overt individuality and express group solidarity in one’s attire. ‘What should I wear this morning?’ is always the first existential question one must face daily, so long as there is more than one possible configuration of clothes in the closet. As a medium of self-expression, the clothes one purchases and wears must, above all other considerations, ‘fit’ one’s own self-image. (p. 125)

Furthermore, in the same way that we are encouraged to enhance our physical appearance, we are urged to wear fashionable and designer styled clothing (Featherstone, 1987; Lasch, 1979). From this perspective, the historically recent proliferation of styles of men’s clothing can be interpreted as offering the opportunity to buy into identities as various as Italian macho, urban cowboy, professional, and retro (Nixon, 1992).

The overall style of our garb, as well as the details of its design, reflect aspects of identity including the social worlds we inhabit. Men’s business suits, for example, have been described as a means of claiming membership of the corporate, political, bureaucratic or judicial world. Neckties, and the manner in which they are worn, define masculinity and male identities in terms of ambition, taste, personal style, intentions, seriousness and respectability, social status and power, regional origin - as in American black string ties, sexuality, and social attachments, for example to a school or private club (Finkelstein, 1991). In addition, research into people’s behaviour in shopping malls suggests that there is a range of culturally based, discretionary “images” that consumers might negotiate through the clothes they wear:

... jocks, brains, nerds, popular kids, gangbangers (rappers), greenies, preppies, and/or prissies, are clearly differentiated by the styles, fashions and tastes of particular stores, brands or regions of malldom in which membership is indicated by self-displays of identity such as the athletic shoes and outfits of the working strata, the ‘outdoor’ or

‘natural’ look of the preppies, the black leather and chrome chains of punks or the jeans and Greenpeace T-shirts of the socially conscious whale-loving greenies. It seems as if most mallers wear some kind of statement to express a consumer-based identity of brand name, radio station, exotic place or to simply outrage, ‘gross out’, the viewer. ... There are some who reject commodity-based selfhood but can’t stop looking at the others. (Langman, 1992, p. 60)

Langman concluded that “the objects of daily life provide gratifications, meanings and statements about the user’s social status and identity, if they are not one’s very identity” (p. 63). However while Langman described the identity of ‘mallers’ as consumer-based, other observers have argued that people do not passively accept the identities created by advertisers. Rather, they note the ways people appropriate and adapt fashion to demonstrate their uniqueness (Prost, 1991), which, as noted in chapter two, is a defining feature of both rational and Romantic perceptions of identity. Equally however, people appropriate fashions in order to fit in. For instance, immigrants who arrived in the United States in the early part of last century to find themselves the object of scrutiny and judgement, and open to swindles and mockery, rapidly learned that American clothing and hairstyles were essential for success (Ewen, 1988). This is perhaps what Davis (1991) had in mind when he declared that “it is glaringly evident ... that the clothes people wear, how they wear them, and where they wear what, communicate a great deal,” and that clothes can be employed to create “calculated duplicities, and artful conceits” (p. 106).

Other objects

It is not just clothing that mirrors identity. Our possessions, and how we regard them, are widely assumed to reflect something about the kind of person we are. Richins (1994), for example, suggested that “a man whose most valued possessions are a bible and his wedding ring probably differs in many ways from one who cares deeply about his snowmobile and hunting rifles” (p. 522). As well as reflecting our personalities and values, people’s personal possessions reveal something about their past (Radley, 1990). In addition, objects such as cars and appliances are generally understood to be status markers (Aronowitz, 1992; Belk, 1988) and instances of people concealing their ownership or use of products inconsistent with the status they wish to claim have been documented (Goffman, 1969).

While individualist notions of identity prevail in most of the literature, group based identities are also marked by objects. For instance, treasured heirlooms reflect membership of a particular family, conveying a sense of belonging while also providing a sense of continuity of the family over time (Belk, Wallendorf & Sherry, 1989). As discussed in chapter two, it has also been claimed that our nationality is reflected by the way we use objects, such as Polish women starching their washing and how they decorate their homes (Leveau, 1991).

The objects we have and use also reflect a gendered identity. Thus, men typically make identity claims through the make of car they drive and the brand of cigarettes they smoke (Dittmar, 1992), and the males in a household frequently take charge of the TV remote and the VCR (Wajcman, 1991). As well as simply announcing our gender, the ways man and women regard their possessions may reflect deep-seated differences. First noted by Pythagoras in the sixth century BC and more recently confirmed by consumer researchers, women have been noted to share their possessions more readily than men and to value things that represent important personal relationships and specific events. This is consistent with the fact that female gender identity, at least in the Western world, is characterised by an emphasis on interpersonal relationships. This emphasis is reflected in the meanings women ascribe to treasured possessions, as in, 'the painting my mother gave me before she died' (Dittmar). Men, in contrast, value things that provide a sense of social competence or physical prowess (Rudmin, 1990). Gender differences are also reflected in the way objects are used. For example, Betteridge (1997) found that the men of Whiddy Island, off the west coast of Ireland, typically used telephones for business transactions, whereas the Island's women used them to keep in touch with family members and friends.

Gender, however, is not a neutral concept and objects have at times been employed to symbolise the rejection of gender expectations. The flowered shirts and beads of male hippies of the 1960s are a case in point (Bocock, 1992; May, 1991). Feminist scholars have also identified the power relationships underlying gender identities in the Western world, and how this is reflected through object use. They note, for

example, that women's identity is not enhanced by their use of machines in the same way men's identity is, and the absence of technical confidence or competence as part of feminine gender identity (Wajcman, 1991). This is true even in relation to technologies identified with women's domestic role, such as microwave ovens (Cockburn & Ormrod, 1993) and sewing machines (Cockburn, 1988).

In addition, some objects take on different meanings when reflecting male or female identity. Vespa motor scooters, for example, connote the freedom enjoyed by 'modern' young Italian women of the early 1950s. Their popularity is held responsible for trends in women's fashion of the time, such as headscarves and turtle neck sweaters, which were designed to eliminate draughts down the neck. For British motorcycle riders, however, if scooters were a form of transport even a woman could handle, they were definitely unmanly, a gimmicky and inferior object (Hebdige, 1988).

The changing identity meanings of objects

As well as being potentially ambiguous, the meanings of objects and the identity they reflect may change. Tremblay (1996) for example, describes a post-second world war shift in the meaning of wheelchairs, from a means of transporting patients to an independent means of transport. This shift in meaning paralleled and reflected a change of identity for spinal cord injured veterans, from invalids to 'wheel chair types', people returning to the community to resume education or employment. Wheelchairs, however, retain negative connotations, revealing an identity as wheelchair-bound, of being confined to a chair (Linton, 1998). Some wheelchair users manage to turn this identity to their advantage. Callahan, for example, confesses to using his wheelchair "as an ideal pity grabber and all-purpose manipulative tool" (1990, p. 127). More typically, however, despite health professionals' efforts to consider wheelchairs and seating systems as "an extension of the client's tastes and self-image" (Taylor, 1987, p. 712), wheelchairs generally equate with the social stigma of disability (Mulcahey, 1992).

Nonetheless, empowered by the disability rights movement, the meaning of wheelchairs and of being someone who uses a wheelchair may again be changing.

Accordingly, purchasing a motorised wheelchair after years of struggling with walking aids was described by one woman as ‘coming out’, a claiming of identity as a disabled person. Others, refusing to be marginalized as less than perfect, have urged people with physical disability to throw away their lap rugs and dark glasses, wear clothing which reveals rather than hides imperfect bodies, and to rally to the catch cry of “letting our freak flag fly” (Linton, 1998, p. 3). This may be interpreted as a process of challenging the identity these objects reflect. Generally, however, it is assumed that objects are an accurate reflection of the identity of the person who wears or uses them. Even opting not to acquire objects may reflect self, revealing values of resourcefulness, independence, discipline and thrift (Lastovicka, Bettencourt, Hughner & Kuntze, 1999).

Perhaps because the assumption that objects mirror identity is so pervasive, instances of people managing, deliberately changing or distorting the identity their possessions reflect are widely acknowledged. Heskett (2002), for example, explained that objects are not only used to construct a sense of identity, they can be deliberately used to “shape, even pre-empt, what others perceive and understand” (p. 125). For instance, one study found that business graduates who hadn’t gained good qualifications were more likely to display objects indicative of business success, such as an expensive watch or briefcase, to project an identity they possibly do not feel (Wicklund & Gollwitzer, 1982).

Interpreting the Reflection

Objects are surprisingly good mirrors of identity. As Finkelstein (1991) asserted, our clothes announce “whether one is addressing a male or female, someone of higher or lower status, an adherent to the status quo or a deviant from it” (p. 115). In addition, clothing can accurately mirror social and ethnic identity; values and attitudes, standards of respectability, refinement and tastes; proclivities and talents, as well as accomplishments and attributes; and an intention to behave “in the same way as others who are similarly attired” (p. 109). Furthermore, research findings indicate that people do read others’ material possessions in order to locate them in a social-material hierarchy, and thereby form an impression of their personal identity. Moreover, we are able to recognise the identity symbolism of objects with

reasonable accuracy (Dittmar, 1992). Exactly how these meanings are encoded into clothing and other objects, and the process by which people interpret others' identity from their possessions is not clearly understood however (Davis, 1985).

The association between objects and identity is so taken for granted that individuals are accorded a social identity on the basis of their possessions. Csikszentmihalyi, for instance, reportedly argued in his address to the 1982 Convention of the American Psychological Association that:

A person who owns a nice home, a new car, good furniture, the latest appliances, is recognised by others as having passed the test of personhood in our society ... This information includes the social recognition that follows upon the display of status symbols. (Belk, 1988, p. 148)

As well as interpreting people's social status from the objects associated with them, Goffman (1968) suggested that we form an impression of the objects people will have and use based on our knowledge of their status. He documented, for example, the case of Roger Stevens, "the real estate agent who engineered the sale of the Empire State Building" (p. 22), whose small house, modest office, and lack of personalised stationery were reported as surprising.

Equally, the identity others see reflected in our possessions may not be what we intend or might choose. Consider, for example, John Callahan's (1990) description of Brother Mark, a regular at the bar he frequented, "who wore heavy-rimmed glasses like Poindexter's, which made him look like the scholar he was" (p. 96) or the volunteers from Alcoholics Anonymous whom he describes as "a couple of older men in shapeless synthetic suits who looked like extras from *Night of the Living Dead*" (p. 98).

To summarise the discussion to this point, it seems that people in Western societies, informed by their beliefs about the kind of person they really are, use objects to act out their tastes, fashion their bodies, and display their distinctiveness. In doing so, they take it for granted that these objects both reflect their self-image and act as a mirror through which they can communicate their identity. Moreover, people

generally take care over what is reflected because they assume their image can and will be interpreted by others. In order to present an image to which they cannot really lay claim, however, people at times actively manipulate or distort the reflection. In addition, our identity is open to being misread.

The Moral Overtones of Using Objects as Mirrors

Using objects to mirror our identity is problematic, however, because accumulating and valuing personal objects is socially and morally questionable. Contemporary perspectives on conspicuous consumption, as discussed earlier, reveal a generally held social antipathy towards individuals deemed to flaunt their possessions, or to indulge in the hedonistic pleasure of having more possessions than others might think reasonable. Such people might be labelled materialistic, meaning that they believe that acquiring and possessing things is desirable and that success in accumulating things is what defines a good life (Belk, 1985; Richins & Dawson, 1992).

The depth of antipathy towards materialistic values is evident in research conducted by consumer researchers. In one study designed to measure how materialistic people are, the researchers applied surprisingly negative labels to describe the attributes of materialistic people: possessiveness, lack of generosity, and envy of others' possessions (Belk, 1984b). In a more recent study, materialistic people were categorised as believing that acquiring possessions is central to achieving happiness and being successful (Richins & Dawson, 1992). Moreover, a further study of people in twelve countries spanning America, Europe and the Pacific found that people generally associate materialism with valuing objects more than other aspects of life, including people, and striving to have more than others (Ger & Belk, 1996). Americans in particular tended to view materialism as excessive and a weakness, even though materialism is frequently identified as a dominant American value in consumer behaviour texts (Richins & Dawson). In comparing the relative materialism of people in the countries surveyed, the researchers concluded that periods of rapid cultural change and unsettled social conditions tend to increase how materialistic people are, as they compare what they have with what they used to have, what they expect to have, and what others in better-off nations have. In

identity terms, the more insecure people become in relation to the identity they want, the more they tend to want the material symbols or markers of that identity.

The unease people feel towards materialism has a long history. Similar sentiments are evident, for example, in Marx's (1867/1978) concept of commodity fetishism, the worship of goods in the false belief that they would bring happiness, something he considered better achieved through meaningful work. Various religious philosophies also express the same reservations. Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Christianity all condemn accumulating material wealth, apparently because doing so breeds pride, envy, gluttony, and greed, four of the seven Judeo-Christian deadly sins. From this perspective, accumulating objects indicates a passion for earthly things that threatens to replace the worship of God. It is also thought to give rise to fraud, deceit, and theft, as well as a selfish individualism that precludes charity, justice, and compassion (Belk, 1983). Accordingly, in sixteenth century America, for example, Calvinists espoused the notion of 'worldly asceticism,' whereby salvation was achieved through denying material wealth in favour of spiritual devotion. Eighteenth century Puritans and Quakers also promoted a frugal and thrifty lifestyle (Lastovicka et al., 1999).

The Christian discomfort with accumulating material wealth appears to have its roots in ancient Greek notions of moderation over excess, and in the Greco-Roman philosophy of Stoicism, which was founded in Athens in the early third century BC. The Stoics considered inner serenity, doing one's duty and stern self-discipline more important than one's external circumstances (Tarnas, 1996). They idealised reason over emotions, which they considered to be irrational and to make us frustrated and unhappy, and promoted asceticism, or self-denial (Solomon & Higgins, 1997). The ideas of the Stoics continued the central themes of Socratic philosophy, which espoused that happiness is a consequence of living a virtuous life, rather than one's physical circumstances, power, wealth or reputation (Tarnas).

From this perspective, a self-image or identity built around a display of objects is highly questionable, a moral lapse. The only apparent exception is material wealth accumulated through honest hard work, an attitude endorsed by religious leaders

around the time of the Industrial Revolution (Weber, 1930/1958). It is little wonder that research into the lifestyles and beliefs of frugal people describes them in almost virtuous terms; self disciplined, prepared to make short term sacrifices in order to achieve long term goals, less swayed by others' opinions, and resourceful in using and reusing the things they have despite, or even oblivious to, others' perceptions of them (Lastovicka et al., 1999). From a Puritan or Stoic perspective then, using objects to mirror identity carries with it an expectation of making rational decisions about what you need, being disciplined about what you want, not being wasteful, and perhaps being most comfortable with things earned through hard work.

Philosophical Underpinnings of Using Objects to Mirror Identity

The discussion has revealed that people in Western societies assume that the objects individuals have and use mirror their sense of self and their identity. That is, we take it for granted that the objects we have gathered around ourselves record and reflect information about us, and that we can interpret other people's things to understand something about who they are.

A mirror's usefulness is in providing a fine-grained, accurate reflection. Objects function quite well on both these counts. Taken together, the objects associated with us, perhaps especially those we would count as precious or meaningful, mirror a multiplicity of personal memories, relationships, abilities and interests. They remind us of who we are and where our lives have taken us. Moreover, the image is accurate, in that these objects reflect things we know about ourselves. They also reflect our identity to others, offering insights into our gender, age, nationality, ethnicity, socio-economic status, skills and interests, personal biography and outlook on life. All of this information is available by observing what objects surround us, how they are placed or organised, and how we interact with them.

When people make efforts to display objects that will highlight selected aspects of self, and to hide objects that will give a poor impression, they are actively managing the identity the objects associated with them will reflect. Their actions are informed by their appraisal that some aspects of the self are more or less attractive, or likely to be preferred by the viewer. When others misinterpret the meaning of our things,

perhaps seeing them in a less favourable light than we do, or make incorrect assumptions about us based on their knowledge of only a sample of our possessions, we might be flattered, indifferent, hurt or insulted. Whatever our emotional reaction, we are likely to believe that people who make such judgements are in error. Alternatively, if people deliberately distort their image, convincing us that they have certain attributes or credentials by presenting themselves with the accoutrements of a role they cannot in truth claim, we are likely to feel a sense of betrayal or deceit. They have not enabled us to perceive them accurately, or to know them for what they are.

As well as providing factual information about individuals, we assume that the objects people have reveal something of their values. That is, people's relationship to objects is assumed to have a moral perspective. Accordingly, we make judgements about the kind of person an individual is, based on the abundance, quality and value of his or her possessions and how they are displayed to others. Primarily, this appraisal is informed by attitudes that decry materialism. We suspect that people who show off how much they have, or who seem to value their possessions too highly are likely to be selfish and greedy, self-important, and to value things over people in the false hope that their possessions will make them happy. Such perspectives may also explain, at least in part, the anger and disappointment we will feel over objects that did not prove to be good value for money.

Running through this summary of the relationship between objects and identity, are all the assumptions of rationalism. There is a general orientation to knowledge characterised by believing that objective knowledge exists and that things in the world can be understood, as well as trust in our powers of observation and ability to make rational judgements. There is also an emphasis on accuracy along with an assumption that having more information will increase the accuracy of our deductions. There is confidence in acting on our observations, and an orientation towards seeking the truth. The rationalist assumption that objective knowledge exists is apparent in our expectation that others will understand the identity meanings of our possessions in the same ways that we do. This expectation is

perhaps most apparent in our surprise when people interpret the objects associated with us in ways that we perceive as inaccurate, regardless of whether these assessments are overly generous or unfair. The assumption that things can be understood is evident when we assume that we can select objects that will accurately reflect our identity, even accentuate our strengths. The strength of this assumption may in part account for the sense of embarrassment or confusion that often accompanies the discovery that something we have acquired is not as good as we thought and therefore does not reflect well on us.

Our faith in the power of our reasoning is affirmed when we evaluate the decisions we have made about acquiring or discarding objects to be well founded. This might be experienced, for example, as confidently describing oneself as being good at shopping, whether that means chasing down a bargain or being skilled in recognising high quality products. Confidence in our ability to work things out for ourselves is also evident in our assumption that we can accurately infer things about people's identity from their possessions and the things they use. Also consistent with rationalism is our trust in our observations of the kinds of objects people have and use, and how they use them. There is also a sense of being able to draw reasonable conclusions from such observations, such as thinking that someone who drives a particular make of car must be doing well financially. As well, we assume that the accuracy of our interpretations would improve if we had opportunities to see a bigger sample of an individual's possessions, perhaps by visiting their home. We are confident in using our knowledge of others and ourselves in relation to objects as a basis for action, such as when we decide who to ask to water our pot plants while we're away or who is trustworthy enough to borrow our possessions. Finally, the rationalist emphasis on truth is evident in our feelings of puzzlement, disappointment or outrage when we discover that someone has made false identity claims by manipulating the objects around them.

Rationalism, then, is one cornerstone of the way people living in Western societies view the relationship between objects and identity. As the discussion in chapter four will reveal, the moral questioning of materialistic values is not implicit within rationalism but is associated with it because rationalism emerged as a way of

viewing the world at a time when Protestant values held sway and socio-economic values associated with industrialisation were emerging.

Objects Transforming Identity

A second theme that emerged from the literature reviewed for this chapter is that objects can transform people. This notion takes two distinct forms, as descriptions of people becoming one with the tools they use and as almost magical thinking that objects have the power to lift us above the commonplace and make us better people. These notions about objects are discussed in relation to becoming a tool user and transcendent identities.

Identity as a tool user

Tools, weapons and instruments are objects that allow us to do things we would not otherwise be capable of doing, or not with the same precision or ease. Hammers enable us to exert more force on the head of a nail than we could achieve with our bare hands. Roller blades enable us to reach greater speeds than running allows. Personal computers give us the ability to produce typewritten documents and to send messages around the world by tapping buttons on a keyboard. Guns provide the ability to hurt or kill at long range, and enhance personal power (Belk, 1988). Using an object purposefully and well is a learned skill. Once we can control objects automatically, in much the same way we control our arms or legs, they are perceived to be part of self (McClelland, 1951), as physical self-extensions (Dittmar, 1992) and thus change the way self is conceptualised. In Piaget's (1932) terms, the objects we learn to manipulate become interiorised aspects of self. Furthermore, once a tool becomes incorporated into the self, it has the power to transform us into someone stronger, faster, more professional or more powerful.

Callahan (1990), for example, described his experience of being fitted with wrist splints during his hospitalisation following a car accident that left him without the full use of his arms or legs. The splints were spring loaded, designed to increase his grip strength, and initially gave him a somewhat macabre sense of being invincible. In his words, "I wanted to take them out to the Mojave and try them out on a dead jackal. Later on, living in the real world, I would find these Bionic Man gadgets

embarrassing; eventually I threw them away” (p. 76). What Callahan’s experience reveals is that the meaning of using tools and the way in which they transform our identity depends on the context, and that this can change with time and circumstances.

Transcendent identities

As well as being transformed into tool users, people use objects to elevate themselves into someone “more successful, exciting, stunningly attractive, socially well-placed” (Dittmar, 1992, p. 98). This phenomenon has been described as a desire for the transcendent, “for something more lasting, mystical, and magical than that encountered in our daily lives” (Belk, 1997, p. 69). Accordingly, objects function as wish fulfilment, becoming the means by which individuals achieve an identity (Lasch, 1984). These transformative objects are perceived as extending the self, and are “imbued with a ‘personal’ meaning ... illuminating the kind of person they are, or want to become” (Rose, 1996, p. 162). In using objects in this way to rise above daily life, people seek to overcome the limitations of identity to become their ideal self.

The notion of transcendence surfaces under a number of guises. Perhaps the most common is the notion of uplifting moments within the drudgery of everyday life. Kaufman (1986), for example, told the story of an aging resident in long term care, who had experienced a lifetime of poverty and an unfulfilling marriage. Her only experience of transcendence was in her childhood, as she walked to the piano lessons her brother paid for. “With her music under her arm she was a special person, talented and well-off, and recognised as such” (p. 43). In her novel *Magic Spells*, Yorke (1999) also related a story of an object that for a moment transcends the everyday cares of a single mother. In this case, the object was a green chiffon and silk dress so airy it would “slip right through a man’s fingers” (p. 124). For Jane, the heroine:

... blowing five hundred dollars on a dress should not have been an option, but suddenly it felt like exactly what she needed to do. She wanted to buy a dress she would wear only once. She wanted to not feel like a mother for five seconds, to look so good a man couldn’t take his hands off her. (p. 125)

A further example of objects being transformative is the mutual gift giving between people who are falling in love. This is a process of magical transcendence, of being loved and becoming closely bonded to another. Once the transformation is completed, when identity as part of a couple is established, romantic gift giving typically ceases or at least falls off (Belk & Coon, 1993).

Objects perceived as transformative may be invested with a kind of supernatural power, which is likely to increase with age even if they are seldom used. A cartoon published in *The New Yorker Magazine* in 1936, for example, featured a wife suggesting that she throw out her husband's old Yale rowing sweater because he was unlikely to wear it again. That she might even entertain the thought was clearly intended to inspire horror, because proposing to dispense with such significant objects is in effect "proposing to destroy our connection with our own, often more heroic or romantic, past self" (Lurie, 1982, p. 231).

Achieving transcendence has also been espoused as a lifestyle. For example William Morris, a key proponent of the Art and Craft Movement, asserted that hand-crafted as opposed to mass produced objects could yield a transformative benefit to both the creator and the owner, lifting people above the commonplace through their beauty (Spretnak, 1997). In addition, the notion of identity transcending time was raised by Belk (1988, 1990), who suggested that people who own antiques may be endeavouring to extend their sense of self to encompass the assumed qualities of the original era of their possessions. Similarly, heirlooms are recognised to provide a sense of familial continuity, and people who collect things might be described as extending their sense of self through their collections, perhaps literally extending themselves beyond death if their collection remains intact. Alternately, collectors may experience a lack of self-completion if their collection remains incomplete.

Objects can also symbolise people's aspirations to transcend their nationality, as illustrated in an excerpt from *The Sound of One Hand Clapping*, a novel that describes the experience of an immigrant to Australia.

The (Holden) FJ had been almost new when Bojan had purchased it, and the object of envy on the part of many who knew him. It was a lovely car at first, and at first Bojan possibly saw it as the future into which he could escape from an ever more unsatisfactory present. After all, it was what no-one he knew had had in Slovenia: a car like in the American movies. And it was proof to both those in Slovenia and Australia that he had become what he set out to be: Australian. (Flanagan, 1997, p. 85)

Although Bojan's expectations of being accepted as an Australian were not fulfilled, they illustrate the strength of belief and almost magical thinking individuals may hold in relation to objects and identity claims. Objects might also be implicated in the stunting of social identity. For example, Yorke (1999) described a character in her novel thus:

Lenore had transferred to Pendleton High as a sophomore and was never happy again. She had been chubby then, and not gotten her braces off till she was a senior, which was too late to do any good. ... Her braces had been like gates on her mouth. (p. 125)

Not only do people transcend their own identity, they use objects to transform others. Thus in their day-to-day shopping, Miller (1998) suggests, the women of North London attempt to change their husbands and children into individuals worthy of their purchases; more health conscious, more skilled, better dressed, or uplifted in some way. However, giving objects does not always lead to a transformation welcomed by the receiver. One story in the literature tells of an American woman who experienced bewilderment and felt distanced by an unsuitable gift from her mother-in-law, lamenting that "she has no sense of me" (Ruth, Otnes & Brunel, 1999, p. 394). A more extreme example was depicted in one of Callahan's (1990) cartoons, where a man in a wheelchair is presented with an assistive device, along with a sign to hang around his neck that reads "Cripple". Similarly, Luborsky's (1993) tells a story of one woman's "heroic perseverance" (p. 76) to overcome her disability. The crux of the tale is that she managed to discard her wheelchair, thereby symbolically transcending her medically defined identity as too weak to lead a normal life.

In the same way that people can be transformed by the objects they receive, identity can be radically altered by losing one's personal effects. Belk and his associates (Belk, Wallendorf, Sherry, Holbrook & Roberts, 1988), for example, noted the diminished sense of self that people feel when their prized possessions are lost or destroyed. One illustrative example is the sense of panic one Australian woman felt when she discovered her mother's "brown book of recipes" was missing. She explained, "it's more than just hoarding, it's part of ourselves" (Bell, 1987, p. 33). Once located, the book was consigned to her sister's care. Another example is from the novel *Humbolt's Gift*:

Someone had done to my car as rats, I had heard, did when they raced through warehouses by the thousands and tore open sacks of flour for the hell of it. I felt a similar rip at my heart ... I had allowed the car to become an extension of myself ..., so that an attack on it was an attack on myself. It was a moment terribly fertile in reactions. (Bellow, 1975, p. 36)

In likening the damage to his car to being ripped open by rats, Bellow amply shows how such threats to identity may elicit strong emotional reactions. In the same vein, one man forced to pawn his possessions experienced what amounted to dissolution of self. Reflecting on his experiences, he said: "I stand in those lines with my suitcase full of things to practically give away ... and I tell myself my entire life is being sold ... Don't make me hock my life away, I beg" (Cottle, 1981, p. 18). Perhaps the huge impact of losing our things is because, as Csikszentmihalyi reportedly claimed in a 1982 presentation, "the objects we possess and consume ... tell us things about ourselves that we need to hear in order to keep ourselves from falling apart" (Belk, 1988, p. 148).

In some circumstances, the removal of individuals' possessions is institutionalised but no less traumatic. McCracken (1987), for example, labelled the compulsion to shed one's possessions when entering residential care as 'identity deprivation'. Similarly, Goffman (1968) coined the term 'degradation ceremony' to describe the forced removal of people's clothing when they enter institutions such as boarding schools, military training camps and monasteries. In a symbolic sense, to remove someone's clothes is to strip them of their identity kit (Belk, 1988; Dittmar, 1992;

Goffman). It is an emotional stripping of the old self to engineer a new institutionalised identity (Cohen, 1994). This sense of being deprived of oneself when deprived of one's clothes is perhaps best illustrated by the difference in self-perception when clothed and nude. An example is Primo Levi's account of life in a concentration camp where, however foul the clothing that was supplied, it rendered people less vulnerable than being naked (Finkelstein, 1991).

A final consideration in this section of discussion is that people's attempts to use objects to transcend self and identity may be pathological or misguided. For example, compulsive shoppers make frequent references to "being bad, guilty, unattractive, and lacking a clear identity" (O'Guinn & Faber, 1989, p. 153). Their compulsive buying of things they do not need and cannot afford compensates for feelings of alienation, and legal and marital problems by providing positive interpersonal interactions and an enhanced self-perception, at least in the short term. The failure of objects to sustain a transcendent identity in the longer term that has been frequently identified may be because achieving an identity through objects is a poor substitute for identity achieved through skills and achievements (Belk, 1984a).

In summary, this section of the discussion has shown how people can be transformed by the tools they use; made stronger, faster, more powerful or invincible. They can also be transformed by an object whose symbolic meaning lifts them above the commonplace, making them better people; more successful, exciting, or attractive. Transformative objects can fulfil our wishes. Wearing or using them, we can become who we want to become, our ideal self. Equally, however, objects given or taken away have the power to reduce us; stunting social development, labelling us as unworthy, or reducing us to just one of many or less than human. The objects that can effect this transformation have an element of magic or the supernatural, uplifting us and revealing our heroic or romantic self, or dashing our confidence and security.

Critiques in Relation to Objects as Transformative

One critique that has been frequently levelled against experiencing and defining who you are through objects is that the expectation that possessions will bring

happiness is unrealistic and bound to be disappointed. This is because individuals within consumer societies can never be satisfied, since they are racing towards an ever moving target of more and better consumer products (Braun, 1995). By extension, an identity created through products is ever incomplete, self-fulfilment and self-actualisation are never achieved, one's identity within the group never secured. This is because "the propaganda surrounding commodities advertises them so seductively as wish-fulfilments" (Lasch, 1984, p. 34), which implies they will bring satisfaction, yet products are designed for immediate obsolescence. Basing one's identity in objects, Lasch concluded, means knowing the world "largely through insubstantial images and symbols that seem to refer ... [to an] inner psychic life" (p. 34). While this critique points to the futility of using objects in our quest for self-fulfilment, other commentators have identified societal conditions that impel people towards using objects to secure an identity. For instance Toulmin (1990), a critic of modernity, argued that people in post-industrial societies try to buy certainty and stability through their consumer purchases, in a futile attempt to transcend the uncertainty of the modern world.

To substantiate criticisms of the contemporary world of consumer goods, and the pitfalls of basing one's identity on consumer goods, authors at times cite 'the way things were'. This is a nostalgic view of what objects meant to people before we had lots of them. Prost (1991), for example, stated that at the turn of the century:

... the poor had few personal belongings, and most of those were generally objects received as gifts: a knife, a pipe, a rosary, a watch, a jewel, or a dressing case. These often modest objects took on great symbolic value, since they were the only things a person could truly claim as his or her own. (p. 64)

Such comparisons infer that in modern Western societies, where most people have a superfluity of possessions, the value and meaning of each one is undermined. A similar critique holds that the objects available to us are in fact degraded, or perhaps degrading. From this perspective, living a life surrounded by man-made objects is held to "no longer serve very effectively to mediate between the inner world and the outer world" (Lasch, 1984, p. 195). Claims such as these typically draw from the assumptions of the Arts and Crafts Movement, and lament that "commodities

cannot take the place of hand-made objects any more than science can take the place of practical worldly experience. Neither contributes to a sense of exploration and mastery” (Lasch, 1984, p. 195). Typically, with such claims no evidence of the virtues of the previous time or of life surrounded by hand-made objects is offered. They neglect, as consumer research tends to do, the meanings even mass-produced objects may acquire, and the sense of self which may develop as people explore, master, and care for them.

Notwithstanding this debate, the notion of objects transforming people points to an entirely different experience of having and using objects to create and express self and identity. A great many people in the Western world do use objects to create a desired self-image and to proclaim an identity of leading a perfect life (Campbell, 1987). Moreover, they do so without the guilt or moral depravity that religious doctrine, with its claims about the perils of amassing material goods, might suggest. Accordingly, recipients of spontaneous, romantic gifts from their beloved are likely to feel cherished and uniquely loveable (Belk & Coon, 1993). Expatriates report incorporating local products into their homes, to give a sense of being ‘at home’ in the new culture and as a demonstration of how cosmopolitan they are (Thompson & Tambyah, 1999). The objects in question support an identity of being in love, or belonging in a foreign place. Equally, disposing of objects might mean a release from guilt and anguish, such as the woman who sold her divorced husband’s old golf clubs at a swap meet and reported feeling freed. She’d ‘got rid of him’ (Belk, Sherry & Wallendorf, 1988) and in doing so achieved a self-image as a single woman living successfully without him.

Taken as a whole, the various critiques of using objects to support an identity and a sense of self seem to come from two differing perspectives. The first reveals the tension between the rationalist perspective of using objects to mirror self and identity and expectations of transformation. In comparison with the measured account of objects as tools of communication, the almost magical properties of transformative objects seem unrealistic and insubstantial. The second perspective, based on a nostalgic longing for the past and the hand-made objects espoused by the Arts and Crafts movement decry modern, mass-produced consumer goods as not up

to the task of transforming people. Irrespective of these critiques, however, this analysis of the literature has revealed that people living in Western societies at the turn of the millennium take it for granted that individuals can be transformed by objects, even if only momentarily.

Philosophical Underpinnings of Viewing Objects as Transformative

One assumption threaded through the discussion of the ways in which objects might transform our identity is that people are capable of such a transformation: that is, that our experiences might propel us into a radically new understanding of our self and, moreover, that others would recognise this shift in identity. Also implicit in the discussion is that the experience of being transformed by acquiring or losing an object is highly emotional. We might be uplifted and achieve our ideal self or realise our worst fears about our shortcomings. As the examples cited in the discussion have shown, people transformed by an object might feel cherished and uniquely lovable, supremely attractive and at ease with the world, set free, secure within their world, angered or overlooked, alienated or destroyed. They might be instantly transported to heroic confidence, creative genius, an unleashing of imagination and power, or filled with despair, hopelessness and extremes of self-doubt.

Also significant to this discussion is that the exact nature of this transformation is unclear; it is a magical or mystical transcendence of everyday life, a wish fulfilment or a nightmare, and often unexpected and unprompted. The power objects hold to transform us seems to defy rational explanation. Not only did none of the literature reviewed attempted to explain it, there was a sense that attempting such an explanation might put an end to the illusion, or dissipate the magic. This acceptance of the supernatural, along with the supremacy of emotional experience over rational explanation, is the hallmark of Romanticism. Other defining features are the intense focus on oneself, along with a nostalgic longing for an idealised past or future.

Arising as a response to the Enlightenment, Romanticism stands in contrast to the careful observation and deductive reasoning of the scientific revolution. Instead, the Romantics espoused humanity's spiritual aspirations, emotional depth, creativity

and imagination. Rather than observation and reason, the Romantics were interested in human consciousness, the power of individual self-expression and self-creation, and the complexity of the human self in all its moods and motives. They were also concerned with the pursuit of beauty for its own sake. The leading proponents of the Arts and Crafts Movement were to pick up this aspect of Romanticism, in their idealisation of well-proportioned handmade objects, which through their beauty are endowed with special powers to transform us. Objects such as these can fire our imagination, holding the promise that we can do it all, that we can be who we wish to be.

In Romantic terms acquiring and using objects, whether handmade or not, to create and transform the self requires being open to the “variegated quality of human experience” (Tarnas, 1996, p. 374) and to developing a heightened awareness of the complexities of self, with all its conflicts and contradictions. Not to be attuned to the opportunities for self transformation that objects offer, or failing to act when opportunities present themselves is to risk perpetual yearning for things we might have owned or used, and the person we might have become. In contrast, recognising the potential objects hold to create and proclaim the identity we long for is to experience the pleasure and the pain of being noticed and recognised (Langman, 1992). This is the stuff of transformation, of transcending the mundane everyday world to experience and portray ourselves as the best and the worst that we can be.

Conclusion: The Support for Rationalism and Romanticism

Sartre (1943/1956) posited that having things is a fundamental state of human life, alongside being and doing. Furthermore, he argued, people only want to have things in order to enlarge their sense of self, and only know who they are by observing what they have. The discussion in this chapter has similarly argued that people living in contemporary Western settings know themselves, in part, by the objects they have and what they do with them. Furthermore, it has proposed that we know something about others by the objects they have and use.

The discussion in this chapter has led to the conclusion that two divergent bodies of thought inform the nature of the self we know and the identity we project through

objects; rational and Romantic. Reassuringly, I am not alone in reaching this conclusion. For instance, Shimp and Madden proposed in 1988 that 'consumer-object relations' are motivated by Romantic factors they labelled Infatuation and Succumbed Desire as well as rational concerns such as Functionalism and Utilitarianism. Around the same time, Campbell (1987) traced the Romantic underpinnings of bourgeois consumer behaviour in the eighteenth century, and how a Romantic perspective gradually took its place alongside the rational and utilitarian attitudes towards material possessions that were favoured within Protestantism. More recently, Belk and Coon (1993), noting how gifts selected for someone you love affirm the recipient as absolutely unique, concluded that the selection of such gifts is more informed by Romanticism than rational consumer choices. Similarly, the everyday consumer choices of contemporary married women in America have been described as exhibiting a blend of rational decision making based on price, need and product features, and Romantically motivated impulses (Thompson, Locander & Pollio, 1990). Finally, Belk (1993a) has debated the merits of rational and Romantic perspectives of Christmas gift buying.

Thus reassured that the relationship people perceive between objects and identity has roots in both the rational and Romantic philosophical traditions, the next two chapters address the origin and development of each of these philosophical perspectives, and consider the assumptions made about the nature of the world, the nature of being, and the relationship between objects and identity within each.

Chapter Four

Empiricism and Rationalism: Exploring the Philosophical Roots of the Relationship Between Objects and Identity

In chapter three I concluded that people living in Western societies at the turn of the second millennium use objects to actively construct an identity and manage the identity they project. Furthermore, I suggested that they interpret the identity meanings of the objects others have and use. In so doing, I posited that people hold two distinct sets of assumptions - rational and Romantic, and that these lead to different understandings about how objects and identity relate.

In chapters four and five, rational and Romantic perspectives about the ways people use objects to shape and reflect their identity will be explored. Chapter four addresses the rationalist view of the relationship between objects and identity, and a diagrammatic representation of the sequence of the discussion is presented in Figure 4:1.

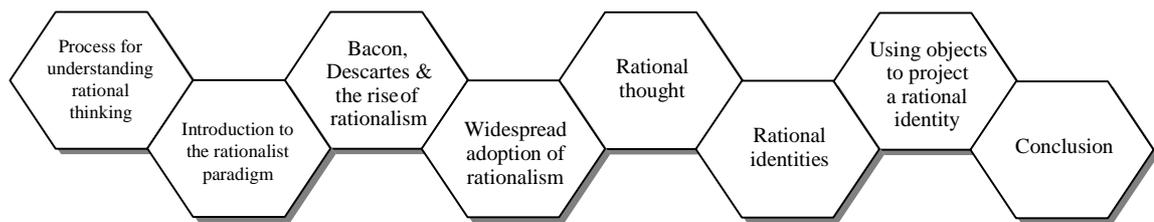


Figure 4:1 Progression of the Discussion in Chapter Four.

To give some background to the discussion, the chapter describes the shifts in Western philosophy that led up to the emergence of rational and empirical thinking during the Enlightenment, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. This was an extended and complex process that profoundly affected the worldview that prevailed at that time. In order to historically contextualise the discussion, a broad outline of the society into which rationalism and empiricism emerged is provided.

Having laid the groundwork, the key figures in the lengthy debate over the relative benefits of rationalism and empiricism are introduced and the story of how their competing schools of thought coalesced into the positivist scientific method is outlined. Because rationalism came to pervade everyday life, its impact on society at large is examined, focusing particularly on rational assumptions about the nature of the world and the nature of human life. The discussion presented draws from a number of scholars. It addresses how the perspectives promoted by rationalist thinkers affected people's view of how they might live in a world where objectivity, certainty, predictability and the perfectibility of human life were becoming the dominant values. At the end of the chapter, against the backdrop of understanding that has been built up about the emergence and impact of rational thinking, I present my interpretation of the ways people informed by rationalism might use objects to manage and project their identity. First, however, the journey of coming to understand the complexities and implications of rational thinking, and the contribution the various authors made, is outlined.

Process of Coming to Understand Rational Thinking

This chapter addresses the ways in which people have thought, reasoned and constructed arguments about reality and human existence, and how that thinking, reasoning and arguing has affected and been affected by the things people do. Its purpose is to understand rationalist thinking, so that rational assumptions and ways of thinking about objects and identity can be interpreted.

Since rationalism pervades philosophical, scientific and everyday discourse within Western societies, there is an abundance of scholarly literature on the topic. Nonetheless, I came to this literature remarkably uninformed. I initially relied on contemporary authorities to introduce the field and help me identify the key figures in the development of rationalism. My selection was guided by two general criteria. Firstly, the works I consulted needed to take an historical perspective, so that an understanding could be built up of the gradual diffusion of rationalism throughout people's everyday lives, including their use of objects for identity purposes. Secondly, consistent with a history of ideas methodology (Lovejoy, 1948), literature

by recognised authorities representing a range of different disciplines or perspectives was sought. This ensured a multifaceted understanding of rationalism not unduly influenced by the concerns of any particular individual or branch of philosophy.

Several texts proved particularly informative. Firstly, Tarnas' (1996) *Passion of the Western Mind* was an invaluable guide to the ways people's thinking has evolved in response to philosophical, scientific, and spiritual innovations and challenges. Supplementing Tarnas' overview, Randall's (1926) earlier exposition on the making of the modern mind proved extremely helpful because he endeavoured throughout to take the perspective of people who had participated in shaping Western thought. In addition, the account of rationality presented in this chapter owes much to Gellner's (1992) philosophical, historical and sociological perspectives on the rise of rationalism, which usefully informed the discussion of the rational world view, the nature of being, and how to live under rational precepts. Finally, Sedgwick's (2001) clear introduction to and explanation of the various logical and metaphysical shortcomings of both rationalism and empiricism added depth to the discussion. Reading across and between these differing viewpoints gave an appreciation of the incremental development of rationalism and the intellectual stance and purpose of each of the key figures. It was also revealed the influence of earlier scholars on what was later assumed to be true.

Having gained an overview, I consulted the original sources, to read at first hand the beliefs and assumptions about the merits of rational or empirical approaches to knowledge development. In most cases, a range of different versions and translations were available. I selected comprehensive collections of each author's work, so that his ideas could be viewed in context of his broader thinking, and earlier renditions so that ideas written over the course of several centuries could be read with a greater sense of history. Finally, conclusions were drawn about how a rational perspective colours Western people's view of the world and our place in it, and the ways objects might be used for identity purposes.

An Introduction to the Rationalist Paradigm

Rationality, which means having a rational justification for all one's beliefs and actions that has been developed through inquiry and deliberation, has a long history (Nathanson, 1994). Many scholars begin their accounts in ancient Greece, where Socrates and Plato reputedly initiated the rationalist ideals of aspiring to the truth, impartiality, objectivity and autonomy of judgement. For Plato in particular, truth assumed high importance because he believed it would bring the wisdom he needed to conduct himself well and make his life worthwhile. Being rational also meant standing aside from one's desires and emotions to consider the long-term implications of the beliefs one might hold and the choices one might make. These characteristics closely align rationality with moral and ethical reasoning, and were reputed to confer virtue, just and moral behaviour, and a happy and fortunate life.

In medieval times, spanning approximately the fifth to the fifteenth centuries, classical knowledge was all but lost to the Western world. It is the rediscovery and further development of rationality during the Renaissance that is the focus of this chapter, because it is this modern rationality that informs Western people's use of objects to construct and manage an identity. Accordingly, the journey initiated here focuses on empiricism and rationalism, which are generally acknowledged to be the "twin epistemological bases of the modern mind" (Tarnas, 1996, p. 280). While this view is not entirely uncontested, the substance of the debate is peripheral to this argument. It is nonetheless summarised in Appendix 1, for those readers who are interested. Being rational, and seeking evidence, facts and reasons on which to base our actions are the bedrock of the modern Western worldview and, as identified in chapter three, one of the ways we approach objects.

The next steps in this journey will be to more clearly elucidate what is meant by empiricism and rationalism, to explore the notion of rationalism and empiricism as epistemologies, and to give a brief historical background to the emergence of these ways of thinking.

Empiricism and Rationalism

Empiricism, simply put, is the theory that experience of the natural world is the primary source of all human knowledge and understanding. That is, we work out what is true and how the world works by systematically collecting and collating information from our senses, and through inductive reasoning and experimentation. An explicit assumption of empiricism is that nothing can be known before we experience it. Rationalism, in contrast, is the philosophical approach of rigorously applying human powers of reasoning, as opposed to intuition, inspiration, visions, received cultural and historical wisdom, experience or our senses, to determine the true nature of the world and how it works. For rationalists, mathematics and logic are the overarching paradigm of knowledge development (Grayling, 1996).

Empiricism and rationalism developed over the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (Tarnas, 1996). See Figure 4.2 for a chronology of Western philosophy. Their relative merits have been the focus of intense epistemological debate from the time they were proposed. At the time they emerged, it was assumed that because God had created the world in his own image, he was the source of all knowledge. It was also assumed that God would reveal his truths to man as and when he saw fit, and that some things were beyond human understanding. Rationalism and empiricism profoundly challenged that worldview, and radically altered people's perception of the nature of God's universe and their relationship to God.

For readers unfamiliar with the concept of epistemology, its meaning and the differences between rationalist and empiricist epistemologies, and accepting God's word are discussed in Appendix 2. The discussion now turns to the historical context in which these perspectives emerged. In particular, it focuses on the ways that empiricism and rationalism challenged the existing worldview.

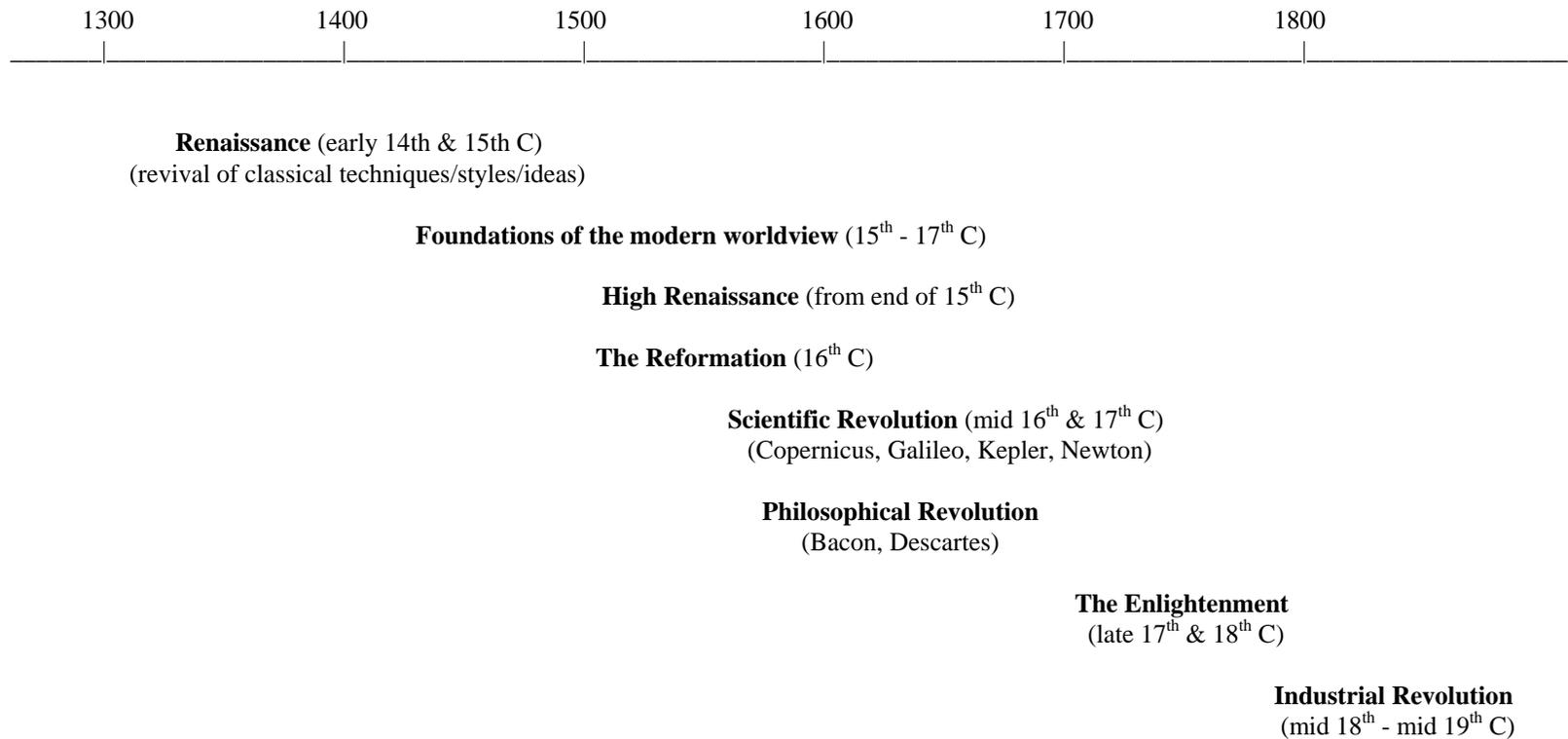


Figure 4:2 A Chronology of Western Philosophy from the Renaissance to the Enlightenment.

The Context in Which Rationalism and Empiricism Emerged

To appreciate the impact of rationalism and empiricism on the ways Western people think it is necessary to trace what happened from the twelfth century onwards, as Europe gradually emerged from the Dark Ages. No single event or institution marks the beginning of this Renaissance of Western civilization. Rather, Randall (1926) outlines a steady build up of agricultural resources and market towns, and an intellectual curiosity characterised by seeking new knowledge. People's conception of the kind of world they inhabited was, however, radically different, a place of myth, magic and miracles wrought by a highly interventionist God (Saiedi, 1993). Accordingly, their quest for knowledge was characterised by a desire to understand the meaning and significance of things. They wanted to know why, rather than how, things happen but accepted that the ultimate reason for everything was the will of God. Events of the times, however, contributed to an increased questioning of accepted wisdom. The black plague, which killed a third of the population of Europe by the mid-fourteenth century, undermined both economic and cultural institutions (Tarnas, 1996). In the early sixteenth century, Martin Luther's dispute with the Catholic Church sparked the Protestant Reformation. At much the same time, the ultimate authority of the church in determining the affairs of men was inadvertently challenged by Copernicus (1473-1543), Galileo (1564-1642), Kepler (1571-1630), Newton (1642-1727) and others, whose scientific discoveries were inconsistent with contemporary interpretations of the bible.

To keep track of the sequence and duration of the various cultural epochs, readers are referred back to Figure 4:2. In addition, Figure 4:3 provides a visual representation of how the people who were influential in the emergence, development, and later coming together of empiricism and rationalism related to each other in time. To further assist those unfamiliar with this period in history, a chronological listing of the key figures mentioned in this chapter is provided in Appendix 3, along with brief biographical notes about each of them (in alphabetical order).

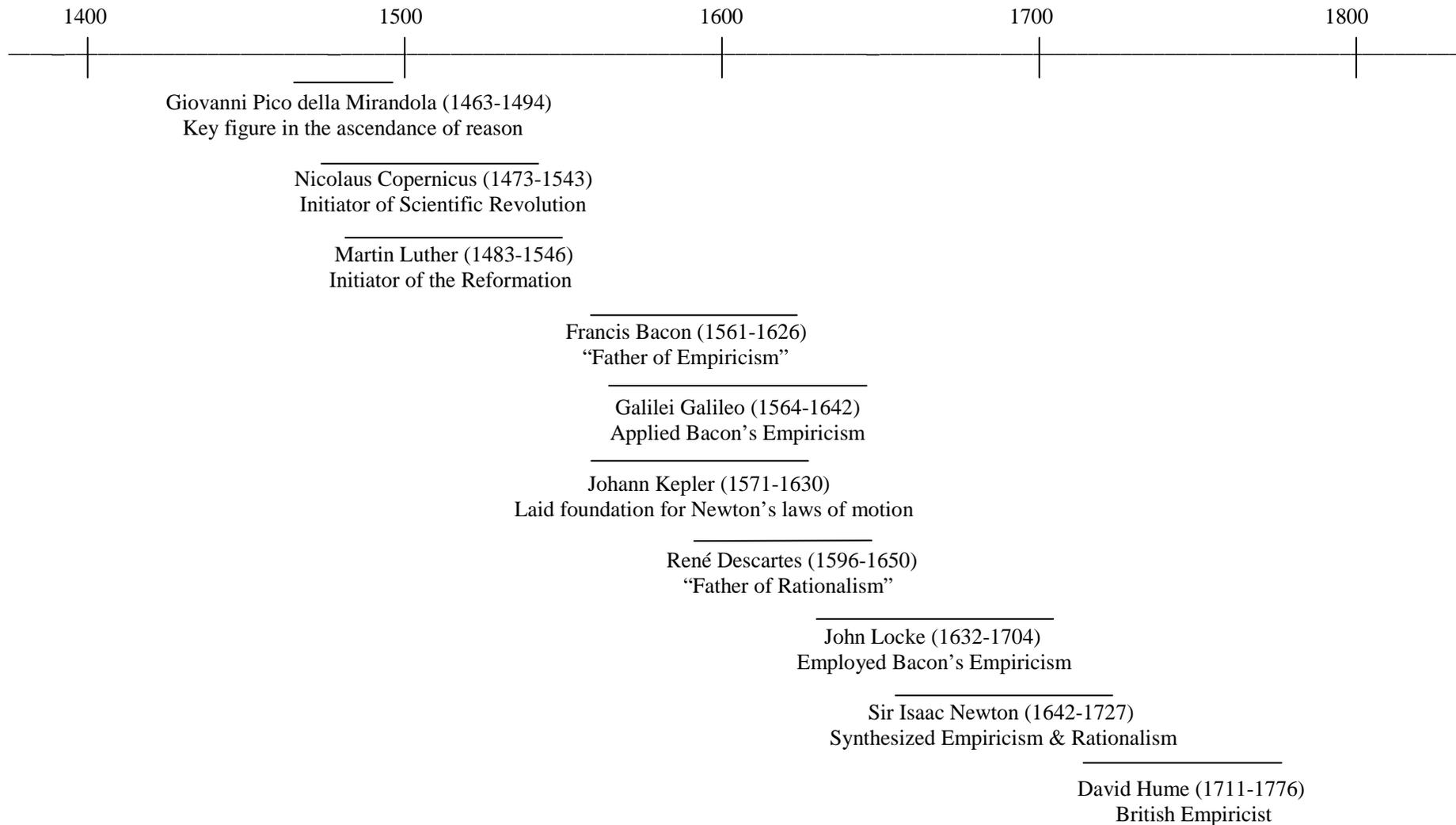


Figure 4:3 A Chronology of the Development of Empiricism, Rationalism and Positivist Scientific Method.

Two technological innovations played a role in shaping the new worldview. The development of a reliable compass enabled global exploration, including Columbus reaching America in 1492, which contributed to the emergence of a new sense of intellectual competence. As well, printing presses resulted in the spread of the printed word and supported widespread literacy. Being able to read things for themselves and formulate their own views freed people from the traditional ways of thinking promoted by the monarchy, clergy and universities of the time. Partly in response to advances in technology and the changes wrought by the scientific revolution, the Renaissance was a period of profound epistemological reorientation. The rise of rationalism and empiricism in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century were pivotal to this change process. The following sections of discussion focus on building up an appreciation of why these ways of thinking emerged, what they entail, and how they changed over time and became intertwined, as these inform an understanding of the rational thinking people now employ in relation to objects and identity.

The story that unfolds is quite long and involved, in part because the evolution of both empiricism and rationalism occurred over a period of more than two centuries. Two key figures that epitomize the unfolding philosophical revolution were Francis Bacon (1561-1626) and René Descartes (1596-1650). Their ideas about how knowledge might best be developed were subsequently challenged and built on by Locke, Hume and others. Here, the story is sketched only briefly; introducing just those ideas identified as relevant to the ways we now regard objects and identity. For readers who, like me, start with only a vague sense of this period of history, a more detailed introduction to these key figures, the genesis and impact of their propositions, and the controversies that surrounded them is provided in the appendices.

Bacon, Descartes and the Rise of Rationalism

Bacon (1561-1626) was an English philosopher who is important in this study for his empirical approach to knowledge building. He held that true knowledge came from systematic observation of the world, including the objects that surround us. He emphasised that our observations could and should be unbiased (Bacon, 1625/1890). For

Bacon, the human quest to understand our world was a moral endeavour, a return of mankind's God-given domination over nature (Losee, 2001; Tarnas, 1996). Empiricism has had far reaching consequences. It directed people's attention to things that are observable and measurable, and gave rise to the assumptions that we can explain what causes things to happen and that having more information will better inform our decisions (Bacon, 1627; Tarnas). A summary of Bacon's empirical vision of knowledge development, and its impact on Western thinking is presented in Table 4:1, (next page), and more background on how Bacon arrived at his conclusions is given in Appendix 4.

René Descartes (1596-1650) was a French philosopher, born only 35 years after Bacon but with very different views. Like Bacon, he foresaw a time when people would be able to control nature and believed this would ensure health and prosperity (Cottingham, 1993). However, he considered our senses to be inherently unreliable and dismissed the idea that we can trust the things we see, hear or sense. Instead, Descartes put all his faith in his powers of reasoning. This insight is encapsulated in his famous phrase *cogito, ergo sum* [I think, therefore I am] (Descartes, 1637/1985). Reason, he asserted, would pave the way to understanding how things really work, and render the world intelligible.

Descartes' insistence that reason can furnish the truth (Descartes, 1641/1984) spawned a perception of humans as rational beings, each responsible for discerning his or her own truths and acting accordingly (Sedgwick, 2001). This viewpoint reinforced a sense of individual identity, which as discussed in chapter three underlies our assumptions about the relationship between objects and identity. It also gave rise to an expectation that we could know things with absolute certainty, and an attitude that not knowing or being uncertain is intolerable (Ross & Franks, 1996). In addition, Descartes' elevation of reason above sensation resulted in people placing more importance on things they think rather than what they feel (Tarnas, 1996). A summary of Descartes' assumptions and how they became incorporated into Western philosophies can be found in Table 4:1. As well, more background on his philosophical thought and various critiques levelled against him can be found in Appendix 5.

Table 4:1

Overview of Bacon and Descartes' Philosophies

	Bacon	Descartes
Key Assumptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Truth is found in nature • Nature explained by causal laws 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information from senses is unreliable • Mechanical laws of nature are completely intelligible • Physical world devoid of life force, intention or subjectivity • Society as an error ridden accumulation of ideas
Method	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Careful, unbiased observations \Rightarrow inductive reasoning \Rightarrow controlled experiments • Rejection of a priori hypotheses, which prejudice findings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impartial reason as the only source of knowledge
Purpose of Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Domination of nature to deliver practical benefits for human good 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Control nature to provide health, prosperity & practical benefits
Personal Edicts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trust your own ability to test assumptions and observations • Actively seek new/more information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trust only your own reasoning and reflections • Discard all knowledge derived from tradition, example, experience, emotion, authorities
Imperatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to examine all that is taken as given 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on how things work
View of People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As having God-given dominion over nature • Have a moral obligation to seek true knowledge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rational, intelligent, reflective, self-conscious • Know ourselves by what we think, not what we feel, independent of social & material circumstances • Consider ourselves in time, choose which desires to satisfy & know things beyond the physical realm • God-like mind, corrupt/untrustworthy body (Cartesian mind-body dualism)
Philosophical Outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Directed people's attention to the observable & measurable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demand for absolute certainty & intelligibility

The Widespread Adoption of Rationalism

Descartes had not arrived at his conclusions in a vacuum. A key figure in the ascendance of reason was Pico della Mirandola (1463-1494), an Italian priest who actively disseminated the rediscovered works of the ancient Greeks, particularly Plato. Pico interpreted the Greek maxim to 'be perfect' in the context of his Christian faith, asserting that God had charged man with the power and responsibility of self-creation. Furthermore, he asserted, this would be achieved through reason:

If the seeds of sensation, he will grow into brute. If rational he will come out a heavenly animal. If intellectual, he will be an angel, and a son of God. ... If you see anyone ... delivered over to the senses, it is a brute not a man you see. If you come upon a philosopher winnowing out all the things by right reason, he is a heavenly not an earthly animal. If you come upon a pure contemplator, ignorant of the body, banished to the innermost places of the mind, he is not earthly, not a heavenly animal; he more superbly is a divinity clothed in human flesh. (1486/1965, p. 6)

Once formulated, rationalism became unstoppable. Important in this context is that it contributed to major scientific advances that would lead to the development of steam engines, which fuelled the industrial revolution and the mass production of everyday objects that ensued. Rationalism was equally influential in the arts as it was in the sciences. The conviction that our perceptions of beauty rest on fixed and binding laws steadily gained ground (Motooka, 1998) as did the expectation that artistic rules would be formulated to explain how and why poetic language gave pleasure. As the later discussion will reveal, this expectation of rational explanation also came to pervade understandings of the relationship between objects and identity.

The rise of rationalism was not without its critics. Erasmus (c1466-1536) for example, despite believing that it was humanity's destiny to be rational, warned that the new interest in scientific thinking turned people's minds from morality. Similarly moralistic attitudes towards owning objects emerge as significant later in this discussion. Some church leaders also feared that the Christian gospel of love was being replaced by "joy in the exercise of man's God-given powers", obedience to God's will would be superseded

by freedom of thought, and men would place their faith in “the fearless quest of the intellect” (Randall, 1926, p. 123) rather than God’s mercy. Such concerns came to the fore during the sixteenth century. The Council of Trent, for example, commanded that Catholics with true faith would not be driven by inquisitive curiosity (Chemnitz, 1565-1573/1971). Luther (1483-1546), the German cleric who initiated the Protestant Reformation, was also a strident critic of rationalism. He abhorred reason, declaring that reason:

... is the Devil’s harlot, and can do nothing but slander and harm all that God says and does. If outside of Christ, you wish by your own thoughts to know your relation to God, you will break your neck. Thunder strikes him who examines. It is Satan’s wisdom to tell what God is, and by doing so he will draw you into the abyss. Therefore keep to revelation and do not try to understand. (Luther, 1525/1957, p. 6)

Regardless of the concerns of religious leaders and the intervening turmoil of the Reformation, the eighteenth century is considered the period in which rationalism and empiricism came together and triumphed (Saiedi, 1993). The Edinburgh Review of September 1831, for example combined elements of both in their assertion “that human reason, or the reasoning faculty, is the sole arbiter as to what is to be received as truth” and that “facts recognised by sense” as well as those derived from consciousness “form the materials on which the reasoning faculty is to be exercised” (Oxford English Dictionary, 1986). Although the optimistic faith that human reason would provide the means of comprehending and mastering reality has continued to be questioned, not least by the Romantics, it remains a dominant mode of thinking that has shaped how the relationship between objects and identity is understood.

In summary, Bacon promoted a new and rigorous scientific procedure founded entirely on methodical observations, and established a general orientation to seeking new knowledge. Descartes promoted the idea that men are rational beings in a completely intelligible world and charged each of us with the responsibility for ascertaining the truth about the world, and the objects in it. Their ideas were challenged and further developed by later philosophers. It is to two of them that the discussion now turns.

Bringing Rationalism and Empiricism Together

In seventeenth century Britain it was generally accepted that all our ideas, including concepts like identity, could ultimately be traced to sensory information of some kind. This assumption provided the background to the philosophical deliberations of two famous empiricists who followed Bacon: John Locke and David Hume (Parkinson, 1993). While only selected elements of their work are discussed here, a more encompassing discussion of their ideas is presented in Appendix 6.

John Locke (1632-1704) was an English philosopher who was convinced that all learning is grounded in our experience of the physical world. He maintained that the veracity of the senses could not be doubted (Sedgwick, 2001). Nonetheless, he conceded that people also learn by comparing different experiences, and by questioning, remembering, thinking abstractly and generating hypotheses to explain how things work (Locke, 1690/1823/1963). He warned, however, that we should not accept such hypotheses until they had been thoroughly and impartially tested, thus revealing his commitment to rational thinking (Woolhouse, 1996). He also held individuals responsible for working things out for themselves, irrespective of others' opinions (Saiedi, 1993).

David Hume (1711-1776) is recognised as a “one of the greatest philosophers to write in English” (Jones, 1996, p. 571). While supporting the notion that our senses are a central means of generating knowledge, Hume acknowledged that people interpret their sensations or experiences based on prior experience and attitudes. He also recognised that social contexts influence those experiences and what we come to know (Jones, 1996) and allowed that reason might be useful to ensure our judgements are sensible (Hume, 1739-40/1990). Hume concluded that people are not primarily rational because our choices were always made in the context of the social world and fleeting feelings and sensations of bodily existence (Hume, 1739-40/1990), arguing that being entirely rational would not be desirable. Without the influence of human feelings, he believed that people might not act out of concern for others, nor be motivated by ethical considerations or a sense of justice (Turski, 1994). Reason, Hume (1739-40) concluded, must always be the slave of passion.

Table 4:2

Overview of Locke and Hume's Philosophies

	Locke	Hume
Key Assumptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Veracity of senses cannot be doubted • Empirical facts cannot produce certainty 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senses central to knowledge acquisition • Our thoughts are always influenced by our attitudes & experiences
Method	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use hypotheses as memory aids, but don't accept them too quickly • Design experiments to test hypotheses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge built up through experience
Personal Edicts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each responsible to work things out for ourselves 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human experience is inescapably social
Imperatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't accept what authorities say • Even revelations must be subjected to rational scrutiny 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each responsible for making own decisions and for our actions
View of People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blank slate at birth, filled with ideas arising from senses & refined through reflection & reason • Sentient beings that can understand things via the senses • Learn to perceive, remember, doubt, believe, think abstractly & reason by experiencing the external world 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Go beyond the evidence of our senses by linking ideas together; noting resemblances, contiguities, cause & effect • Have the capacity to make own decisions • Self-consciousness based on interpretation of experience, social context & sensations
Impact of Philosophies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ideal of impartially weighing evidence • Perception that clearly expressed ideas are true 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perception that we can explain what caused human behaviour, and can predict what people will do • Objective reasoning cannot guarantee empathy, justice or ethical behaviour (View of reason as cold)

Rational Thought

While philosophers had essentially the same goal, of moving from the fleeting and fragmentary world of sensations to a stable, orderly world that men could manipulate, they disagreed about whether reason or experience was the best means to achieve this goal. In the end, Hume succeeded in highlighting the difficulties inherent in Descartes' attempt to derive knowledge of the world through entirely rational means and his position was affirmed by practical scientists of the day. For example, Newton was careful to emphasise that deduction divorced from empirical data was insufficient. In his words:

Whatever is not deduced from the phenomena is to be called an hypothesis; and hypotheses, whether metaphysical or physical, whether of occult qualities or mechanical, have no place in experimental philosophy [science]. In this philosophy particular propositions are inferred from the phenomena, and afterwards rendered general by induction. (Newton, 1729/1962, II, p. 314)

Newton is credited with effecting “a harmonious reconciliation” (Randall, 1926, p. 263) of empiricism and rationalism. He inductively analysed observed facts to generate a fundamental principle, used deduction to express the principle mathematically, and then conducted experiments to test the mathematical relationships and their predicted consequences (Tarnas, 1996). A quarter of a century after his death, Newton's method was neatly summed up thus:

We have three principal means: the observation of nature, thought, and experiment. Observation collects the facts, thought combines them, and experiment verifies the result of the combination. The observation of nature must be assiduous, the thinking must be profound and the experiment must be exact. (Diderot, 1754/1937, XV, p. 45)

By demonstrating the intelligibility and predictability of the physical world, scientists like Galileo and Newton showed that people should not be limited by accepted ideas, even those that are strongly held within society. By disaggregating taken for granted ideas and carefully interpreting their observations, they were able to generate new explanations built on a sensitive and systematically gathered knowledge of the external

world (Randall, 1926). At a more philosophical level, Hume also showed that Descartes' assumption that men could develop an entirely trustworthy and complete knowledge of the physical universe was not realistic. He showed that there are no guarantees between the data people have at hand, whether derived from the senses, experience or reason, and the constructed world of human perceptions, customs and cultural beliefs. In its own way, this insight fuelled people's belief that better decisions could be reached by having more information. As we shall see, this assumption also informed people's assumptions about the relationship between objects and identity.

Perhaps what rationalism and empiricism achieved in the long term was a more scientific approach to living based on a deep-seated conviction that the world and customary knowledge cannot be accepted on trust. Each person is responsible for recognising generalisations as well as exceptions that cast doubt on what has been taken as certain. We are also responsible for formulating searching questions and gathering information, and for thinking rationally about what is known and unknown, conscientiously weighing the evidence and deciding for ourselves what to believe. The demonstrated successes of science also supported the notion of progress, that inevitable, ongoing improvement in material, medical, social and political conditions. Predicted by Condorcet (1795/1955) in the late eighteenth century, the idea took root in the Western psyche. This was partly because Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831), a German professor of philosophy, promoted the idea in the language of reason. Progress meant the betterment of society at large and of personal circumstances, and contributing towards this end became, in a sense, the purpose of rational thinking.

The discussion now turns to an exploration, from a rationalist perspective, of the kind of world humans inhabit, the nature of being, and how people might best live in the world. See Figure 4:4. This discussion shows the way rationalism has shaped people's views, and leads to key conclusions about the rationalist relationship between objects and identity.

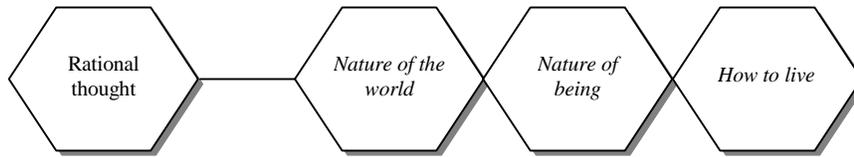


Figure 4:4 Topics in Relation to Rational Thought.

The Nature of the World

The predominant metaphor of the rationalist world is the machine, with all of the uniformity, universalism, regularity and reliability that implies (Campbell, 1987). It is still a world created by God, but in the rationalist vision God is cast as a watchmaker who designed the world according to rational laws (Saiedi, 1993). In comparison to what had come before, casting the world in mechanical terms removed its mystery (Midgley, 1992). Nature was no longer something powerful, unpredictable and unknown, something against which men stood impotent. Rather, it simply became inert matter subject to the laws of physics. Also, curiously, as science conquered and subdued nature, uncovering “the secrets still locked in Nature’s bosom” (Farrington, 1970, p. 92), the forces of nature were reduced from feminine mystique to masculine precision.

In a world brought increasingly under control, there would be no more chaos, no more confusion. Ongoing scientific discoveries would render nature increasingly rational, as predictable patterns were identified and harmonious relationships uncovered. Accordingly, by the eighteenth century orderly predictability came to be perceived as a natural state of affairs, as though regularity was somehow the natural way of things (Randall, 1926). What’s more, this expectation of regularity was increasingly applied to the human world of the Enlightenment period. Descartes’ warning about the irrationality of the customs and collective understandings that make up any culture, particularly those that had developed haphazardly over time, still held sway. Nevertheless human being, society and history gradually came to be perceived as legitimate objects for scientific analysis, and it was anticipated that such analysis would reveal them to be subject to impersonal, rational laws similar to those that rule the natural world. The discovery of

such laws would decrease superstition and ignorance. In doing so, rational exploration would decrease the domination of church and state by showing that humanity is part of the natural world, rather than the world of mythology and metaphor. In turn, this would enable rational decision-making at a political level, and further the social values Enlightenment activists held dear: liberty, equality, and democracy (Saiedi, 1993). Against this background of confidence in humans' ability to control nature, design efficient social institutions and predict and perfect human behaviour, the inevitability of progress seemed even more assured (Falzon, 2002).

One thing that is evident is that a rational world might take a range of forms: an orderly natural world, the inevitable progress towards a better life, a well-organised society. What each of these visions of an increasingly rational world shares is the assumption that it would be better than what came before.

The Nature of Being

For both the empiricists, principally Locke, and rationalists such as Descartes the primary characteristic of humanity was being conscious, and rationality was its very essence. Rationality itself, at least in modern Western societies, has three components. These are people's ability to reason, their understanding of reasons, and their response to reasons (Raz, 1999). From the perspective of rationality, each individual is viewed as a thinking, experiencing self, that in adulthood is charged with taking full responsibility for progressively and systematically searching out the truth, for nothing can be taken on trust. Moreover, the stakes are high, because for people dedicated to ideas and the truth, error is tantamount to damnation.

The basis on which judgements about the truth should be made is not entirely clear, however, as the role emotions play in rational decision-making remains contentious (Gellner, 1992). From one perspective, supported by Hume, our feelings are the key to our values, preferences and satisfactions, and the basis of morality, and so should be factored into every decision. Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), a Prussian philosopher perhaps known best for his works *Critique of Pure Reason*, *Critique of Practical Reason*,

and *Critique of Judgment* voiced a competing perspective. He held that sensations and emotions are accidental, dependent on the situation and outside human control, and should not be allowed to influence one's decisions. This controversy has not been resolved, and it remains uncertain whether emotions are an implicit and valuable essence of human being, or an unfortunate distraction.

To further complicate things, yet another perspective has recently gained credence. The argument that supports this viewpoint is that emotions, intentions, desires and beliefs are rational if the person who holds them is rational, in control of his or her cognitive faculties, and has intelligible, reasonable, and appropriate reasons for having those emotions, intentions, desires and beliefs. Irrational emotions, beliefs and so on, would only occur in a rational person if there had been a failure of rational processes, such as not paying attention, being emotionally upset, having a mood disorder such as depression or mania, having memory loss, or due to a failure of will. What is evident here is that rationality is now presumed to be universal, except in cases of clear dysfunction.

A final facet of being rational is the internal search for truth. Inspired by Descartes' distrust of custom and example, there is an assumption that people who strive to be rational inevitably face the need to reassess what they assume to be true. This need arises from the corrupting influences of society and our education during infancy and youth, when we are ill equipped to recognise or resist the influence of irrational thinking, beliefs and practices. By its very nature, self-exploration is a private endeavour, of great religious and moral import (Taylor, 1989, p. 389). It is literally a rational remaking of the self. Achieving cognitive self-creation demands detachment from the corrupting influences of culture, if not from one's emotions, for such is the path to liberty (Gellner, 1992).

In sum, rationalism is "profoundly individualistic" (Gellner, 1992, p. 3), for each of us is responsible for formulating not only our own understanding of the world but formulating ourselves as well. This is important in relation to this thesis, because one of the ways to do this is through objects.

How to Live

According to Descartes, the primary value in living was being rational: respecting only one's own reasoning and being influenced only by evidence. Rational living is not straightforward, however, because evidence is not always available and human knowledge incomplete. Knowledge previously assumed to be certain might be overturned by new theories. Things deemed magical or supernatural, such as faith healing and miracles, might have rational explanations not yet revealed by science, but how is one to know? As if this were not enough, it is unclear whether the final arbiter of truth should be the precision of one's reasoning and clarity of one's ideas, which would be true to rationalism, or the availability of trustworthy evidence as espoused by the empiricists.

Because of all this, being reasoned demands, above all else, "no haste, no untidy confusion, no impulsiveness" (Gellner, 1992, p. 5). Rational living requires orderliness, and that requires keeping track of one's reasoning. It means separating the issues, so that each can be clearly thought through, and having clear, intelligible criteria for decisions made. Rationality also means doing things in a rational way, and that means being "slow, careful, judicious, deliberate, omitting naught, accounting for all" (Gellner, p. 5) and doing one thing at a time. As well, rationality carries with it suspicion of authority, even the authority of God and the church, unless there are good reasons to trust it. Faith can only be sustained by declaring it exempt from the scrutiny of reason. Furthermore, rationality requires paying attention to clearly conceived, rationally compelling convictions for these, like Descartes' *cogito, ergo sum*, reveal inner truths. However, such convictions must be based on rational thinking without the interference of visions, emotional abandon, loss of sobriety or deliberate excess of any kind.

Rationality, then, demands carefully measured and deliberate living, and calculated, autonomous decision-making in the pursuit of self-interest and economic enterprise (Saiedi, 1993). Small wonder Descartes has been criticised as overwhelmingly bourgeois, decidedly individualistic, unromantic, anti-communal and denying any need to acknowledge or make concessions for historical circumstances. Moreover, such critique might equally be levelled at the empiricists who, in their efforts to determine what we

could justifiably believe, similarly emphasised the importance of orderliness and control. Although the words are different, the intent was the same: meticulous data gathering, careful inductive reasoning, breaking ideas down into their simplest components, and guarding against the corrupting influence of preconceived ideas. Like Descartes, the empiricists demanded that individuals develop the ability and motivation to stand aside from culturally embedded values and beliefs to work things out for themselves. The only point of real difference was that where Descartes' starting point was inner truths, the empiricists worked from ideas derived from real life experiences and observations.

In the end, rationality means being able to account for one's beliefs and motivations, and being able to justify why actions are taken, or not taken. This requirement for justification is more straightforward than it might seem, however, because since the Enlightenment human motivation has been typecast in clear utilitarian terms as maximising pleasure and minimising pain. Hobbes (1588-1679) for example, asserted that:

It is of itself manifest that the actions of men proceed from the will, and the will from hope and fear, insomuch as when they shall see a greater good or less evil likely to happen to them by the breach than observation of the laws, they willingly violate them. (1658/1972, p. 165)

One implication of presuming that people act to maximise pleasure is that it defines people as insatiable consumers, relentlessly pursuing material goods to satisfy their needs and give them pleasure. This acquisitiveness has been framed as natural and universal, and presumed to lead to societal welfare and harmony. For example, these principles underlie Adam Smith's economic theory, published in his *Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (1776). A further assumption is that striving for pleasure and avoiding pain are inherent aspects of human nature. This supposition is important because it reflects Enlightenment thinking about man's place in nature, such that individuals are free to decide whether, when and how to achieve their goals, within the limits set by nature. Also taken for granted is the notion that being rational and efficient is the best means of achieving one's goals (Saiedi, 1993). Certainly, rational decision-making to maximise efficiency proved to be a highly successful prescription for the early

capitalists. Max Weber (1904/1930) at least, attributed their single-minded amassing of wealth precisely to their orderly, meticulous and unrelenting efforts. What's more, they were renowned as independent thinkers, who had a sense that their fellow men and God endorsed their efforts and the rewards they reaped.

In the post-modern world, our faith in the existence of immutable, universal laws has been eroded by the certain knowledge that other people see things differently and that even scientists change their minds. Nonetheless, seeing something with our own eyes and logical thinking continue to be considered trustworthy methods of arriving at an answer, making a decision or determining goals and priorities. Accordingly, we reach conclusions about individual's identity by observing what objects they have or don't have, and think about how others will perceive us in relation to the objects we have and use.

Rational Identities

Although little of the literature reviewed directly addressed notions of identity, or rationalist approaches to establishing or expressing an identity with objects, it is possible to discern identity meanings. The discussion in this section, as indicated in the introduction to the chapter, is my interpretation of rational approaches to identity formation implied by the philosophical works of Bacon, Descartes, Locke and Hume. The discussion presents a melding of their ideas about what it is to be rational with my perceptions and experiences of rationality in the modern world. It must be acknowledged, however, that the perspectives presented are philosophical, and address a generalised ideal of rationality and so are unlikely to hold true for all individuals who hold themselves to be rational.

As discussed, rationalist ideals of humanity emphasise two elements. The first is the centrality of reason. The second is that people have a sense of continuity, a consciousness of experiencing an ongoing life. Accordingly, identity is cast in terms of rationality and continuity. The extent to which identity also encompasses an awareness of feelings and the physical body is less clear (Gellner, 1992). As the discussion to this point has revealed, various philosophers had differing opinions about this. Descartes clearly

identified self as that part of us that thinks rather than our corporeal body, which supports a purely cognitive perception of self. Locke also held that “the identity of the same man consists ... in nothing but a participation of the same continued life”, adding that “consciousness always accompanies thinking, ... in this alone consists personal identity, i.e. the sameness of a rational being” (1690/1997, p. 302). He did however acknowledge that such experiences took place in the company of “constantly fleeting particles of matter, in succession vitally united to the same organised body” (p. 299). For Hume, in contrast, identity incorporated feelings because he believed that these were the seat of our unique preferences, aims, values and morals (Gellner, 1992). So identity is certainly rational, but whether coldly rationality as Descartes asserted or warmed by Hume’s humanistic concerns is to some extent contested.

This issue of whether identity is informed by feelings takes on added significance when considered in the context of Descartes and Hume’s disavowal of culture, custom and authority. For separating self from social norms and expectations means the loss of socially ascribed roles that tell us who we are, where we fit, and how to behave. There is no longer anyone in authority who can determine our identity, for we give no one that authority. When we assume personal responsibility to understand the world and make our own decisions, as each of the philosophers directed, we also assume the responsibility of determining who we are. Underlying all this, the rationality, sense of continuity, caution around letting our feelings influence our decisions, and responsibility for self definition, is an implicit assumption of individualism, for no-one but I can lay claim to my consciousness, or my accumulation of experience. Exercising the responsibility to work things out and decide for ourselves means being methodical and precise, whether informed by Bacon’s empirical method or Descartes deductive rigor. It is also to seek information about the world and human activity, because as Bacon asserted, knowledge is power and conversely to not know, not be certain, or have information withheld from us is to be disempowered.

As Locke suggested, rational people have the ability to be impartial, because they are analytical, can stand back from their feelings to evaluate things against set criteria, and

will endeavour to consider all things equally. It follows that they are likely to stand by their decisions, even if those decisions prove to be unpopular, unless they can be convinced that the decision was illogical or misinformed. Equally, following Descartes' assertion that knowledge should enhance health and prosperity, people are motivated by efficiency, effectiveness, thrift and perceived responsibilities. Informed by Hume's warning that all experience is social, such motivations will be tempered by an evaluation of certainty and risk, what it would be sensible to do, and knowledge of the local norms, rules and politics, the law, and the consequences of contravening any of these. In addition, rational people are prone to evaluating their success in life by their achievements.

It is a reasonable assumption, given Descartes' demand for impartial reason and Hume's acknowledgement that this is never fully possible, that rational people will pride themselves in being measured or at least deliberate in all things, including their feelings. Accordingly, they will conduct themselves in an orderly, self-disciplined manner, and consistent with Hume's cause and effect thinking, be able to provide credible explanations of what caused them to do what they did, and why they intend to do what they plan. The exception they may allow themselves is in matters of the heart and faith for, in all else, they expect the world to conform to Bacon and Descartes' vision of an orderly, predictable and reasonable world. By extension, rather than Descartes' error-ridden society, rational individuals may seek an orderly, predictable and reasonable society and so will be comfortable with routines and procedures. This preference for order is likely to extend to a systematic division of labour so long as the reasons for organising things that way are evident and, in their judgement, well founded. To maintain a sense of personal order, Gellner (1992) suggests they will prefer to deal with one thing at a time, in order to avoid confusion. They will be open to change, if they understand the reasons for it, and likewise, respect authority if there are sound reasons for doing so.

In addition, rational people prefer their dealings with others to be guided by a clear agreement and take their responsibilities under such a contract seriously. They expect that others will behave in similarly rational ways and that society and commerce will be

structured and function on rational lines. They are likely to experience bewilderment and frustration, or respond with cynicism when things are not so. Finally, rational individuals make decisions about their identity, based on their knowledge of their aptitudes, skills, intelligence; social milieu and status within it; leisure, lifestyle and work preferences; worth on the employment market; other identifying characteristics such as ethnicity and religious beliefs; and the opportunities and resources available to them.

Rational people, then, live lives guided by information and reason. They expect to be able to solve problems, better themselves and their circumstances, and to relate to others in rational ways. In the sense that there are no socially ascribed roles to tell them who they are, where they fit, or what to do, rational people also accept responsibility to shape their own identity. This being so, what remains to consider in this chapter is the part objects play in such identity claims.

Using Objects to Manage and Project a Rational Identity

It stands to reason that the actual objects individuals might have and use will depend on circumstance: what is available at a particular place and time, what they need or want to do, their financial resources and creative abilities, the tastes of the people around them and so on. While it is impossible to predict precisely what objects any individual will have and use for identity purposes, what can be interpreted is the general orientation rational individuals might take towards objects and the identity thus forged or expressed. Aspects of rationality might be evident, for example, in how individuals go about acquiring or learning to use objects, their attitudes towards the things they have and use, and how they use them, as well as in the things themselves. The discussion that follows is again, my interpretation, supported by the rationalist philosophers, and addresses the rationality people might bring to building or expressing their identity through objects. As Figure 4:5 depicts, it addresses how people build an identity using objects and how they might express that identity.

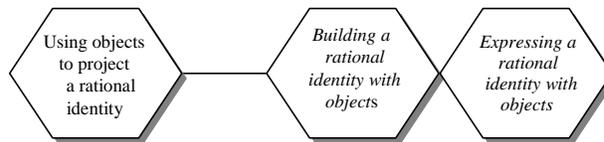


Figure 4:5 Subtopics: Using Objects to Manage and Project a Rational Identity.

Building a Rational Identity with Objects

Descartes declared people able to objectively choose which of their needs and desires to satisfy or deny yet declared no rational limit to our choices. In combination with Condorcet's (1795/1955) notion of progress, which became interpreted as betterment of one's personal circumstances, rationalism frames people as inveterate consumers. Yet, consistent with the philosophers' precepts of careful and objective rationality, individuals would not be expected to acquire objects on impulse. Rather they might be expected to deliberately seek things out to fulfil an identified need, purpose, or responsibility or to provide pleasure; to conscientiously gather information; and to carefully and impartially weigh the relative strengths of various objects available before deciding. Furthermore, because of the capacity Descartes recognised of being able to consider themselves in time and make choices about the needs to satisfy, we might anticipate that people would rationally plan how to acquire objects in the future and logically prioritise their acquisitions. An individual's decisions to acquire objects might, for example, be guided by consideration of the attributes required of an object to fulfil a need and the shortcomings of already available objects. Considered acquisition decisions are likely to be guided by individuals' values, within the broad scope of values that typify rationalism: individualism, freedom, and equality (Saiedi, 1993). Individualism, for example, might support preferences such as having individual ownership of valued or frequently used objects, rather than sharing those objects amongst a collective. Building an identity as free and equal to others might translate into wanting unimpeded access to objects that give a sense of freedom, such as one's car or passport, or feeling a sense of entitlement or being deserving of objects that others have.

As well as being informed by values, rationally based decisions to acquire or use objects might well be shaped by individuals' knowledge of their aptitudes, intelligence or skills

in relation to perceived requirements to successfully use an object. Individuals confident of their mechanical skills, for example, might expect to find technical information intelligible and seek to find out how things work. Less confident individuals might prioritise ease of use, or the availability of demonstrations, instruction or training before they could consider acquiring or using certain objects. Knowledge of societal rules, norms, politics and laws would likely also influence whether individuals are happy to be associated with certain objects, and thus to shape decisions to acquire or behaviour towards such objects. Stolen property might, for example, be refused, accepted but 'hidden' in the sense that its origins might not be declared, or flouted to demonstrate a deliberate stance of being unconstrained by social norms and sanctions. Concern with relative efficiency and effectiveness might well also be expected to figure amongst rational individuals' justifications for the objects they 'need' to acquire, as might concerns driven by thrift, such as versatility, reliability, and robustness. Such rationale might be stated with exactitude and certainty, and be justified as sensible.

When people talk rationally about the objects they wish to acquire, or would not want, it is likely that they will, as Bacon and Descartes espoused, trust their own reasoning and consistent with Locke and Hume, assume personal responsibility for their choices. That is, they will expect to have to decide for themselves which of the available alternatives best suit their purposes or whether it would be preferable to do without, and to judge themselves in terms of their success or failure to obtain suitable objects. Their identity as a competent judge of objects will be strengthened or undermined by the success of the object for its intended purpose. It is also likely that, consistent with Locke's assertion that people learn from their interactions with the external world, individuals who consider themselves rational will base acquisition decisions on careful consideration of past experiences of what they are attempting to do and the circumstances in which they will do it. Their decisions will likely also be informed by the self-consciousness and interpretation of social contexts that Hume identified. For instance, women who pride themselves on dressing well are nonetheless likely to set different criteria for clothing to wear to work and clothing to wear to a concert. Accordingly, rational individuals are likely to determine in advance the criteria an object must fulfil, the information they will

require in order to judge whether an object meets those criteria, and to engage in extensive data gathering or comparative buying strategies. Their intent will be to determine the similarities and differences amongst available products and to weigh the value of the various attributes against requirements and resources. This gathering of information signals both an empirical approach to the world of objects, which is philosophically aligned to Bacon's work, and a sense of personal responsibility for making the best decision as Descartes emphasised.

In relation to acquiring objects, therefore, rational people might identify themselves as surrounded by objects chosen or provided for particular purposes or reasons, and about which they have a great deal of information. The particular collection of objects associated with any individual will contribute to the construction of a unique identity. For some, because individuals in the Western world are perceived as having the freedom to choose their identity, the objects surrounding them will have been chosen with a view to bringing a particular identity into being.

Expressing a Rational Identity with Objects

As well as being deliberate about the objects they acquire, rationalists might be expected to have a particular orientation towards the objects they use and surround themselves with. For instance, because as Descartes argued, rationalists perceive a continuity of self, this might be expressed as holding on to key possessions that symbolise earlier periods in one's life, or important events such as one's wedding day. Equally, because rationalists tend to evaluate their success in life by their measurable achievements, possessions that signal accomplishments, such as a framed diploma, might be retained when others are discarded. However, such considerations are likely to be tempered by estimations of the usefulness or ongoing relevance of possessions. In addition, influenced by Condorcet's (1795/1955) suppositions that human conditions will improve over time, possessions might be replaced when newer models with more features become available, despite individuals' emotional attachment to the object itself or any people associated with the object.

Rationality, informed by Bacon's moral imperative to seek knowledge and the fact that his philosophies have directed our attention to the measurable and observable, is also likely to influence how much individuals know about the objects they have and use. This will be because finding out about things will have been part of the decision to acquire them, and because being able to give facts and figures about things will be an ongoing part of justifying their acquisition and usefulness. Such justifications are likely to be factually or practically based, for example that carpet of a particular shade wouldn't show the dirt, that a certain brand of products are known for high reliability, or that a model has precise functions not available in earlier or competing products. In individuals motivated by thrift, rationale is also likely to focus on how much was saved by purchasing a particular item, or that it was a bargain. Perhaps despite Hume's assertion that reason is influenced by our attitudes and experiences, the reasons given are less likely to emphasise sensory or emotional responses to objects, their look, smell or feel, unless that was the characteristic that was specifically sought. Rather, explanations of having chosen one rather than another product may emphasise not being swayed by objects perceived as attractive because of more rational considerations: the softer fabric would not wear so well, the white sports car would be harder to keep clean.

Consistent with the rational vision of an orderly world, identifying oneself as a rational person might also influence how objects are organised and tended. A collection of screws, neatly separated into different containers according to length and thread pattern, might reveal the workings of an overtly rational mind. Equally, a washing machine cleared of lint on a weekly basis in order to extend its working life, might point to a level of domestic orderliness few might aspire to. Systems for ordering or cataloguing possessions are most likely to have a rational basis. Examples might include storing CDs alphabetically, shelving books in order of size, or grouping clothes hanging in the closet into colour co-ordinated outfits. Consistently applied aesthetic rules, such as placing ornaments symmetrically on a mantelpiece, might equally signal a rational sense of orderliness. Similarly, implementing sensible or practical systems for maintaining control of one's possessions or tools of work, such as painting a shadow board for one's tools, demonstrate rational valuing of order and efficiency. Finally, because personal objects

are selected on a rational basis, as a matter of personal choice and responsibility, individuals are perhaps unlikely to recognise objects as holding culturally embedded meanings, or the ways social, cultural or national forces have influenced their choice of objects.

Conclusion

In summary, rationalism has two parts: gathering information from observations and experience, and using our human powers of reasoning. Although these strategies for determining what is true and justifying our actions were for centuries viewed as competing, they have now coalesced in the modern Western mind as complimentary components of scientific thinking. However, although much has been achieved by science, rationalism has not lived up to the promise that Plato and others foresaw. That is, being rational has neither, in itself, given people the wisdom to conduct themselves well, nor does it necessarily make life worthwhile. Similarly, rationalism has not made men God-like, given us control over nature or ensured good health as Bacon and Descartes envisaged.

Nevertheless, the Greek ideals of impartiality, objectivity and autonomy of judgement are still upheld as ideals against which some people measure themselves and many people measure decisions made for the good of society. As well, Pico's assumption that God gave men the power and responsibility to create themselves and Descartes' separation of mind and body continue to support conceptions of self and evaluations of self-worth based on our prowess as thinkers. Being well informed, observant, good at solving problems or arguing a point, quick to understand complex issues, having a good memory or being focused on one's goals might be given more weight than merely acting out of habit or following tradition. Furthermore, describing oneself as kind, sensitive to emotional nuance or sensuous, for example, would likely be equated with femininity or weakness. With prowess as a rational being, however, goes individual responsibility for determining the truth. This awareness of self as a rational being supports individualism, in the sense of claiming a unique identity informed by individual thoughts, motives and reflections. However, such conceptions have been critiqued as denying the advantages

and constraints of social realities and cultural context, and certainly undermined people's obedience to and reliance on the teachings of the church.

Being rational and self-reliant extends to many of the objects we have and use, and is a pervasive element of Western identities. Rationality informs strategies individuals use to deliberately construct and convey an identity through the range of objects they surround themselves with and master. Rationality is also incidentally conveyed by individuals' choice, knowledge and organisation of objects, and their attitudes towards and use they make of the objects that surround them. However, although rationality has long been the dominant mode of being in the world and interacting with objects, the Western faith in rationalism has continued to be questioned, not least by the Romantics. In chapter five, the Romantic perspective of human life and personal identity are explored.

Chapter Five

Romanticism: A Philosophical Root of the Relationship Between Objects and Identity

While rational modes of thinking remain highly influential, Romanticism also shapes the ways Western people regard the objects they have and use. This chapter addresses the philosophy of Romanticism and presents Western understandings of objects and identity from a Romantic perspective. To start, the process of coming to understand the philosophy of Romanticism is briefly outlined, in order to make evident what influenced the particular perspective that is presented here. Next, the Romantics are introduced and the social, political and historical context within which their thinking emerged is outlined. Enlarging on this historical perspective, the prevailing philosophical assumptions of those times are addressed, because in large part this is what the Romantics were reacting against. Accordingly, the rationalist ways of thinking that were examined in chapter four are briefly reviewed in relation to Romanticism.

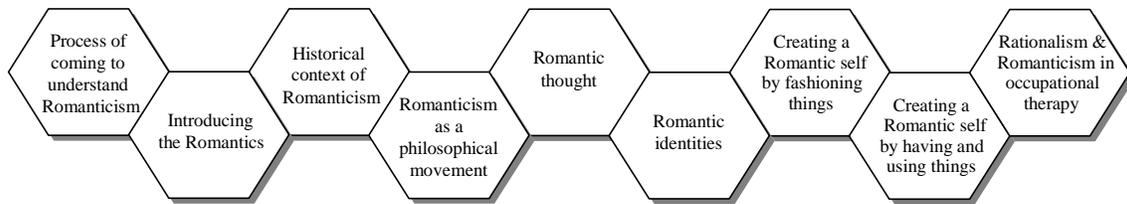


Figure 5:1 Progression of the Discussion in Chapter Five.

This preliminary discussion paves the way for a more detailed consideration of Romantic ideas about the nature of being, the nature of the world, and how people might best live. Romantic notions of creating self through creating objects, and by having and using objects are considered. Finally, the links between Romanticism and the Arts and Crafts Movement are explored, for these provide a direct link from Romanticism to

occupational therapy. Figure 5:1 gives an overview of the progression of the discussion in this chapter.

Process of Coming to Understand Romanticism

Consistent with a history of ideas methodology, my understanding of a Romantic sense of self and Romantic ways of thinking about and responding to objects began with a critical analysis of the work of other scholars. In this chapter, like the previous one, I began with secondary sources, to gain an overall appreciation of Romanticism and to guide my selection of primary material to consult. Tarnas (1996), whose chronology of the directions Western thought has taken, and the philosophical, scientific, and spiritual innovations and challenges that have influenced it, once again proved to be invaluable. In addition, to develop a depth of appreciation of Romanticism, four further authorities to the philosophies underpinning Romanticism were consulted. The first was Taylor (1989), a Professor of Philosophy and Political Science. In his exhaustive examination of the philosophical underpinnings of contemporary Western identity, Taylor directly addressed the Romantic identity and its imperative for individuation and emotional expression. The second guide was Saiedi (1993), who was valuable for his exploration of the philosophical heritage of sociological theory and his insights into how and why people act, from a Romantic perspective. Third was Spretnak's (1997) critique of the cultural transition from modernism to post-modernism. Of particular interest was her discussion of the role the Arts and Crafts Movement played in providing a bridge between the Romantics' nineteenth century literary sentiments and the every-day world of objects in the twentieth century. Finally, although to a lesser extent, Eldridge's (1994, 2001) scholarly explorations of Romanticism's continuing influence on both philosophy and literature provided valuable insights into contemporary perspectives.

Taylor, Saiedi, Spretnak and Eldridge are each notable for their depth of scholarship and critical analysis. In addition, because each addressed Romanticism from a unique perspective and for different purposes, reading them in combination effectively provided a multifaceted view of the Romanticism. Furthermore, the process of reading through and between these varied perspectives yielded insights beyond the original discussions. This

was a reflective process of considering how a Romantic identity might influence object use. The next step was to delve into the works of the Romantics themselves, to ground, test and extend my developing ideas about Romantic ways of being and using objects to shape the self. This drew me into an unfamiliar world of poetry and philosophical debate about poetry's place and influence on human lives. I was struck by the sheer volume of work that individuals such as Wordsworth had produced, and the even greater volume of analysis and critique their work had inspired. Amongst this wealth of words, further insights and gems were located to add depth to the understandings reached.

Overall, the process of exploration provided reassurance that suggesting Romanticism has continued to influence the ways Western people use objects to shape, experience, and interpret identity is not unreasonable. What follows is the culmination of this path to understanding.

Introducing the Romantics

Before addressing Romanticism as an intellectual movement, the Romantics themselves need introduction. They were a relatively small group of British, German and French composers, artists and writers who lived and worked in the late eighteenth to the mid nineteenth centuries. Their musical, artistic and literary endeavours were informed by a general belief that ideas could arise from inspiration rather than rationality, and their emphasis on the subjective, the irrational and the primacy of the individual.

The composers considered to epitomise Romanticism include Franz Schubert (1797-1828) who is associated with Romanticism because of the emotional intensity and lyricism of his compositions; Robert Schumann (1810-1856), a German composer who drew much of his inspiration from the Romantic poets; Franz Liszt (1811-1886), the Hungarian composer of the Faust and Dante Symphonies; and Richard Wagner (1813-1883) a German composer who synthesised music, legend, drama and spectacle. In the opinion of some musical authorities, Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827) should also be considered amongst the Romantic composers. The artists generally identified as typifying Romanticism, notwithstanding the diversity of their artistic styles, include Goya (1746-

1828), a Spanish painter and etcher whose major works depicted the French occupation of Spain; J. M. W. Turner (1775-1851), who is famous for his stormy seascapes; and Eugène Delacroix (1798-1863) from the French Romantic School who is renowned for his use of vivid colours and often violent or macabre subject matter.

Even more than the artists and composers, it was the Romantic writers who articulated a Romantic philosophy. Accordingly, it is their ideas that are the focus of the discussion that follows. Key amongst the early British writers was William Blake (1757-1827), now recognised as one of the most original of the Romantic poets, who illustrated his prose with engraved illustrations that decorated and explained his work. Another was William Wordsworth (1770-1850), who lived for a time in the Lake District, where he was joined by Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834). There they co-authored a major Romantic work, the *Lyrical Ballads*. Their contemporary, Sir Walter Scott (1771-1832) was a Scottish poet, novelist, writer and publisher who developed his home, Abbotsford as a bastion of Romanticism. George Byron (1788-1824), an English Baron, was a Romantic poet and author of *Don Juan*. He took his seat in parliament in 1811, but left England in 1816 because he was disillusioned with the strictures of British society. John Keats (1795-1821), a poet and playwright, blended pleasure in the beauties of life with melancholy, and is often identified as the most poignant of the English Romantics. Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792-1822), a rebellious and impulsive young man is renowned for the novels, poetry, dramas, and satirical pieces that earned him a reputation as the most versatile of the Romantics. Perhaps his most notable works are *Ode to the West Wind*, *To a Skylark*, and *The Cloud*, which capture the fleeting mood of a moment.

While Romanticism in Britain is associated primarily with poets and writers, many of the key figures in European Romanticism were also politicians, philosophers and historians. Johann Gottfried Herder (1744-1803), a German philosopher and critic who pre-dates the Romantics by about thirty years, is credited with bridging the gap between the Enlightenment and Romanticism with his concept of historical evolution. Other key figures include the German brothers August and Friedrich von Schlegel (1767-1845 and 1771-1829 respectively). Amongst August's contributions were his active promotion of

Romantic aesthetics throughout Europe and his insights into poets' use of signs, symbols and pictures to communicate beauty. Friedrich founded the journal *Athenæum*, developed theories of aestheticism, and wrote a novel considered outrageous at the time because it was purported to promote free love. Two other notable Romantics were Friedrich Hardenberg (1772-1801), an outstanding German poet who focused on his search for the inner meaning of life and wrote under the pseudonym Novalis; and Prosper Duvergier de Hauranne (1798-1881), a French politician and historian who campaigned for electoral, parliamentary and literary reform, and was closely associated with the Romantics in that country.

The Romantics' contemporaries include Napoleon Bonaparte (1769-1821) who led his troops against the British at Waterloo in 1815; Jane Austen (1775-1817), author of *Sense and Sensibilities* and *Pride and Prejudice*; and Benjamin Disraeli (1804-1881) who was appointed Prime Minister of England in 1868 and again in 1874-1880. In addition, the two philosophers perhaps most associated with this period are Kant and Hegel, whose contribution to rationalism was noted in chapter four. It was Kant who argued that sensation is the starting point of understanding and knowledge, while Hegel outlined a three-stage process of dialectical reasoning on which Karl Marx based some of his theory. Marx (1818-1883) himself was a contemporary of the later Romantics.

To assist readers to keep track of the people mentioned here, and throughout the chapter, a table of biographical information has been prepared. See Appendix 7. In addition, Figure 5:2 presents a chronology of the British Romantics and some of their contemporaries.

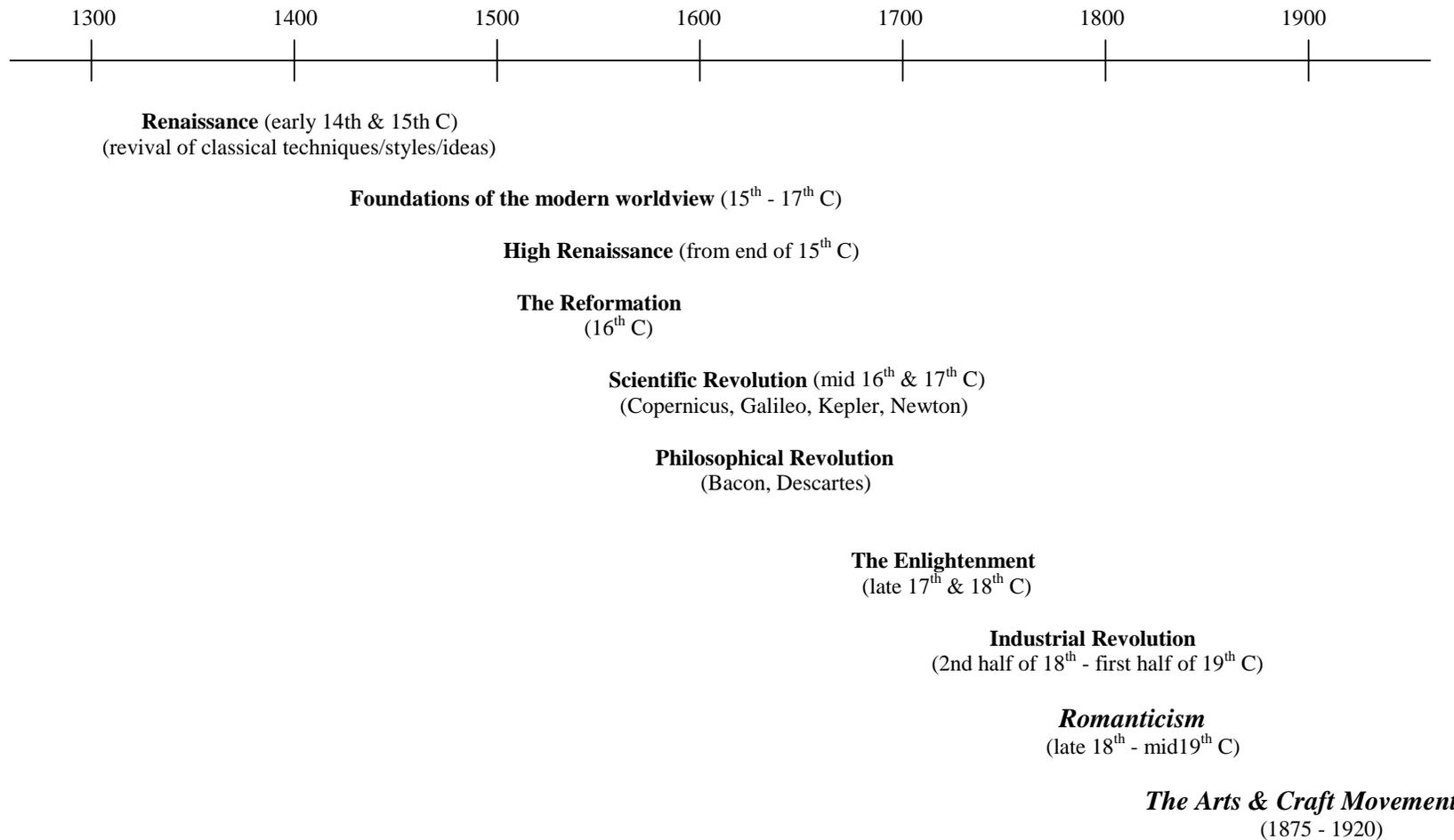


Figure 5:3 A Chronology of Western Philosophy with the Inclusion of Romanticism and the Arts & Crafts Movement.

Historical Context of Romanticism

Having introduced the Romantics, it is time to address the historical context of the intellectual movement they founded. As discussed in chapter four and illustrated in Figure 5:3, Western societies of the late eighteenth to mid-nineteenth centuries had been profoundly influenced by the scientific and philosophical revolutions of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. As well as giving rise to empiricism and rationalism, the Enlightenment had contributed to a questioning of religious dogma and superstition that undermined the influence of the Church. What followed was an unprecedented religious tolerance, although the principal religious belief systems in Britain during the eighteenth century remained essentially Protestant. According to Campbell (1987), a sociologist who has extensively researched the cultural history of modern consumerism, Protestant belief systems gave rise to a religious tradition that on the whole “did not look with favour upon the pursuit of pleasure” (p. 101). Maintaining strict self-control, in all circumstances, was a central tenet. Based on an assumption of man’s fundamental depravity, such control was considered necessary to counter the threat of raw and irrational instincts that might surface as impulsive responses, spontaneous enjoyment or an awakening of pride and covetousness. Pastimes such as attending the theatre, writing poetry and reading novels were deemed to be frivolous and wanton, and to contravene God’s will. Instead, the ideal of human behaviour was sober utility, strict outward control of emotional expression and recreations that might serve a useful purpose.

Against this background of behavioural expectations, the social context of the British Romantics was profoundly shaped by the Industrial Revolution which, in Britain, spanned the second half of the eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth century. A visible outcome of industrialisation was a rapid expansion of factories, coal and steel mines, and the canal and railway systems. Perhaps less obvious, at least initially, was the mechanistic view many British industrialists had of industrial labourers, and the extremely harsh working conditions they were forced to endure. To compound these problems, the massive population shift from agricultural to industrial settings had caused massive overcrowding, which has been linked to the major cholera epidemics that

swept across Europe and Britain in 1830-31 and 1848. The famines caused by the failure of the potato crop in Ireland in 1821, and again in 1845 were a further significant threat to human well-being.

As well as the plight of workers and the poor, two other important human rights issues were contested at this time. One was slavery, which was finally abolished throughout the British Empire in 1836. The other rising issue was women's rights within society. In a significant challenge to male supremacy, Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-97) published her groundbreaking book, *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792), which championed their educational rights. Fertility control was another aspect of women's rights that was contested at this time. This issue drew in some notable figures, including John Stuart Mill (1806-1873), an English philosopher renowned for his defence of empiricism (*System of Logic*, 1843), moral argument for the importance of individuality (*On Liberty*, 1859), and linking of utilitarianism and justice (*Utilitarianism*, 1859). Mill was arrested for disseminating birth control information in 1824. Florence Nightingale's (1820-1910) rejection of the extremely limited occupational roles assigned to upper class women grew out of the same demand that women be acknowledged as self determining and deserving of the same rights as men.

On the world stage, war featured large. The War of American Independence (1775-1783) ousted British control of the United States of America, and set the scene for the westward expansion of settlement across the North American continent that began in 1815. In France, the Bourbon monarchy was overthrown in the French Revolution (1789-99). Napoleon's rise to military leadership and successes on the battle field led in quick succession to his investiture as Emperor in 1804, the Battle of Trafalgar in 1805, his abdication in 1814 and defeat at the Battle of Waterloo in 1815. There were abortive uprisings in Portugal, Sicily, Germany and Spain in 1820. In 1853, the Crimean Wars broke out. Over this period, the English, French and Dutch were all trading extensively in Asia, and extending their network of colonies. This activity contributed to the conflicts of the times, with the first Opium War beginning in China in 1839. In New Zealand, despite

or perhaps because of the Treaty signed between Maori and British settlers in 1840, the Land Wars broke out in 1860 and continued till 1872.

As this overview of world events illustrates, the Romantic Movement emerged and prospered amidst major challenges to health and well-being. The Romantics' was a time when human rights to intellectual and religious freedom, political and biological self-determination, and universal access to adequate physical and economic sustenance were strongly contested. Resistance to the profound social and economic changes that accompanied the Industrial Revolution included the Luddite riots against machines in 1811. As well, social activists challenged the inadequacies of contemporary employment, educational, property and welfare legislation. Their activities culminated in the 1833 British Factory Act, which regulated child labour, the 1834 British Poor Law Amendment Act, which made better provision for the destitute and the 1847 Factory Act, which mandated a maximum 10-hour workday. There was also philosophical resistance to industrialism, which is perhaps best illustrated by Marx's well-known critique of capitalist economies. Focusing at a structural level, Marx and Engel predicted that class conflict between the bourgeoisie, who control the means of production, and the proletariat, who are subjected to dehumanising work and insufficiently rewarded for their labour, was inevitable.

Each of these responses to the issues of the day was deeply humanistic, fuelled by a belief in the implicit value and dignity of human life. So too was the Romantics' challenge to prevailing ways of thinking and being, but where others sought to change the system, the Romantics sought to change themselves. They developed an individualistic vision of freedom whose key features were the pursuit of creative genius and the cultivation of one's feelings. Their philosophy of living is perhaps best understood as a response to the prevailing philosophies of their times, and it is these competing philosophical viewpoints that are the focus of the next section of discussion.

Romanticism as a Philosophical Movement

According to John Stuart Mill, Romanticism arose in Britain, France and Germany in reaction to what he termed ‘the narrowness of the eighteenth century’. This narrowness typified both the ways people thought and their ways of being. The intellectual climate, as described in chapter four, was dominated by rational and empirical thinking of Bacon, Descartes, Sir Isaac Newton and the like. Their positivist approaches had steadily gained ground during the sixteenth, seventeen and early eighteenth centuries so that by the late eighteenth century the ideal of objective scientific method untainted by human biases held sway. Furthermore, as a result of the Industrial Revolution in Britain, the mechanistic worldview of the physical sciences had spread to economic and political theory. For that reason, it was commonly understood that mechanical laws governed both the physical world and the affairs of men.

At the same time, as previously described, both European and British societies were highly influenced by Protestant understandings of how to be and how to act, in order to avoid the threat of eternal damnation (Campbell, 1987). The various Protestant religions asserted, to differing degrees, that the pursuit of pleasure for its own sake was unacceptable. Furthermore adults were expected to keep strict control over outward emotional displays. At its extreme, Weber (1930) described the Calvinist ideal of not expressing one’s emotions even at the funeral of a family member.

Romanticism was, as Mill’s critique suggests, a reaction against the prevailing current of Enlightenment thinking and the Protestant ideal of self-control. In their place, the Romantics espoused ‘imagination’, meaning a participatory and engaged consciousness that could lead to original inspirations and daring new perceptions (Spretnak, 1997). They also valued emotionality, which directly contravened established behavioural codes. While the overall tenor of Romanticism can be described, however, this does not imply that the Romantics coalesced into a unified movement. Rather, they were a disparate group of individuals whose philosophical, political, literary and artistic endeavours blossomed within a brief period of human history. As individuals, they developed

alternate and, sometimes, contradictory explanations of life and society, just as the leading figures in scientific thinking disagreed in some respects (Saiedi, 1993).

The diversity within Romanticism is not surprising, given that it developed simultaneously but separately in three different countries with quite distinct political climates. Consequently, while it was already established in Germany and continued to be a dominant school of thought there, French Romanticism arose largely as a reaction against the ideals of the French revolution (Saiedi, 1993). In contrast, the early British Romantics, particularly William Blake, Samuel Taylor Coleridge and William Wordsworth, were initially excited and inspired by the radical social change that seemed imminent at the beginning of the French Revolution. As well as presenting differently in different places, Romanticism changed over time. The so-called second wave of British Romantics, personified by Byron, Shelley and Keats, retained the youthful, radical and unconventional flavour of earlier British Romantics. The later softening into sentimentalism and nostalgic longing for medieval times, which typifies late nineteenth century British Romanticism, is associated with writers such as Sir Walter Scott, John Ruskin and Charles Dickens (Kinna, 2000).

Despite these variations, Romanticism can be considered to be a general cultural movement, a new way of feeling that represented a shift in Western consciousness. To the extent that the Romantics shared some common perspectives and concerns, they are considered as a collective within this discussion. They have, as Wellek (1962) put it, a 'family likeness' in their orientation towards symbolism, imagination, and nature; and away from rules, tradition, conformity and uniformity (Gouldner, 1973).

Romantic Thought

In rejecting the accepted view of the world as an orderly system governed by discernable rules, the Romantics challenged the very essence of rationalism. In particular, they considered the scientific method to be utterly inappropriate to achieving an understanding of human motivations, subjective experience and socio-historical realities. Even more

critical, from the perspective of the Romantics, were the restrictions rationality imposed on the expression of human emotions.

Against the dominant metaphor of a machine-like universe, in which nature and humankind were characterised by uniformity and governed by universal laws, the guiding metaphor of the Romantics was nature as a living organism. Thus where rationalists perceived the machinery of the universe grinding on, without regard for human sentiment, the Romantics assumed that nature was at heart benign, a source of inspiration and comfort:

Nature never did betray
The heart that loved her; 'tis her privilege,
Through all the years of this our life, to lead
From joy to joy: for she can so inform
The mind that is within us, so impress
With quietness and beauty, and so feed
With lofty thoughts ...

... that all which we behold
Is full of blessings.

(Wordsworth, Tintern Abbey, 1798/1911, p. 207, lines 122-
8, 133-4)

Furthermore, rather than attempting to dominate and control nature, which was the rationalist vision, the Romantics viewed human life as embedded in and part of nature. Therefore they saw their role, in part, as helping people to realise this. Wordsworth, for example, asserted that:

... a great Poet ... ought to a certain degree to rectify men's feelings, to give them new compositions of feeling, to render their feelings more pure sane and permanent, in short, more consonant to nature ... and the great moving spirit of things. He ought to travel before men occasionally as well as at their sides. (1802/1967, p. 355)

To the Romantics, nature connoted growth, emergence, history, uniqueness, activity and freedom, as well as the contradictory notion of the functional interrelationship and interdependence of all things. This organic vision demands an understanding of diversity,

individuality, change and human imagination. In a world no longer amenable to scientific method alone, the Romantics in Saiedi's terms "defended the legitimacy and validity" of generating knowledge based on tradition, revelation and other non-rationalist methodologies (1993, p. 153). Relevant here is the way this perspective informed the Romantics' orientation towards being in the world, the nature of the world itself, and how humans might live, because these are the elements of knowing oneself and relating to objects. Accordingly, these are the topics that are now addressed. For a schematic overview, see Figure 5:4.

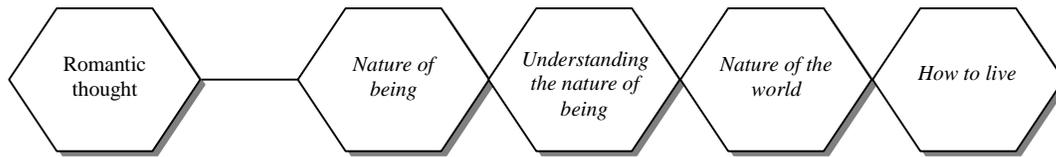


Figure 5.4 Subtopics: Romantic Thought.

The Nature of Being

Consistent with their organic view of nature, the Romantics perceived people as playful, creative, inspired and unpredictable beings who are in charge of their destiny and their world. This view of human unruliness, at heart, was perhaps not too different from the Protestant belief that people were full of natural desires, feelings, instincts and spontaneous impulses. But where Protestants saw human impulsivity and irrationality as something to be brought under strict moral control, lest it pave the way to depravity, the Romantics celebrated and sought to enhance it. In this, they had taken up Rousseau's belief that people are inherently good, rather than the Christian assumption of humans being tainted by original sin and needing a high level of social pressure to curb their thoughts and impulses (Campbell, 1987).

Like Protestants, the Romantics were acutely aware that people are shaped by the norms, values, practices and traditions of their culture (Saiedi, 1993). This insight was hardly new. What was new was the Romantics' interpretation of the outcome of this process of socialisation. Consequently, they railed against the bondage of the conventions of their

time and the contrivances of social etiquette, which they perceived as contradicting or at least limiting individuals' capacity to construct their own world and subjectivity. For example, where the prevailing expectation was that people should comply with the directives of higher authorities, Shelley declared

obedience,
Bane of all genius, virtue, freedom, truth,
Makes slaves of men, and, of the human frame,
A mechanized automaton.
(1813/1990, *Queen Mab*, III, lines 177-80)

Further, unlike the Protestants, the Romantics perceived children's playfulness and creativity as natural assets requiring protection and nurturance. Accordingly, instead of demanding obedience, which would make them servile, the Romantics saw virtue in allowing children to express their unique nature. In his poem *Characteristics of a Child Three Years Old* (1815/1911), for example, Wordsworth seems to revel in his daughter Catherine's untamed spirit:

LOVING she is, and tractable, through wild;
And innocence hath privilege in her
To dignify arch looks and laughing eyes;
And feats of cunning; and the pretty round
Of trespasses ...
(p. 80, lines 1-5)

This sense of valuing children's unspoiled innocence, so that each would fully develop his or her potential, is a repeating theme in Wordsworth's poetry. To avoid dampening or extinguishing children's energy and creativity, the Romantics idealised nature rather than adult society as both a venue and source of essential learning. Nature is invoked as a font of imagination and nature's beauty through the changing seasons is declared to elicit thought and feeling, and strengthen the human soul. This is brought about through an appreciation of nature's glories, not the "vulgar works of man" (Wordsworth, 1809/1911, p. 89, line 8). The Romantics also presumed that children's openness to experience and

their instinctual appreciation of nature would affirm their passion for living while teaching them discipline.

The Romantics' particular interpretation of human being in the world was fuelled by an intense self-awareness and introspective focus on the complexities of the human self (Tarnas, 1996). The roots of this perspective lie in Enlightenment notions of moral, emotional and aesthetic sensibilities, which in the Romantics were realised as individualism, novelty, fantasy, spontaneity and celebration of the irrational (Nenadic, 1999). While pursuing the Romantic vision might lead to fulfilment and joy, however, it could equally end in revolt, escape, melancholy, restless anxiety and a deep-seated dissatisfaction with the contemporary world.

The Romantics, then, held that human life was embedded in nature. They perceived humans as inherently playful, creative and spiritual but understood that these assets were fragile, at risk of being quashed by human society. Children, therefore, required protection and nature, rather than adult society, would provide the ideal context for development. The process of exploration however, might equally end in joy or despair. This view of humanity as embedded in, and nurtured by, the natural world led the Romantics to contest prevailing understandings of how human experiences might be investigated and described. This is the subject of the next section.

Understanding the Nature of Being

The Romantics rejected the Enlightenment belief that people, like other aspects of the natural world, exhibit predictable patterns of behaviour. Accordingly, they contested the very notion that positivist scientific methods could elucidate the nature of being. From their perspective, the complex aspects and interrelationships of human experience defied scientific laws. Neither did they accept the notion that humans act rationally in order to efficiently secure their best interests. From a Romantic perspective, this viewpoint cast men as no more than machines who might be judged from a set of standard criteria. To the Romantics, this suggestion was a denial of human autonomy, creativity and freedom, a portrayal of individual's and culture's inherent uniqueness (Saiedi, 1993) and diversity

as pathological. Further, as both Weber (1864–1920) and Foucault later noted, the rationalisation of human beings and society promoted by Enlightenment thinking makes domination just as possible as efficiency, by enabling calculated, systematic, and impersonal control of individual's desires and the economy (Foucault, 1977; Weber, 1922).

This clash between Enlightenment beliefs and Romantic visions was, in part, due to the Romantics' focus on the special qualities of each person, rather than the consistencies and normative patterns in human nature and behaviour perceived by empirical scientists. The Romantics also held that rational and utilitarian considerations could never explain the contradictions implicit in the human situation, or the tension between "the human quest for the infinite and the limitations nature places on human possibility" (Saiedi, 1993, p. 61). Attempting to do so, from their perspective, was to falsely privilege cognition over other human faculties, to deny that human life is embedded in the natural world, and to rob human existence of its spiritual dignity (Spretnak, 1997). As well, they considered some things beyond conscious knowledge, such as the powerful union of souls experienced by people in love and the unseen, perhaps sacred forces that dwell within each person and give life meaning (Gergen, 1991). The Romantics' perspective was perhaps best captured by Keats, whose poem *Lamia* contains the lines:

Do not all charms fly
At the mere touch of cold philosophy?

As well as human subjectivity, unfettered rationality would make the natural world a sterile and uninspiring place. The poem continues:

Philosophy will clip an Angel's wings,
Conquer all mysteries by rule and line,
Empty the haunted air, and gnomed mine –
Unweave a rainbow ...

(1820/1970, p. 41)

The Romantics' insistence on privileging human subjectivity and the mysteries of the natural world does not, however, imply that they opposed science or rational thought. Rather, Romanticism acknowledges the importance of rational and utilitarian considerations, whilst simultaneously insisting that irrationality, the unconscious, moral and aesthetic influences, and the historical nature of human life also influence individual and social action. Indeed, recognising the culturally mediated disharmony and tension between the rational and the Romantic epitomises the Romantic outlook (Saiedi, 1993). Accordingly, the Romantics looked forward to a coming together of reason and passion as natural allies and some deemed this alliance imperative, if reason was to fulfil its promise of improving the human condition. For example Schelling (1775-1854), a German philosopher, proclaimed that:

I am convinced that the highest act of Reason, the one through which it encompasses all Ideas, is an aesthetic act, and that truth and goodness only become sisters in beauty – the philosopher must possess just as much aesthetic power as the poet. (1796/1972, p. 429)⁶

Shelley, from his more radical perspective, also postulated a utopian union of body and mind, of 'soul' and 'sense', but believed that this would only be possible once the repressive constraints of society were broken. In his philosophical poem *Queen Mab*, (1813/1990), Shelley envisioned a time when:

Reason was free; and wild though passion went
Through tangled glens and wood-embosomed meads,
Gathering a garland of the strangest flowers,
Yet like the bee returning to her queen,
She bound the sweetest on her sister's brow,
Who meek and sober kissed the sportive child,
No longer trembling at the broken rod.

(1813/1990, IX, lines 50-56)

⁶ The original document is in Hegel's handwriting, but is usually attributed to Schelling.

As Duff (1994) explained, Shelley's 'meek and sober' sister represents reason, and the exuberant child, passion. The 'broken rod' is the overthrown social conventions of the times, which Shelley and other Romantics experienced as a repressive orthodox morality.

The Romantics were not alone in envisioning a better life, nor in assuming that this would require radical change in the existing social order. Indeed, at much the same time that *Queen Mab* appeared, Robert Owen developed his utopian vision of a world in which infants would be educated "to become full-formed men or women, having every portion of their nature duly cultivated and regularly exercised" (Owen, 1836/1993, p. 156). What Owen seems to suggest, is a greater balance of the rational and the emotional than was the norm at that time. Although Owen did not presume such a radical dissolution of social conventions as Shelley, his vision of cultivating well-rounded individuals was in concert with the Romantics. This concurrence in their visions is important to occupational therapists because, as Wilcock (2002a) identified in the first volume of her history, *Occupation for Health*, Owen's utopian experiments informed the vision of this fledgling profession through his links with Octavia Hill and Dr Elizabeth Casson, one of the founders of the profession in Britain.

Despite the evident similarities between the utopian visions proposed by the Romantics and others, their insistence on coupling rational ways of investigating the nature of human life with subjective, introspective understandings seems to have been unique. Equally, their perspective on the natural world and how we might understand it was dramatically different to Enlightenment thinkers. It is to these differences that the discussion now turns.

The Nature of the World

As Saiedi (1993) put it, "while the Enlightenment objectified human subjects, Romanticism subjectified the world" (p. 68). Everything was thought to be living and spiritual; full of paradox, mystery and contradiction. Even physical objects were viewed as embodying feelings, spirit and human consciousness. Keats' (1818/1907) *Sonnet to Ailsa Rock*, which was published posthumously, is just one example of addressing an

inanimate object as though it were sentient. Here a rocky prominence is given voice, body and sleep, as well as experience beyond human understanding:

HEARKEN, thou craggy ocean pyramid!
Give answer from thy voice, the sea-fowl screams!
When were thy shoulders mantled in huge streams?
When, from the sun, was thy broad forehead hid?
How long is't since the mighty power bid
Thee heave to airy sleep from fathom dreams?
Sleep in the lap of thunder or sunbeams,
Or when grey clouds are thy cold coverlid.
Thou answer'st not; for thou art dead asleep;
Thy life is but two dead eternities –
The last in air, the former in the deep;
First with the whales, last with the eagle-skies –
Drown'd wast thou till an earthquake made thee steep,
And cannot wake thy giant size.
(p. 325)

As Saiedi notes, perhaps ironically, this subjectification is indeed “a romanticization of the world” (p. 157). From their organic perspective, the Romantics accorded nature the power to awaken us to the “possibilities of human life in nature” (Eldridge, 2001, p. 4), or as Wordsworth put it, to “arouse the sensual from their sleep / Of death” (1802, Prospectus to *The Recluse*, lines 813-814). Furthermore, the Romantics considered this renewal of meaningfulness in living to be “within any man’s power to accomplish, as he is here and now” (Abrams, 1963, p. 27).

Alongside the scientific quest to understand nature as a single objective reality governed by universal processes, the Romantics revelled in the notion of multiple realities, and in the complex uniqueness of each object, event and experience. They also gave credence to the personal, emphasising the subjective and always revisable experience of physical surroundings that were highly contextualised and highly temporalised (Eldridge, 1994). Wordsworth’s well-known poem about daffodils, which speaks of a moment when his experience suddenly altered, is one example.

I WANDERED lonely as a cloud

That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden daffodils; ...

A poet could not but be gay,
In such a jocund company:
I gazed—and gazed—but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought:

For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.

(1807/1911, p. 187, lines 1-4, 15-24)

This is a personal tale of nature's power to revive and comfort people. The daffodils inspired immediate wonder, changing Wordsworth's mood from lonely to happy, and left a joyful memory that provided a lasting source of pleasure.

As well as being informed by the poetic, the Romantics' subjectivism was informed by intuitive, revelational, historical, artistic and enthusiastic approaches to knowledge. Rather than starting with abstract principles, they believed knowledge stemmed from human consciousness, embedded in the human situation. In addition to this subjectivist view, the Romantics had a transcendental orientation to the world, human occupation, and in particular to art that encompassed the irrational and the visionary (Pioch, 1995). This perspective contrasted sharply with classical scholars who had espoused a vision of art in which meanings were completely revealed and expressed. From their subjectivist stance, whereby meaning resided in the individual, the Romantics could not accept this ideal. For them, everything was metaphorical; meanings were symbolic and not revealed simply by examining the empirical and observable features of art or human actions. This tension is illustrated, to a small degree, by the following verse from Samuel Taylor Coleridge:

Come, come thou bleak December wind,

And blow the dry Leaves from the tree!
Flash, like a love-thought, thro' me, Death!
And take a life, that wearies me.
(1806/1912, p. 1001)

Here, the chilly winds of winter are invoked to give a sense of despair, and to provide context to the poet's assertion that he would welcome death. Winter, however, suggests spring, when the weary days of winter will lighten and life will be reborn. Whether the poet hopes that his life will be taken, or expects some kind of rebirth is open to interpretation. Readers must determine, for themselves, which meaning is more likely.

The metaphoric meanings, such as Coleridge's winter wind, that the Romantics employed could render the vulgar noble, the commonplace mysterious, the known unknown, and make the finite seem infinite (Saiedi, 1993). As Friedrich Hardenberg (1772–1801), writing under the pseudonym Novalis, explained “the feeling for poetry has much in common with the feeling for mysticism. It is the feeling for the particular, the personal, the unknown, the arcane, the revelatory It portrays the unportrayable. It sees the invisible, senses the impalpable” (1798/1996b, p. 85). Transcendent meanings such as these exist beyond the present, hovering “between recollection and hope” (Schlegel, 1798/1996, p. 117). Such meanings might be cultural, nationalistic, religious, universal or the artist's creative genius. Through expressing or interpreting the metaphorical, The Romantics believed that individuals form themselves, their values and their desires, and construct their world. Further, in rejecting the notion that meanings could be made perfectly evident, the Romantics rejected the Enlightenment notion of a universal aesthetic; that is, that universal criteria could be discovered to determine the nature of beauty. Wordsworth, for example, argued in his unfinished essay *The Sublime and the Beautiful*, written perhaps in 1811-1812 and likely revised between 1820 and 1823, that:

The true province of the philosopher is not to grope around in the external world &, when he has perceived or detected in an object such and such a quality or power, to set himself the task of persuading the world that such is a sublime or beautiful object, but to look inside his own mind & determine the law by which he is affected. ... To talk of an object as being

sublime or beautiful in itself, without reference to some subject by whom that sublimity or beauty is perceived, is absurd. (1820-3/1974, p. 357)

The Romantics, then, lived in a mysterious and contradictory world that had the power to awaken us to the possibilities of human living. Within this world, human experience was contextualised in a particular time and place, yet was highly symbolic. Experienced meanings were subjective and might change from moment to moment. Furthermore, meanings might vary according to the perspective taken and were always open to revision. Although some things were beyond human understanding, the meaning of others might be achieved through reason, but might equally be intuitive, revelational or revealed through history, poetry or art. How then might we live in such a world?

How to Live

In contrast to the reasoned approach to living that typifies rationalism, the Romantic vision exalted the spontaneous and “affirmed the inexhaustible drama of human life” (Tarnas, 1996, p. 367). This drama had emotional, intellectual and social manifestations (Pioch, 1995), celebrating imaginative and spiritual aspirations, personal perspectives, and individual variation. It was a drama that emphasised passion, rather than mere sentiment, which Campbell (1987) likened to the evangelical Protestant traditions of that time. As well as being, at times, reasoned and deliberate, the Romantics just as readily characterised human actions as deriving from genius, madness, inspiration, poetic creativity, or possession. What these have in common is an acknowledgement of the irrational, unconscious, transcendental and social determinants of human behaviour (Saiedi, 1993). To critics who favoured rational explanation and calm reason, however, basing insights and behaviour in madness or the poetic appeared unrealistic and impractical.

Notwithstanding such critique, the Romantics located their vision of an authentic approach to living in two seemingly different contexts. The first, in clear contrast to both high society and industrial labour, was their yearning for and idealisation of a simple rural lifestyle. Here, they imagined, families lived in cosy self-sufficiency, producing the

necessary means of survival with their own hands. A glimpse of this idyllic vision is provided in Wordsworth's description of a family engaged in their cottage industry:

His wife sate near him, teasing matted wool,
While, from the twin cards tooth'd with glittering wire,
He fed the spindle of his youngest child,
Who turn'd her large round wheel in the open air
With back and forward steps.

(The Brothers, a Pastoral Poem, 1800/1963, lines 21-25)

Describing their actions and tools of trade in a detail that suggests familiarity, Wordsworth presented this small family as an economic unit, complete in itself. Their close physical proximity, collaborative effort and healthy outdoor living paint a picture of creative labour sustaining the family structure. For the Romantics, escaping to an idyllic lifestyle in the countryside was more than an idle dream. Various of the English Romantics, Samuel Taylor Coleridge and William Wordsworth included, did in fact live relatively self-sufficient life styles in a rural setting, at least for periods of their lives.

The second, and sharply contrasting, aspect of the Romantics' vision of how to live was their propensity to seek new and extreme experiences. This was the drama of novelty - new people and places, new sensations and new cultures - the remote, the mysterious and mystical, the weird, even the monstrous (Gaarder, 1995; Pioch, 1995). Having experienced such extremes, however, the Romantics were at times left feeling there was nothing left to live for:

... I have experienced
The worst, the World can wreak on me; the worst
That can make Life indifferent, yet disturb
With whisper'd discontents the dying prayer.
I have beheld the whole of all, wherein
My Heart had any interest in this Life,
To be disrent and torn off my Hopes,
That nothing now is left. Why then live?

(S. T. Coleridge, 1810/1973, 3796)

In this respect the Romantic drama is, perhaps, antithetical to what might be perceived as the organised and dully repetitive routines of middle class life. When viewed from a twentieth century perspective, this hunger for novelty has been implicated as giving rise to the perpetual longing and generalised dissatisfaction that are defining characteristics of modernism (Campbell, 1987; Nenadic, 1999).

The Romantics' purpose in seeking to experience more and more was essentially introspective: a cultivation and exploration of feelings such as awe, melancholy, peacefulness or dread that are awakened and intensified by nature and that reflect all that is noble and uplifting, but also dark and irrational in the human soul (Taylor, 1989). Through their diverse experiences, the Romantics sought to discern their own moods and motives, fears and desires, and dreams. Their inner conflicts were also keenly experienced, as Shelley portrayed in a scene where the protagonist's conscience awakens him from a drunken stupor:

his fevered brain
Reels giddily awhile: but ah! too soon
The slumber of intemperance subsides,
And conscience, that undying serpent, calls
Her venomous brood to their nocturnal task.
(*Queen Mab*, 1813/1990, III, lines 58-62)

In short, the Romantics' goal was to experience both the heights of ecstasy and the depths of the human soul, and through fully experiencing their emotions to seek truth that would be "inwardly transfiguring and sublime" (Tarnas, 1996, p. 367). Judged from the perspective of Bacon's empirical scientific method, however, the Romantic notion of increasing wisdom by reflecting on experience, and one's emotional responses to those experiences, appeared absurd. Nineteenth century critics of the Romantics' subjectivism decried it as nothing but indolence and confusion. Furthermore, alongside Protestant conventions of decent self-control, the Romantics' open expression of emotion brought them censure for throwing off all limitations on human thought and actions (Eldridge,

2001). This was especially the case when conspicuous emotional expression overtook the need to act.

In summary, the Romantics can be described as living life with passion, celebrating humanity's imaginative and spiritual aspirations, and their own individualism and personal perspectives. While at times reasoned and deliberate, at other times they called on creativity, genius, and madness. As an intellectual movement, they seeded an expectation that living one's emotions fully and experiencing the extremes of the human soul would lead to self-understanding. This was an introspective goal, which the Romantics counted as wisdom. Against a backdrop of rising awareness of the evils of slavery and industrial labour, however, their quest for self-knowledge might seem self-indulgent. They have been accused by many of melodramatic sentimentality (Campbell, 1987), and "wallowing in the personal" (Eldridge, 2001, p. 5). In a more sympathetic appraisal, however, Williams (1962) noted that the Romantic poets in particular were more involved in social critique and political activities than any other generation of creative writers.⁷

Despite the critique, Romanticism remains influential in Western philosophical thought. This persistence, Eldridge (2001) suggests, is because Romantic thought captures the contradictions "inherent in the possession of human powers of remembering, envisaging, and partial responsiveness to the force of reasons" (p. 11) and the precariousness of choosing between alternatives, resolving conflicts and contradictions, or reaching towards human ideals such as justice, morality or freedom. Or perhaps, as Campbell (1987) suggested, Romanticism has endured because it addresses the strain Western people experience "between dream and reality, pleasure and utility" (p. 227).

⁷ A brief discussion of activist responses, focusing on Byron and Shelley in the early 1800s, may be found in Appendix 8.

Romantic Identities

Having explored in some depth the Romantics' perspective of the nature of human life, the world, and how we might live, it is time to turn our attention to issues of identity. The interlocking facets of the Romantic identity are also explored in some depth because it is only by understanding its complexities that we can meaningfully consider how a Romantic identity might be created through fashioning, having and using objects. As identified in Figure 5:5, three key aspects of the Romantic identity will be considered – individualism, values and emotionality. The process of developing a Romantic identity is also addressed.

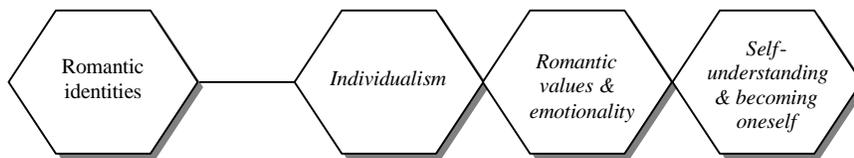


Figure 5:5 Facets of Romantic Identities.

Individualism

Romanticism, continuing in the tradition of the Enlightenment, affirmed individualism (Nenadic, 1999) yet cast it in a new light so that identity took on new proportions. Consistent with their emphasis on the importance of the particular, the Romantics insisted that all individuals are incomparable. From this perspective, where each individual was held to be a “revelation of the possibilities inherent in the human species” (Spretnak, 1997, p. 139) and their actions and emotions an expression of their character, identity was conceived as being qualitatively unique. This emphasis on individuality is commonly identified as the hallmark of Romanticism (Saiedi, 1993), and the notion of the individuated and creative originality of each person is its essence. This creative individual, rather than rationally examining the facts and acting on the basis of reason, was guided by moral feelings and an instinctive nurturing of others inspired by honour for the intrinsic, almost sacred value of each individual.

As Taylor (1989) observed, noting individual difference was not the exclusive preserve of the Romantics. What was new was their idea that this might make a difference to how people should live. From the perspective of the Romantics, not only does each of us have an individual life path, we also have an obligation to live up to our originality. The Romantics considered realising and expressing our unique identity to be an essential element of human existence, and central to Romantic notions of love. Accordingly, it is one's individuality that is loved, not one's actions. Not being unique would render one not uniquely lovable.

As part of valuing the uniqueness of each person, the Romantics were also keenly tuned to social diversity, which they understood to be, in part, apparent in people's cultural identity and national customs (Spretnak, 1997). Herder (1744-1803) in particular promoted the idea of national identities with characteristic ways of thinking, feeling and being, and held that all nations have the right and duty to nurture that identity (Herder, 1784-91/1968).

Romantic Values and Emotionality

Another central aspect of the Romantic identity was, as Hegel's (1905) analysis of Romantic art revealed, that it incorporated the same Romantic values of love, chivalry, fidelity and honour that are associated with the medieval knights. These values are readily discerned in Romantic poetry, and they set the tenor of the Romantics' emotionality. In particular, love, which was experienced as an intense union with an equal spirit, was viewed as giving rise to spontaneous joys and immense suffering. Samuel Taylor Coleridge's infatuation with Sara Hutchison spawned both, as the following excerpts illustrate. The first is a pure expression of being uplifted by feelings of love:

You lie in all my many thoughts like Light,
Like the fair light of Dawn, or summer Eve,
On rippling stream, or cloud-reflecting lake;
And looking to the Heaven that bends above you,

How oft! I bless the lot that made me love you.
(E. H. Coleridge, 1806/1912, p. 1002)

The second, written at a time when Sara lived in the Coleridges' home but steadfastly rejected his advances, is more tortured:

Two wedded hearts, if e'er were such,
Imprison'd in adjoining cells,
Across whose thin partition-wall
The builder left one narrow rent,
And where, most content in discontent,
A joy with itself at strife –
Die into an intenser life.
(E. H. Coleridge, 1806/1912, p. 1003)

As well as love, the Romantics were inspired by fidelity, or a sense of union with someone perceived as not one's equal, which no doubt inspired the feelings of strong personal loyalty that Gergen (1991) also identified. Any or all of the Romantics' chivalric values might account for their love of tragic struggles and acts of great heroism. In contrast, living an existence devoid of such emotional extremes might account for the deep-seated yearning for a sense of belonging that the Romantics also, at times, endured (Larmore, 1996).

Driven by their values, and in contrast to the calm and reasonable persona of rational identities, the Romantics were highly tuned to their feelings. The Romantic identity was given licence to be emotionally expressive and spontaneous in the belief that by expressing their feelings they would more keenly experience their true sentiments, and thus come to know themselves. Emotionality, then, was an expression of one's inner core, a self-articulation of one's unique individuality (Taylor, 1989).

Perhaps the best-known example of Romantic emotionalism is George Byron who has been described as moody, rebellious, wilful and passionate (Gaarder, 1995), but likely seemed immature, ill-informed and lacking self-discipline to critics of Romanticism. No

doubt this perception added to the view that Romantic emotionalism was a denial of reality. Byron's poetry, for example, has been described as

an escapist gesture of a special sort: not into the future, or into art, but into the flux of everything which is most immediate, a flight into the surfaces of poetry and life, the dance of verse, the high energy of instant sensations and feelings. (McGann, 1983, p. 127)

What this critique makes apparent is the Romantics' subjectivity, responsiveness and emphasis on attending to the particular, which meant living in the moment and being attentive to the ordinary desires and fulfillments of everyday life. It meant, in short, "the recovery of *the magic of everyday life*" (Larmore, 1996, p. 10, emphasis original) as much as it meant experiencing intense love and the tragedies inherent in human destiny. This perspective legitimates the Romantics' attempts to be keenly attuned to their circumstances in order to divine their feelings, for these would reveal what was significant and point the way to the ultimate happiness of being entirely oneself. This, for the Romantics, was the essence of human freedom, and its purest expression was poetic creativity (Saiedi, 1993).

As noted previously, however, such a vision of personal expressiveness stood in stark contrast to the Protestant sensibilities and Victorian morality. Accordingly, some asserted that Romanticism was "intended only for women and men in their unmasculine moods" (Eldridge, 2001, p. 6). Such critiques have endured alongside Romanticism itself. Also enduring is the Romantic notion that artistic genius is the form of self-expression most worthy of recognition and celebration. For the Romantics, genius represented the presence of the divine, of being possessed by transcendental forces. Precisely because genius was cast as a form of divinity, the creative process of the genius was deemed to be incomprehensible even to the genius him or herself, and as previously discussed, the products of artists' creativity were assumed to have meanings that transcended those intended by the creator (Saiedi, 1993).

Self-Understanding and Becoming Oneself

While genius was deemed unexplainable, the Romantics expected to be able to come to understand themselves. Clearly, this understanding would not arise from disengaged observation or calculating reason, such as the rationalists might envisage. It was, instead, self-discovery governed by personal impulses and unconscious instincts, and enlightened by sentiments and insights. It was an uncovering of the capacities and purposes within themselves. The Romantic self they came to know, however, was not characterised by the coherence and consistency of rational identities. Rather, the Romantics experienced themselves as contradictory, changeable and conflicted. Wordsworth's poem *Prelude*, completed in 1805 but not published until 1850, for example, "turn(s) on the theme of hope and joy and the temptation to abandon all hope and fall into dejection and despair" (Abrams, 1963, p. 55), which was an archetypal plot of Romantic poetry (Eldridge, 2001).

The Romantic focus on discovering the self (Tarnas, 1996) suggests a sense of self as changing over time in response to subjective experiences, intuitive understandings, and spiritual revelations. The notion that one's self may change over time is not peculiar to the Romantics. The bible, for example, is replete with examples of people who were radically changed by their encounters with God's word, actions or messengers. Neither is the notion that the self is multifaceted and contradictory. Burkitt's (c. 1703) translation of Mark xii 34 as "every man may, yea, ought to love himself: not his sinful self, but his natural self: especially his spiritual self, the new nature in him" (Oxford English Dictionary, 1986), for example, predates the Romantics by almost a century. The new element that the Romantics brought to the notion of transformation of the self was that the true source or stimulus for the change, as well as the key to understanding oneself was to be found within, in the form of an impulse, intuition or authentic inner voice of one's feelings. What gave this voice its truth was the harmony or resonance between humans and the natural world, which was "often conceived as a providential order" (Taylor, 1989, p. 369).

Because emotions were an essential vehicle to self-understanding, the Romantics identified the need to cultivate theirs (Barker-Benfield, 1992). They sought to achieve this by being in tune with nature; being curious, receptive and responsive to the outside world and attuned to their fleeting perceptions of life (Spretnak, 1997). It was this sense of being emotionally tuned to experience that the Romantic poets sought to convey. As Wordsworth explained:

I have said that Poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings: it takes its origins from emotion recollected in tranquillity: the emotion is contemplated till by a series of reaction the tranquillity gradually disappears, and an emotion, similar to that which was before the subject of contemplation, is gradually produced, and does itself actually exist in the mind. In this mood successful composition generally begins, and in a mood similar to this it is carried on. (1800/1963, p. 266)

As well as unfolding over time as self-knowledge was achieved, or exploring the boundaries of self through seeking extreme experiences, the Romantics held that one's self could be willed into being through the "heroic self-overcoming of the great individual" (Tarnas, 1996, p. 370). This was a vision of refining, recreating or inventing one's own character, of embracing one's fate, of imagining oneself into being, that rested on the power of creative imagination to be self-transfiguring (Taylor, 1989). Implicitly, the self was never completed and never completely known. Rather one's self, like the world, was experienced as having unceasing ambiguity and ever deepening complexity. However, as Wordsworth suggested, conventional adults may not be able to penetrate this complexity because social conventions and disenchantment with life will have clouded the natural and insightful understanding of reality they had as children. Wordsworth's poem, *We are Seven* (1800/1911), provides one example of adult understandings standing in the way of appreciating the innocent knowledge of youth. The poem reports a conversation between an adult and "a little cottage Girl" who, true to Romantic style, was presented as a child of nature, with a "rustic, woodland air" and "wildly clad". In the course of the poem, a dispute arises about whether the girl's deceased sister and brother should be included amongst her siblings. Against the adult insistence on counting only the five living children, the child reports her reality of them

still being present in her life, their graves side by side only “twelve steps or more from my mother’s door” where she often sat to knit, sew or “sing a song to them”. By the conclusion of the poem, neither has changed their stance, but there is a sense that it is the adult’s view that is limited:

“How many are you, then,” said I,
“If they two are in heaven?”
Quick was the little Maid’s reply,
“O Master! we are seven.”

“But they are dead; those two are dead!
Their spirits are in heaven!”
'Twas throwing words away; for still
The little Maid would have her will,
And said, “Nay, we are seven!”

(p. 84, lines 61-69)

As well as presuming that children have clarity of vision, as this verse illustrates, the Romantics believed that childhood was a time of creative unfolding towards self-discovery. To the German Romantics, in particular, notions of self-discovery and education seem to have been closely linked. Novalis, for example, asserted that “each stage of education begins with childhood. Hence the most educated, worldly person is so akin to the child” (1798/1996a, p. 18). In contrast the British Romantics, who vociferously rejected mainstream social norms and challenged institutionalised power relationships, were more sceptical about the benefits of formal education. This was because, as previously discussed, they expected that they would need to ward off the rationalist restraints imposed by social institutions and norms, as well as the corrupting forces of tradition. From their perspective, unless these forces were resisted individuals’ essence, their ability to feel emotions, would be stifled. Nonetheless, they agreed that the goal was “to grasp one’s transcendental self, to be the self of one’s self. ... Without perfect self-understanding one will never learn truly to understand others” (Novalis, 1798/1996a, p. 14).

As well as being the means of coming to know oneself, the Romantics considered being emotionally responsive to be the key to appreciating nature. This was of vital importance because certain feelings, such as the reverence inspired by the untamed spectacles of nature or a sense of being at one with humanity, were regarded as equally or more significant to defining what was good in life than anything one might do. Moreover, the sensual experiences inspired by nature could be seen as good in themselves, as experiences that conferred a heightened quality of life. As well, people's feelings were deemed to be the source of understanding what is morally good, even the means to divining cosmic truths (Taylor, 1989). A Romantic self, therefore, might be characterised as seeking intense emotional engagement with everyday life and nature in order to be truly authentic, and at one with humanity.

From this discussion it is evident that the three defining elements of a modern identity recognized by Taylor (1989), self-exploration, autonomy and self-definition, can be discerned within the Romantic identity. The imperative for self-exploration is apparent in the Romantics' quest to explore their feelings and sentiments, including their internal conflicts and inconsistencies, through a deep communion with nature. The modern individualistic autonomy is played out both in fulfilling one's destiny by taking the life path that is true to one's emotions, and in being literally self-determining - determining one's self and one's identity. The final element of modern identities, of needing to make a personal commitment in order to achieve a life worth living, is evident in the Romantics' perception of individual responsibility for self-definition, for determining an identity that realises one's uniqueness and creativity. What remains to be addressed within this thesis is how a Romantic identity might be developed, maintained, claimed and communicated through creating, having and using objects.

Creating a Romantic Self by Fashioning Things

The discussion to this point has been revealed that, against the backdrop of gruelling and repetitive industrial work endured by many, the Romantics envisioned personal freedom as the freedom of self-expression. For them, the epitome of freedom was the expression of creative genius, and fully experiencing and expressing one's emotions. Consistent with

the modern belief that work is a primary context within which identity is formed (Taylor, 1989) they held that productive work should develop workers' emotional sensitivity and give them the freedom to express their creative talents and intellectual originality. From the Romantics' perspective, however, each person was responsible for nurturing his or her own potential. This is a highly individualistic vision, but one that on the whole the Romantics were able to take up by virtue of their natural talents and social position.

Creative Work and Creativity

The critical link that the Romantics recognised between work, sensitivity and creativity was to become central to the Arts and Crafts movement (Spretnak, 1997), with John Ruskin (1819-1900), an English art and social critic and one of the movement's key proponents, whole-heartedly endorsing the notion. Ruskin was also influenced by ideas promoted by the Young England Movement, which was led by Benjamin Disraeli and other Conservative members of Parliament. Their vision was to reorganise work within small communities, run along the lines of the large monasteries of the Middle Ages. Such communities would be organised around notions of co-operative work, greater integration of work and leisure occupations, acknowledgement of the human need for physical activity, and equality between the classes.

Informed by these perspectives Ruskin, like the Romantics, rejected classical aesthetics, which espoused that there were universal criteria for beauty and objective measures of taste (Gouldner, 1973). Furthermore, he asserted in 1853 that the neo-classical architecture of his day diminished workmen's self-expression by forcing them to be "servile" to its fixed conventions of pre-established rules and forms. Rather than the neo-classical design he decried, Ruskin followed the lead of another English architect and designer, Pugin (1812-1852), in arguing the virtues of Gothic architecture. According to Ruskin, Gothic ornamentation, with all its inherent irregularities and imperfections, gave workers the freedom to represent the divine glory of the natural world in their own way. Giving workers creative licence to express themselves, he believed, would foster in them a magnificent enthusiasm for and profound sympathy with the natural universe and allow them to fully become what they could be (Spretnak, 1997).

Ruskin argued that mass produced products and the division of labour typical of industrial work demeaned the labourers, forcing them to be machinelike and to produce components of a product or repeatedly perform a single action on identical components. In *The Stones of Venice*, for instance, Ruskin argued that:

We have much studied and much perfected, of late, the great civilized invention of the division of labour; only we give it a false name. It is not, truly speaking, the labour that is divided; but the men: - Divided into mere segments of men – broken into small fragments and crumbs of life; so that all the little piece of intelligence that is left in a man is not enough to make a pin, or a nail, but exhausts itself in making the point of a pin or the head of a nail. Now it is a good and desirable thing, truly, to make many pins in a day; but if we could only see with what crystal sand their points were polished, - sand of human soul, much to be magnified before it can be discerned for what it is – we should think there might be some loss in it also. (1853/1964, p. 283)

In Ruskin's (1853/1964) terms, "the degradation of the operative [i.e. the worker] into a machine, ... more than any other evil of the times" rendered workers "less than men" (p. 282). From the perspective of this study, using machines that force people to be machinelike, or constructing things to designs that make individuals servile diminishes the possibility of fully developing one's creativity and uniqueness. Rather, the machines and things made bestow an identity as machinelike and servile, which would work against the very possibility of being emotionally expressive, developing spirituality or creativity, or being self-determining.

Rather than production-line work, Ruskin proposed an ideal of healthy and ennobling labour that would be achieved by a massive reorganisation of design and production. This would come about when society recognised that work could produce people as well as products:

And the great cry that rises from all our manufacturing cities, louder than their furnace blast, is all in very deed for this, - that we manufacture everything there except men; we blanch cotton, and strengthen steel, and

refine sugar, and shape pottery; but to brighten, to strengthen, to refine, or to form a single living spirit, never enters into our estimate of advantages. And all the evil to which that crying is urging our myriads can be met only in one way: not by teaching or preaching, for to teach them is but to show them their misery, and to preach to them, if we do nothing more than preach, is to mock at it. It can be met only by a right understanding, on the part of all classes, of what kinds of labour are good for men, raising them, and making them happy; by a determined sacrifice of such convenience or beauty, or cheapness as is to be got only by the degradation of the workman; and by equally determined demand for the products and results of healthy and ennobling labour. (1853/1964, p. 283)

According to Ruskin's vision, only absolutely necessary things that serve a practical or noble purpose would be produced, and those would be individually created not merely copied. In contrast to the demeaned and machinelike tenders of machines, Ruskin's moral aesthetic would fulfil the Romantic vision of personal integrity and spiritual expression by enabling workmen to fashion themselves through their work.

As well as sharing the Romantics' vision of work as a venue for self-creation, Ruskin's literary works reveal his Romantic passion for nature. Indeed, Ruskin's astonishingly vivid descriptions of natural things have been described as having an "almost Wordsworthian intensity" (Clark, 1964, p. 85), although Ruskin himself preferred the poetry of Scott and Byron whom he believed to be more precise in their descriptions of nature. For Ruskin, nature was a pure expression of God's glory and evidence of his power. Not surprisingly, he considered nature to provide a source of inspiration for art, declaring "that all most lovely forms and thoughts are taken from natural objects" (Ruskin, 1849, Ch. IV, para. 3).⁸ Ruskin held that nature had powers and subtlety of execution that humans could never match, as illustrated in the following passage:

When a rock of any kind has lain for some time exposed to the weather, Nature finishes it in her own way; first, she takes wonderful pains about its form, sculpting it into exquisite variety of dint and dimple, and rounding or hollowing it into contours, which for fineness no human hand

⁸ Ruskin used a system of numbering each paragraph from the beginning to the end of each of the chapters of his books.

can follow; then she colours it; and every one of her touches of colour, instead of being a powder mixed with oil, is a miniature forest of living trees, glorious in strength and beauty, and concealing wonders of structure. (1856/1964, p. 97)

Handicraftsmen

Notwithstanding humans' inability to match nature's creativity, Ruskin believed that an object made and adorned by hand was made precious by "the sense of human labour and care spent upon it" (1849/1964, p. 235). In this, machine-made products could have no standing, even if the abstract beauty of their decoration was equal to hand-made products. Ruskin felt that the value of a handcrafted object

... results from our consciousness of its being the work of poor, clumsy, toilsome man. Its true delightfulness depends on our discovering in it the record of thoughts, and intents, and trials, and heartbreakings – of recoveries and joyfulneses of success: all this *can* be traced by a practised eye; but, granting it even obscure, it is presumed or understood; and in that is the worth of the thing ... (Ruskin, 1849/1964, p. 235, emphasis original)

The maker of such an object is, in Ruskin's view, accorded the dignity and pleasure of labour, the honour of achieving something difficult, and the identity of a handicraftsman, someone who expresses his emotions and himself in all he creates. Many of these ideas were taken up by William Morris (1834-1896), an English designer, craftsman, poet and socialist whose role as a leading figure in the Arts and Crafts movement was mentioned in chapter three. Like Ruskin, Morris was a Romantic, although his various biographers disagree over the extent to which his Romantic ideals influenced his later avowal of socialism (Kinna, 2000). Ruskin's insistence that men should be able to experience pleasure in their work provided an enduring touchstone in Morris's various public addresses concerning the perils of industrial labour. His philosophies are perhaps best encapsulated in the following excerpt from his lecture to the University College, Oxford in 1883:

The pleasure which ought to go with the making of every piece of handicraft has for its basis the keen interest which every healthy man takes in healthy life, and is compounded, it seems to me, chiefly of three

elements; variety, hope of creation, and the self-respect which comes of a sense of usefulness; to which must be added that mysterious bodily pleasure which goes with the deft exercise of the bodily powers.... As to the pleasures of variety, any of you who have ever made anything ... will well remember the pleasure that went with the turning out the first specimen. What would have become of that pleasure if you had been compelled to go on making it exactly the same forever? As to the hope of creation, the hope of producing some worthy or even excellent work which without you, the craftsman, would not have existed at all, a thing that needs you and can have no substitute for you in the making of it – can we any of us fail to understand the pleasure of this? No less easy, surely, is it to see how much the self-respect born of the consciousness of usefulness must sweeten labour. To feel that you have to do a thing not to satisfy the whim of a fool ... but because it is good in itself, that is useful, would surely be a help in getting through the day's work. As to the unreasoning, sensuous pleasure in handiwork, I believe in good sooth that it has more power of getting rough and strenuous work out of men ... than most people imagine....

Now this compound pleasure in handiwork I claim as the birthright of all workmen. I say that if they lack any part of it they will be so far degraded, but if they lack it altogether they are, so far as their work goes, I will not say slaves, the word would not be strong enough, but machines more or less conscious of their own unhappiness. (Morris, 1883/1915a, pp. 174-175)

Like other proponents of Arts and Crafts, Ruskin and Morris accepted the Romantic assertion of individual creativity and held that freeing workers from the 'slavery' of industrial work would restore their dignity and creative powers. Once freed, the workers would develop a new model of production, fashioning hand made products from locally available, natural materials. Rather than the pretentious ornamentation of the Victorian style, their designs would be individual expressions of creativity inspired by nature and the simple vernacular styles traditional to the area. The objects made would be loyal to the materials used, meaning that they would use the materials to their best advantage, and feature uncovered (so called 'honest') construction (Spretnak, 1997). This would be a return to true craftsmanship, to objects that express the union of mental and manual labour (Aronowitz, 1992). For Morris (1886/1915b), this was epitomised by the medieval craftsman, who:

... was free in his work, therefore he made it as amusing to himself as he could; and it was his pleasure and not his pain that made all things beautiful that were made, and lavished treasures of human hope and thought on everything that man made, from a cathedral to a porridge-pot. (p. 90)

Furthermore, in making well-crafted objects, the handicraftsmen would craft themselves; they would be engaged in “pleasant occupation, ... which will tend to make us good human animals” (Morris, 1888/1914f, p. 157). At the same time, “the pleasurable exercise of [their] energies” would be “at once the source of all art and the cause of all happiness: that is to say, it is the end of life” (Morris, 1891/1915d, p. 261).

True to the Arts and Crafts movement’s creed, Morris founded a company to produce furniture, tapestries, embroidered panels, carpets, tiles and household fabrics, and learned to dye, print, weave and embroider. His designs followed Pugin’s design principles and, inspired by his love of nature and the Romantic ideal, featured stylised flowers, stems, leaves and vines. As well as shaping the lives of its founders, the Arts and Crafts movement also resulted in many women of the time attending art classes and purchasing art manuals. Some became notable artists. Angelica Kauffman and Maria Cosway, for example, were well recognised for their portraits of women and children. Numerous women became known for their miniatures, and others produced designs for textiles and china manufacturers including Wedgwood (Nenadic, 1999). The popularity of such endeavours suggests that the Romantic vision of developing emotional and spiritual depth, sensitivity and personal integrity by creating objects of art was widely accepted.

Creating a Romantic Self by Having and Using Things

In addition to creating oneself by creating things, Ruskin and Morris proposed that the people who appreciated and used well-formed, handcrafted objects would be transformed. Again, these ideals and prejudices have their roots in Romanticism, for the Romantic poets imbued everyday utility objects with dignity and the capacity to commune with the people who used them. Wordsworth’s *To the Spade of a Friend* (1807/1911), for example, conveys a sense of respect for a quality tool whose use might

inspire feelings of pride, while personifying it as a faithful servant that has been privileged to share time with its owner.

SPADE! with which Wilkinson hath tilled his lands,
And shaped these pleasant walks by Emont's side,
Thou art a tool of honour in my hands;
I press thee, through the yielding soil, with pride.

Rare master has it been thy lot to know;
Long hast Thou served a man to reason true; ...

Here often hast Thou heard the poet sing
In concord with his river murmuring by; ...
(p. 489, lines 1-6, 13-14)

The Romantic dignifying and personalising of objects extended to honouring folk beliefs about their mystic qualities. In *Song for the Spinning Wheel* (1820/1911), for example, Wordsworth evokes the sight and sound of a spinning wheel in motion with the line "SWIFTLY turn the murmuring wheel!" while alluding to its power to summon faeries to "Turn the swift wheel round and round". The Romantic approval of objects was not, however, universal, as Wordsworth's initial disapproval of an ornate needle case in the form of a harp reveals:

FROWNS are on every Muse's face,
Reproaches from their lips are sent,
That mimicry should thus disgrace
The noble Instrument.
(On Seeing a Needlecase in the Form of a Harp, 1827/1911,
p. 163, lines 1-4)

Clearly Wordsworth considered the miniaturisation of musical instruments for such profane purposes as ignoble. It was explained to him, however, that 'spirits' of all sizes "rejoice / In the presence of the lyre" (lines 19-20), and that "Gay Sylphs this miniature will court, / Made vocal by their brushing wings" (lines 29-30). Spirits even more "delicate of ear" would play lutes made of gossamer and sunbeams. Convinced by this explanation, Wordsworth appears to have been prepared to accept the advice to

“moderate your ire” (line 18), but a general sense of disapproval of overly ornate trinkets remains.

Being Debased or Uplifted by Objects

As well as this clear preference for simple utility objects, Wordsworth and Blake in particular amongst the Romantics were critical of the debasing power of shoddy, industrially produced goods. In particular, they considered mass-produced art to be without taste. Ruskin shared these sentiments, declaring that objects manufactured by machines “will not make one of us happier or wiser – they will extend neither the pride of judgement nor the privilege of enjoyment. They will only make us shallower in our understandings, colder in our hearts, and feebler in our wits” (Ruskin, 1849/1964, p. 237). Thirty years later, Morris politicised such perspectives, demanding to know how people could “bear to pay a price for a piece of goods which will help to trouble one man, to ruin another, and starve a third? Or, still more, I think, how can we bear to use, how can we enjoy something which has been a pain and a grief for the maker to make?” (1879/1914b, p. 49).

Even more than the Romantics, Ruskin, Morris and other pioneers of the Arts and Crafts movement were committed to counter-acting what they perceived to be the dehumanising effects of modernity in immediate and accessible ways by producing objects that would enrich people in their homes and work places, and change the culture. Their efforts are epitomised by the hand-crafted, high quality furniture and furnishings produced by Morris & Co., which even today are described as having a sensuous vitality, arresting evocative power, and being gracefully erotic and “alluring in ways that defy words” (Spretnak, 1997, p. 153). Such descriptions are clearly reminiscent of Romantic sentiments. A number of notable Arts and Crafts designers followed Morris, including Voysey, Mackmurdo, Baille Scott, Ashbee, and the “Glasgow Four” - Charles Rennei Mackintosh, Margaret Macdonald, Frances Macdonald and Herbert MacNair. While each developed their own aesthetic styles, they continued the ethos of high quality design and production.

The vision Ruskin and his contemporaries promoted was that having and using beautiful things would transform individuals and society. People would be lifted above the commonplace and soothed in their periods of contemplation (Spretnak, 1997). Morris, for example, envisioned a time when men would:

... assuredly be happy in their work, and that happiness will assuredly bring forth decorative, noble, *popular* art.

That art will make our streets as beautiful as the woods, as elevating as the mountain-sides; it will be a pleasure and a rest, and not a weight upon the spirits to come from the open country into a town; every man's house will be fair and decent, soothing to his mind and helpful to his work: all the works of man that we live amongst and handle will be in harmony with nature, will be reasonable and beautiful: yet all will be simple and inspiring ... (1877/1914d, pp. 26-27)

What the proponents of Arts and Crafts could not resolve was that only the wealthy could afford their products. To some extent this issue was addressed over time as industrial designers appropriated Art and Craft designs for mass production, which not only reified Romantic notions in consumer goods but also made them increasingly available. London's department store, Liberty & Co., was established expressly as an outlet for mass-produced goods inspired by the designs of the Arts and Crafts movement (Spretnak, 1997). Despite shops such as Liberty being relatively elitist and expensive, the objects that manifested Romanticism were immensely successful, particularly amongst the middle classes.

Using Objects to Create Identity

As Romantic and Arts and Crafts ideals took hold within society, the notion of individual creativity and freedom of self-expression became embodied in both handcrafted and mass-produced products. According to Nenadic (1999), a social historian specialising in social, economic and cultural life since the eighteenth century, having and using objects became "an act of individual imagination" (p. 208). That is, individuals began to imagine themselves into being, appropriating the meanings held by objects as a means of creating self and asserting an identity. In this section various examples, chosen from many, are

used to illustrate the ways in which people came to use objects to assert different aspects of the Romantic identity, including their gender and national identity.

One of the primary venues where modern people seek to create a sense of self is their home (Taylor, 1989), and so people's homes are one of the sites in which they consume, restore, collect and tend objects associated with the self (Nenadic, 1999). One indicator of the trend towards using objects to create a Romantic self was the dramatic shift in the artworks purchased for the home. Where images of men in public life had predominated in the mid-eighteenth century, and been displayed in areas of the home used for male socialising, by the early nineteenth century art collections were in the main purchased by women for display in the rooms used by women. The paintings and engravings they chose featured iconography that evoked the Romantic spirit, such as women and children, and local scenery.

Women of the period also consumed vast quantities of literature, including the novels, biographies and poetry of the Romantics, which were widely available thanks to new printing technologies. In some of these, the Romantic use of objects for identity purposes was portrayed. Garrett (1885), for example, posed a quandary for one of his fictional characters, who experienced "such a curious feeling of having lost his identity, that he wanted to reassure himself by the sight of his little possessions" (p. 101). Consistent with Romanticism this character, rather than employing logic to examine and resolve his disquiet, sought the emotional comfort of familiar, personal objects to restore his sense of self and regain his composure. Romantically inclined literature was distained in some quarters of society however, and as Taylor (1943) described, many authors apologised for writing it and readers at times resorted to subterfuge to obtain and read it.

As well as the boom in reading, unprecedented numbers of women learned to play the piano or harp, reflecting the eighteenth century belief that music is a romantic art form and a suitable emotional outlet for young women's passions and nostalgic yearnings for a simple rural lifestyle (Nenadic, 1999). Here again objects, this time books and musical instruments, seem to have been used to mediate the development of emotional

sensibilities, creating or expanding an identity as an emotionally sensitive and responsive individual. It is also noteworthy that, consistent with the modern ideal of family as a close community of love within which members experience fulfilment (Taylor, 1989), the books, paintings, and exotic objects were stored and displayed at home and, particularly in the case of musical instruments, used as a focal point of family activities. This ideal of what families should be, again, resonates with Romanticism.

While women apparently favoured a Romantic identity of having emotional depth, both men and women could assume an identity as exotic. This could be achieved through the simple expedient of surrounding oneself with objects suggesting an affiliation with exotic places. For example, Nenadic (1999) identified that in the 1820s the fashion was for objects with Egyptian motifs. She also noted the sudden popularity of published travelogues, and the appearance at this time of souvenirs for travellers to purchase.

Exotic identity claims were also supported by objects associated with a period of history laden with Romantic associations. For men, perhaps more commonly than women, this seems to have meant appropriating non-domestic objects into their domestic environment. Sir Walter Scott (1771-1832), a Scottish novelist and poet, channelled his enormous income into acquiring a prodigious collection of artefacts that expressed his concept of a glorious distant past. The suits of armour, swords, axes and other objects he acquired were used to furnish Abbotsford, the mansion styled after a gothic castle that he built on the borders of Scotland. After the collapse of his business ventures, Scott moved to Abbotsford and there, surrounded by the armoury he had assembled, cast himself as a tragic hero as he struggled to pay off his debts and continued to add to his collection.

A further example of an object adopted to support Romantic identity claims is provided by the resurgence of Scottish kilts in the early nineteenth century. Part of what makes this example interesting is that kilts have dubious authenticity in relationship to the identity claimed. Kilts, despite being proclaimed as the 'traditional' garb of Highland Scots, in fact were designed by an English Quaker industrialist early in the eighteenth century. Similarly, although differentiated clan tartans are believed to have a long history, this is a

myth largely invented by Sir Walter Scott for a pageant staged for a royal visit in 1822. The Romanticism of Scottish kilts stems from the British government's banning of Highland costume, particularly plaid and tartan, subsequent to the Scottish uprising in 1745. The 35-year ban on clothing that was quintessentially Scottish was a deliberate attempt to obliterate the independent Highland way of life. The Highland regiments of the British army were, however, explicitly exempted from the ban. Their success in the British wars in India and America and their prominence in Britain's victory over Napoleon at Waterloo in 1815 fuelled a Romantic vision of a cult of hardy and intrepid warriors from the Scottish Highlands, a race of noble savages whom civilisation had threatened to destroy (Trevor-Roper, 1983; Womack, 1988). As well, Scottish history and landscape came to represent the epitome of Romanticism, and from the early nineteenth century many non-Scots, including the ladies of the Russian court when Sir Walter Scott visited in 1828, were wearing tartan and kilts (Nenadic, 1999).

Another example of using objects to establish a romantic identity is the early nineteenth century popularity of visiting country mansions, which Jane Austen describes in her novel *Pride and Prejudice* (1813/1906). As visitors observed first hand the fabulous furnishings and possessions of the very wealthy, they made presumptions about the identity of people who might own and use such extravagant objects in their everyday lives. Sir Walter Scott was among those who welcomed tourists, who revelled in Abbotsford's Romanticism, although by 1825 he had apparently grown tired of the stream of visitors demanding entrance to his home (Nenadic, 1999).

Even people who shunned consumer products used objects to make Romantic identity claims. The bohemian lifestyle, for instance, was an "attempt to make life conform to Romantic principles" (p. 195). It is epitomised by the starving artist living in a bare garret, who values pleasure above utility and thus lavishly spends money on the good things in life, such as the best bottle of wine available, but eschews durable consumer goods such as a comfortable bed or expensive clothing as valueless symbols of a bourgeois society (Campbell, 1987).

In sum then, as Romanticism and Arts and Crafts movement perspectives gained currency, people came to associate objects with themselves in new ways. In place of measured rationalism, or machine-like industrialism, objects might signal emotional sensitivity, spiritual depth, and a unique identity. By making things with their own hands, individuals could not only experience the pleasures of physical labour, they could come to know themselves as a deft union of mental and physical being. They would be inspired by nature's glory, and as they mastered the materials they worked, they would feel a profound sympathy with the natural world. As they lavished each thing they created with their hopes, thoughts and spirit, they would gain dignity, self-respect and integrity. Moreover, the useful objects they created would stand in testament of the trials and heartbreaks, the recoveries and joyfulness invested in them.

Those who appreciated, used and communed with handcrafted and well-formed objects would also be transformed by their dignity. They would be happier and wiser, because they would have the pride of judgement from selecting such an object and the privilege of enjoying it. Simple utility objects would lift people above the commonplace, enrich them and soothe them. Using objects that were in harmony with nature, reasonable, beautiful, simple and inspiring would be an act of imagination – an imagining of oneself into being, an expression of emotional sensitivity, depth and responsiveness. Objects might even make one exotic.

Rationalism and Romanticism in Occupational Therapy

Chapters four and five have explored, from both rational and Romantic perspectives, the ways Western people develop, sustain and change their identity by creating, having and using objects. The discussion has revealed that both Rationalism and Romanticism are essentially humanist (Tarnas, 1996). That is, both are concerned with a human perspective of the universe, hold human powers in high regard, and attend to human experience and consciousness. Both draw insights and values from classical culture, celebrate human genius, and look to the natural world and present day experiences for fulfilment. Each proclaims freedom, individual fulfilment, and bold encounters with novel experiences as worthy human endeavours.

Despite these commonalities, there are also deep divisions between rational and Romantic perspectives. Of particular relevance here are the differing ways rationalists and Romantics perceive the nature of being, the nature of the world and how to live. Recall how Enlightenment thinkers viewed the world as a wondrous machine and valued rational intelligence and man's power to understand and exploit nature. In this chapter, in contrast, it has been shown that the Romantics viewed creation as a living entity, full of mystery and a source of revelation. They exalted the power of inspiration, and asserted the drama of everyday life. They valued imagination, creativity, emotional depth, and self-expression, and sought to uncover their spiritual essence. Most pertinent here is the Romantics' belief in self-creation, that each man could invent himself, fashion his own character, or by heroic effort, transform himself. This was achieved, in part, by constructing one's world of desires, values, meanings and physical circumstances.

These differences between rational and Romantic spawned very different views of objects and how objects might be used to create, sustain or communicate identity. From a rationalist perspective, objects signal individuality, thoughtful consideration of their use and usefulness, measured pride in achievements, and careful construction of a preferred lifestyle. From a Romantic perspective, objects signal each person's uniqueness, and carry messages of emotional sensitivity, creativity and hope. These objects transport us beyond the commonplace, and transform us into the best that we can be.

Both rationalism and Romanticism influenced occupational therapy, which emerged as a new profession in the early twentieth century. Rational perspectives were incorporated without question, by dint of rationalism's predominance in Western thinking and within a health service dominated by medical science. Romanticism became incorporated as a way of viewing the world and the hardships wrought by illness through the direct links that existed between leading figures in the Arts and Crafts movement and the founders of occupational therapy. These links, identified by Wilcock (2001), existed in both Britain and the United States. In England, Arts and Crafts philosophies were passed down from Ruskin to Octavia Hill, with whom he sustained a friendship over many years, and thence

to Dr Elizabeth Casson who was one of Hill's house managers before going on to found occupational therapy in the United Kingdom. In the United States, Jane Addams, who has been identified as one of the important figures in the early development of the profession (Breines, 1990) and provided a venue for the first formal occupational therapy course, had read Ruskin's *Unto This Last*. Inspired by his description of the perils of industrialisation, she was subsequently involved in the establishment of the Chicago Arts and Crafts Society.

In the next three chapters, occupational therapy is the focus. The discussion in chapters seven and eight centres on the ways rationalism and Romanticism informed occupational therapists' beliefs and assumptions about objects, and how these competing ways of thinking about the things people make and use were played out over time. To set the scene for this discussion, chapter six outlines the context, theories and practices of occupational therapy as it was being established in England.

Chapter Six

Theoretical Roots and Practice Conventions of Early Occupational Therapy

The two preceding chapters explored rationalism and Romanticism in some depth, and conclusions were drawn concerning the assumptions that people in Western societies make about the ways objects relate to identity. The remaining chapters will address the assumptions occupational therapists held about this relationship when the profession was in its infancy, how these assumptions changed over time, and the implications of these shifts for current practice. Before embarking on this philosophical scrutiny, however, it is perhaps useful to give a broad perspective of the profession in its infancy, so that the rational and Romantic ideas occupational therapists held at that time about objects and identity can be considered in context. To this end, this chapter considers the theoretical basis and practice conventions of early occupational therapy, viewed from the perspective of objects and identity.

As Figure 6:1 depicts, the chapter opens with an explanation of the literature used to inform the development of the ideas presented, and why that literature was selected. It proceeds by describing in some detail what was happening in the profession in the early years. In particular therapists' knowledge of craft techniques and patients' creation of craft objects is discussed, along with therapists' efforts to become increasingly professional and develop knowledge about the health impact of occupation. Some of the contextual factors that influenced therapists' actions and their view of the world are then briefly sketched, and finally identity issues of both patients and therapists are considered.

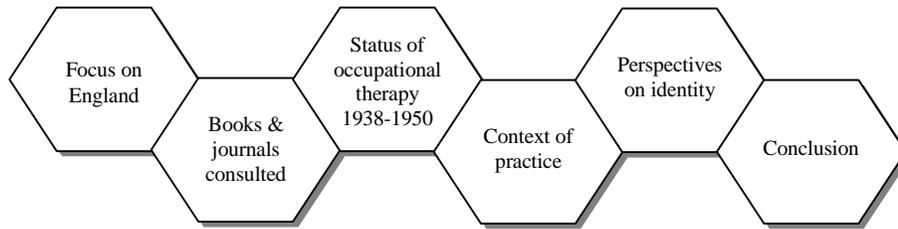


Figure 6:1 Progression of the Discussion in Chapter Six.

A Focus on England

For the most part, the discussion in this chapter draws on the English literature.⁹ One reason for electing to focus on what happened in England is unashamedly parochial, for it was occupational therapists from England who established the profession in New Zealand. England, in a sense, was the font of the knowledge that informed the profession in this country. For any readers unfamiliar with this history, it is briefly outlined below. A second reason is that while there are differences in the way the profession developed in Britain and other places, there are substantial similarities. Thus, rather than attempt to negotiate multiple histories, which might risk becoming a tangle of people, events and dates, a single, representative history is analysed and presented. However, because occupational therapy's history in the United States started earlier than its history in Britain, American texts were also used to inform the discussion.

The English Roots of Occupational Therapy in New Zealand

The first occupational therapist to be recruited to New Zealand, Margaret Inman, trained in England at Dorset House. Inman had been amongst the first students to sit the Association of Occupational Therapists' preliminary examination in 1938, and came to New Zealand as a relatively new graduate. She established the first occupational therapy service in New Zealand, at Avondale Hospital in Auckland. Very soon afterwards she set up the School of Occupational Therapy and served as its principal from 1940 until about

⁹ Use of the term "English" is problematic in that the literature published in England, particularly in the professional journal, included material that might more correctly be identified as British. However the term "British" is no more accurate, because the Scottish Association of Occupational Therapists had its own journal for some of those years and material from that journal was not reviewed for this analysis. At risk of offending some, the term English was adopted to signal that not all perspectives arising from Britain at this time are represented.

1948. In single-handedly bringing occupational therapy to this country, Inman transplanted the intellectual heritage she had learned in England to her new setting. One of her first intake of students, Hazel Skilton (nee Barton), was to become the second Head of School, thus providing a direct continuation of the English legacy. The English connection was carried further by the third Head of School, Frances Rutherford who had travelled to England to train at the School in Liverpool, having failed to gain a place in the New Zealand School because of her disability.

Inman's affiliation to occupational therapy in England was ongoing, and some of her periodic letters and reports to the Association were published in the journal (See for example Inman, 1942), as were those of Frances Rutherford (Rutherford, 1959). As occupational therapy became established in New Zealand, the English journal remained the repository of reports from New Zealand. Over time the perspective shifted, however, from reporting the challenges of translating British practice to this new place, to comparing New Zealand's practice to occupational therapy in England (See for example Johnson, 1947; New Zealand, 1951).

As well as the English connection that was maintained through the School of Occupational Therapy, New Zealand occupational therapists themselves were closely associated with the profession in England throughout the early years. One way in which this was achieved was by New Zealand therapists travelling to England to work, visit occupational therapy schools and services, and to attend conferences. Betty Paul and Miss Rayner, for example, are recorded as being the official New Zealand delegates to the first Conference of the Association of Occupational Therapists in London in 1951 (Delegates, 1951). Miss Paul worked in England for several years around that time. After returning to New Zealand she married, becoming Betty Searle, and served for many years as the Charge Occupational Therapist at what was Avondale, then Oakley, then Carrington Hospital in Auckland. She was also a member of the New Zealand Registration Board (Linda Wilson, personal communication, 1 June 2003).

As well as New Zealand therapists travelling to England, a number of English, or at least British, therapists followed in Inman's footsteps by coming to New Zealand to practice. The New Zealand occupational therapy register, which was established in 1950, records 17 'foreign' therapists achieving New Zealand registration in its first dozen years. Of those 17, 10 were from the United Kingdom, 2 from South Africa and Denmark respectively, and 5 are listed merely as 'overseas'. One of the English therapists, Winifred Hewson, is credited with establishing the occupational therapy service at Porirua Hospital, in the Wellington region. In contrast to this ongoing influence from Britain, the first therapist identified as American was registered in 1970.

Identifying England as the intellectual source of occupational therapy in New Zealand is not, however, the same as knowing what that heritage is. Furthermore it is not possible, more than 65 years later, to discern exactly what ideas Inman brought with her from her training at Dorset House. This is particularly the case because there is little published occupational therapy literature originating in England in the period prior to and during Inman's training that one might consult. In 1938 however, the very year Inman emigrated from England, the Occupational Therapy Association initiated publication of a professional journal. Indeed, the impetus for establishing a professional association for occupational therapists, and with it a journal had arisen three years previously in the course of a conversation between students at Dorset House and Dr Elizabeth Casson, the School's founder (Wilcock, 2002b). The journal is a rich portrait of practice in England at that time. While world events, the rise of rehabilitative medicine, and new insights arising from occupational therapists themselves would inevitably take practice in new directions, it can reasonably be assumed that the philosophy, theory and practice into which Inman had been initiated provided the core of those early writings. Therefore the literature of the next dozen years, even though it was published after Inman departed England, has been accepted as substantially mirroring the foundations of practice in New Zealand.

Incorporating American Literature

Notwithstanding the fact that this chapter mainly focuses on the philosophies, theories and practices of English occupational therapists, developments in the United States are also incorporated. The reason for this is that despite the geographic distance, occupational therapy practice in England and the States remained strongly aligned. Indeed, this was one of the objectives of establishing the World Federation of Occupational Therapists in 1952. One way in which this alignment was achieved was by a surprisingly high level of interchange between occupational therapists from the England and America. Individual British therapists, including Miss E. Mary Macdonald, author of a key occupational therapy text of the time, embarked on organised study tours of occupational therapy practice sites in the States. In addition, American occupational therapists who might be considered professional and academic leaders, such as Wilma West, attended various English and World Federation conferences where she met the profession's leaders. As well, American texts were available in Britain and Americans, including Clare Spackman, published articles in the English journal. Because of this interplay, as the discussion will reveal, the philosophical and practice shifts that are evident in England were frequently prompted by developments in the States, as much as they arose from the unique circumstances and experiences of therapists in Britain.

Books and Journals Consulted

As previously explained, the ideas presented in this chapter are largely drawn from an analysis of the occupational therapy literature published in England between 1938 and 1950. This encompassed the Occupational Therapy Association's journal and various books. In addition, American texts available in England at that time were consulted. Included amongst the books was Russell's (1938) *Occupational Treatment of Mental Illness*, the first book devoted to occupational therapy to be published in England. Five further occupational therapy texts published up to 1950 were included in this analysis. See Table 5:1 for a full list. The specific focus of the analysis was on any discussion relating to objects or identity.

Table 6:1

Archival Occupational Therapy Books and Chapters Accessed for Analysis: 1938 - 1950

Year	Place	Title	Author(s)	Professional Affiliation/Role
1938	UK	The Occupational Treatment of Mental Illness	Dr. John Ivison Russell	Medical Superintendent and Examiner to the Association of Occupational Therapists
1944	UK	Theory of Occupational Therapy, 2 nd ed.	Norah A. Haworth & Mary E. Macdonald	Assistant Medical Officer Principal, Dorset House School of Occupational Therapy
1944	USA	Occupational Therapy in the Treatment of the Tuberculosis Patient	Holland Hudson & Marjorie Fish	Director, Rehabilitation Service, National Tuberculosis Association Director of Professional Courses in Occupational Therapy, Columbia University
1945	USA	Prescribing Occupational Therapy, 2 nd ed.	Dr. William Dunton	Physician
1945	UK	The Rehabilitation of the Injured: Occupational Therapy, 2 nd ed.	John H. C. Colson	Technical Director of Rehabilitation (PT/OT)
1947	USA	Principles of Occupational Therapy	Helen S. Willard & Clare S. Spackman	Director, Philadelphia School of Occupational Therapy Director, Occupational Therapy Department, University of Pennsylvania

Within the texts consulted, a wide range of perspectives was represented. The books were authored by doctors, occupational therapists and nurses and variously intended for medical, nursing, and occupational therapy audiences as well as ‘the technician’. Three dealt with occupational therapy in general, but some specifically addressed the needs of specific diagnostic groups, such as patients with mental illness or tuberculosis. All presented the theoretical basis of occupational therapy, but some devoted substantially more pages to instruction in craft techniques and the adaptation of craft equipment for specific therapeutic outcomes. Three of the books were written and published in England and three in the USA.

Although the selection of books accessed for analysis represents a substantial proportion of the occupational therapy texts available at the time, it is by no means a complete set. Seven occupational therapy texts published in the USA between 1910 and 1928 were not accessed, in part because no reference to them was located in the British literature. See Table 5:2 for titles and authors. In addition, a chapter addressing occupational therapy in Kersley’s *Outlines of Physical Methods in Medicine*, which was reviewed in the *Journal of the Association of Occupational Therapists* in 1945, could not be located. Only the second editions of two texts published in Britain were located. These were Norah Haworth and Mary E. Macdonald’s *Theory of Occupational Therapy* (1944) and Colson’s (1945) *The Rehabilitation of the Injured: Occupational Therapy*. However, since the first editions of both had been published only three or one year earlier respectively, it is assumed that the first editions were not radically different. In addition, only the second edition of Dunton’s *Prescribing Occupational Therapy* (1945) was accessed.

Table 6:2
Early Occupational Therapy Books and Chapters Not Accessed

Year	Title	Author(s)	Place of Publication	Publication Details
1910	Studies in Invalid Occupation	Susan E. Tracy	Boston, USA	Whitcomb & Barrows
1915	Occupational Therapy	? Dr William Rush Dunton	Philadelphia, USA	Saunders
1919	Studies in Invalid Occupation	Susan E. Tracy	USA	Whitcomb & Barrows
1919	Reconstruction Therapy	? Dr William Rush Dunton	USA	
1919	Teaching the Sick	George Edward Barton	USA	
1923	Occupational Therapy: A New Profession	Herbert J. Hall	Concord, USA	Rumford Press
1925	Occupational Therapy for the Mentally and Nervously Ill	Louis J. Haas	Milwaukee, USA	Bruce Publishing Company
1928	Prescribing Occupational Therapy	Dr William Rush Dunton	Springfield, USA	Charles C. Thomas
1941	Theory of Occupational Therapy for Students and Nurses	Norah A. Haworth & E. Mary Macdonald	Britain	
1944	The Rehabilitation of the Injured (1 st ed.)	Dr John Colson	Britain	Cassell & Company
1944	Practical Occupational Therapy for the Mentally and Nervously Ill	Louis J. Haas	Milwaukee, USA	Bruce Publishing Company
1944	<i>Occupational Therapy</i> , In: Manual of Military Neuropsychiatry (pp. 604-610)	Walter E. Barton	USA	W. B. Saunders
?1947	A Way of Life for the Handicapped Child	Eirene Collis	USA	Faber & Faber
1950	Occupational Therapy	Dr William Rush Dunton Dr S Licht	Springfield, USA	

As mentioned, information was also drawn from the *Journal of the Occupational Therapists' Association*, which was subsequently renamed the *Journal of the Association of Occupational Therapists* from the winter 1939/1940 issue, and then became simply *Occupational Therapy* in 1957.¹⁰ The Journal was published in England, and whereas some early texts were written to inform others about occupational therapy, it seems that occupational therapists themselves were the intended audience of the Journal. The content, however, was authored by doctors, individuals from related professions such as art therapists, authors of occupational therapy books, recipients of occupational therapy and occupational therapists educated or working in other countries, notably New Zealand and Australia. Articles, editorials, letters to the editor, advertisements, book reviews and professional records were included in the analysis.

Limitations of the Analysis

As with any archival review, this study's reliance on the written word has both advantages and disadvantages. Text has the considerable advantages of being a readily accessible, permanent record that is not subject to the biases, failures of memory, or reinterpretation in light of subsequent events and understandings that might afflict interview based data gathering. Equally, however, historical text has several potential limitations. One is that it is decontextualised, in that authors seldom specifically identify the contemporary societal and health issues that shaped their thinking, either because they assumed their audience would be equally aware of them or because their impact was not yet realised. It is also possible that perspectives deemed unsuitable for publication may be absent. This was not the stated intent of inaugural editors of the Journal, who invited the "expression of views on controversial subjects" and the "airing of criticisms and suggestions for improvement" (Ross, 1938, p. 5), and strongly opposing perspectives

¹⁰ The journal published by the Association of Occupational Therapists in England has appeared under different titles at different times. Here the varying titles are preserved, so that the journal is referred to as the *Journal of the Occupational Therapists' Association* (1938-1939), the *Journal of the Association of Occupational Therapists* from the winter 1939/1940 issue, and then simply *Occupational Therapy* from the first issue in 1957. Conversely, Wilcock (2002) adopted the title *Occupational Therapy* from the time of its first publication in her history.

were in fact published. The extent to which prospective or actual authors self-censored is, however, impossible to determine.

A further limitation of published texts is one of time lag. Although the Journal began publication within three years of the first mention of forming an Occupational Therapy Association in England, the profession's beginnings in Britain are considerably earlier. As Wilcock (2002b) documents, Dr David Henderson, who had experienced occupational therapy first hand with Dr Adolf Meyer and Dr William Rush Dunton in America, established an occupational therapy programme at Gartnavel Psychiatric Hospital in Scotland in 1919. The first American trained occupational therapist to gain employment in Britain, Margaret Barr Fulton, had taken up a position at the Aberdeen Royal Asylum, also in Scotland, in August 1925 and Dr Elizabeth Casson established the first School of Occupational Therapy in 1929. These beginnings, and the ways early events influenced the philosophies and theories that underpin practice are not captured in the Journal. Nonetheless, it is reasonable to assume that the contents of the Journal and the published occupational therapy texts of the day had a substantial, if not exact, relationship to the conceptual and philosophical thinking of the profession at that time.

As already stated, the literature of the first decades reveals a complex and dynamic profession. The broad range of issues articulated within it bears testament to occupational therapists' concern with developing their field of expertise and establishing a place for their profession within the health service. The discussion that follows teases out three aspects of this developmental quest. Firstly, it addresses professional issues through the lens of the objects used in practice; how making objects served the various goals of occupational therapy; how the interactions between people, objects and the environment were conceptualised; and occupational therapists' endeavours to develop and articulate a theory base and to demonstrate their effectiveness. Secondly, the changes already apparent in the profession are placed in context of the intervening World War and dramatic medical advances of the time. Finally, identity issues facing both therapists and patients are considered, with particular reference to the ways the objects they brought into and created within the health context shaped the identity available to them. In some

sections of the discussion, direct quotes are used somewhat liberally in order to give a flavour of the times and so that readers can judge for themselves the veracity of the interpretation given.

The Status of Occupational Therapy, 1938-1950

A central theme of occupational therapy that emerges from the Journal over its first dozen years is that for patients to go to occupational therapy was, literally, to make something. Objects were ever present in the minds and actions of both therapists and patients. For therapists, this association with objects began when they were students, learning how to handcraft objects, and how to adapt the weaving looms and other equipment patients would use (As a W.E.D. Sees it, 1944). As students and then therapists, they taught patients how to make things. Therapists thought about what could be made using different craft techniques and the available materials, the practicalities of making those products in wards and workshops, and the kinds of people who might be enticed into making them (Baily, 1938; Cooper, 1940; Docker, 1938/9; Macdonald, 1938; Owens, 1944; Rivett, 1938/39). They reflected on the intrinsic qualities of various crafts that made them intriguing to particular people but not others and shared pointers about ways to entice patients into agreeing to make something. They learned that others involved in helping people make things, such as art therapists and Home Therapists for the Blind, held similar attitudes towards the importance and impact of crafting things; of painting a picture or sewing a cushion (English, 1946; Hill, 1947; Holms, 1947). They were assured that creating things was essential to the character formation of hospitalised children (Stow, 1946), and pondered the meaning of artworks produced by people with schizophrenia (English, 1939).

Some therapists attended exhibitions to learn about new industrial processes that were revolutionising the way things were made in industrial settings, and wondered whether the same methods might apply to patients making things for therapy (English, 1945). Some also responded to the Government's directive to address patients' ability to earn a livelihood, substituting vocational tasks such as repair work on watches, the assembly of bicycle bells and clocks, and industrial assembly of gloves and slippers for the more

familiar handcrafted scarves, cane work baskets and embroidered table mats (Cox, 1947; Johnson, 1947; McDougall, 1942; Smith, 1945).

Together, therapists addressed the problems they experienced in determining what their patients should make. They learned of their professional responsibility to provide guidance to the doctors who prescribed occupational therapy, so that the intended outcome of making something might be clear (Casson, 1938/39). They advised each other about the best ways to dispose of patients' work (McLuskie, 1940), and discussed the disparaging societal attitudes towards men who made 'feminine' things and the 'arty-crafty' profession that encouraged them to do so (Jones, 1947). They worried about wartime restrictions in tools and materials needed to make things, found ways to turn dingy waste materials into something more appealing (English, 1940), and shared tips on alternatives when traditional materials became hard to acquire (Dean, 1946). When establishing a new occupational therapy department or school of occupational therapy, they considered themselves unable to start until they had the requisite number of rug-frames and table looms, and so made their acquisition or construction a first priority (Thornely, 1948). They heard of the resourcefulness of pioneering therapists in New Zealand and Australia who learned what they could make with the very limited local supplies, and of wartime measures to buy the necessary supplies in bulk for distribution to military hospitals (Inman, 1942; Keam, 1945). They puzzled over an English soldier finding it strange that Ghurkhas, Sikhs and Hindus in British military hospitals in India were weaving belts and making string bags (Curiouser and Curiouser, 1947).

Patients, as they were called, made things. Indeed, the extent to which receiving occupational therapy equated to making things was lampooned in two cartoons published in *Punch* magazine and reproduced in the 1957 volume of the *Occupational Therapy* journal for the amusement of therapists. One portrayed patients, garbed in hospital pyjamas, with their beds smothered by the lampshades, baskets and rugs they had produced, looking on as one of their number, still struggling with his first basket, was informed that he would "have to go" (Anton, 1957, p. 23). The second, taking the joke even further, showed patients hefting planks and mortar, mounting scaffolding, and

laying bricks to construct the occupational therapy building itself (Bolwell, 1957). Patients had in fact built the 'Male Department' of the occupational therapy centre at Shenley Hospital only two years before, starting from digging the foundations and manufacturing the building blocks, to applying the last coat of paint (Henson, 1955).

Notwithstanding this gentle ridicule, the objects patients made and used were potentially highly significant to them. In the first instance, many patients apparently recognised the role that making things played in making hospital life bearable, assisting their recovery and, in the case of some patients in mental health settings, enabling them to gain insights and resolve issues. One patient went so far as to submit a testimony of the benefits he had derived from making things, whilst hospitalised for tuberculosis, to the occupational therapy journal (From an Ex-patient, 1947). Furthermore, crafted objects offered concrete evidence to visitors that their loved ones were making progress in their recovery and preparing for discharge. Secondly, for some at least, the craft skills learned in hospital afforded their only realistic opportunity to secure their livelihood after discharge (Hudson & Fish, 1944). Others, perhaps more fortunate, established or maintained work related skills and built up their work tolerance in the growing number of prevocational and vocational programmes established by occupational therapists.

While patients were in hospital, the fate of the objects they made, how many objects they might make, and who might benefit from their sale was determined by hospital policy, which appears to have varied considerably. In some institutions, patients were encouraged to make things to take home, or to give to loved ones (Hick, 1948; Owens, 1944). In others, patients were restricted in the number of items they might make while in others they were encouraged to engage in ongoing and progressive projects (Noyes, 1939). In still others, the objects patients produced were those selected to provide the prescribed movement pattern (Bunyard, 1940) or needed by the hospital itself, such as the vegetables patients peeled or hospital records they bound (Macdonald, 1938). Some patients were offered first right of purchasing the craft items they made (McLuskie, 1940). In some settings, patients were encouraged to make things to sell, in the belief that generating an income would bolster self-esteem, whilst in others private sales were

discouraged (Students of Northampton School, 1947). Some patients were recruited to make things for local industry as part of their therapy and received payment for their labour, although the Ministry of Health had expressly forbidden this practice (Jones, 1947). Furthermore, concern was expressed about patients in sanatoria over exerting themselves, perhaps in their attempt to contribute to the war effort or secure an income (Cox, 1947).

As with present day occupational therapists, those practicing in England in the early years endeavoured to describe what they did and why. This is the focus of the next section of discussion. Figure 6:2 outlines the specific topics addressed.

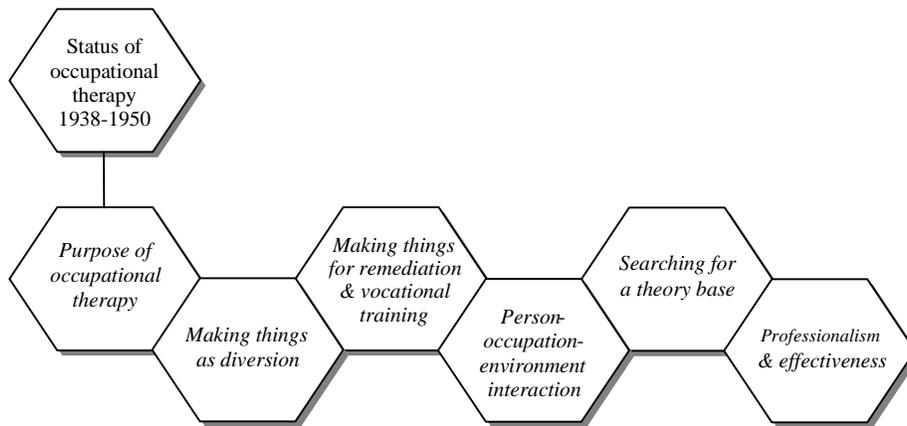


Figure 6:2 Subtopics: The Status of Occupational Therapy, 1938 – 1950.

Purpose of Occupational Therapy

Occupational therapists orchestrated this outpouring of crafted, assembled, and manufactured objects in both physical and mental hospitals, and in convalescent settings such as sanatoria. The overarching purpose of all this activity can be discerned from the definitions of occupational treatment that were developed at the time. One, in which both objects and identity outcomes were highlighted, defined occupational treatment as:

... deliberately planned means of attaching a patient's interests to material objects and their common relationships, in a manner that will persistently emphasise his own value and importance, and so prevent the troubled

mind from seeking refuge in morbid introspection in which it can find but a nightmare of unworthiness and despair. (Russell, 1938, p. 8)

While this definition points to important outcomes for mental patients, the goal of intervention was described somewhat differently in convalescent and physical settings. For example, Dr Jane Walker had been responsible for occupational work at Nayland East Anglia Sanatorium even prior to the establishment of the Dorset House School in 1929. She identified three types of occupational therapy with distinctly different purposes: diversional, occupational work and vocational work (Gribble, 1925/1952). By diversional, Walker meant amusements and simple games, which were presumably employed with patients not well enough to engage in “making useful and artistic things” to restore “impaired or weakened function” (p. 30). In the context of a sanatorium, where patients might remain on bed rest for months or years, diversional occupational therapy was perhaps employed for much the same purpose as in mental hospitals, that is to divert patients’ thoughts from ‘morbid introspection’. The means of achieving this, however, was remarkably different because of the different physical capacities of tubercular and mental patients.

Diversional activities, however, were given different connotations in the context of physical medicine, particularly within rehabilitation programmes. Dr Soltau, for instance, declared occupational therapy to have diversional, remedial and vocational purposes (Address by Dr. Soltau, 1938/39). In replacing occupational work with remediation, Soltau implied interventions that specifically target mental or physical capacities impaired by injury or illness. By implication, diversional activities in physical hospitals were cast as those without remedial intent, which contrasts strongly with what the term implied in mental hospitals.

As Wilcock (2002b) has cogently argued, this medical separation of diversion from occupational work and remediation is misleading because it neglects the importance of diverting patients from focusing on their psychological distress. It also overlooks the long history of diversional activities as one of the few effective means of restoring the

disordered thought patterns and behaviours of mental patients. Furthermore, occupational therapists themselves may not have subscribed to this relegation of diversional activities to a position of lesser importance. In support of her argument, Wilcock cites an article published in the *Lancet* which proclaimed “occupational therapy is primarily a psychological treatment, whether it is practised upon physical or psychiatric cases” and “in all cases the patient’s interest must be diverted from preoccupation with his disability and inadequacy to purposeful activity and involvement” (p. 240). Accordingly, in this thesis the terms diversion and diversional are used to imply activities with a clear intention of addressing psychological well-being.

Making Things as Diversion

In physical settings and sanatoria, diversional therapy referred to a diversion of the mind from pain and loss, which was recognised as promoting healing and in so doing, decreasing the duration of hospitalisation. Bunyard (1940) perhaps best explained the losses patients might experience, identifying loss of independence as well as being:

... cut off from our share of usefulness, and when this loss is due, not to injury, but to mental causes it often brings with it exaggerated feelings of uselessness, remorse at not being able to take our part in life, and many other consequent miseries. (pp. 10-11)

In England in the 1930s and 40s, before the sophisticated medical interventions of the present day or the introduction of unemployment or sickness benefits, the ‘consequent miseries’ facing men in particular included the immediate worry of how their family was faring on a substantially reduced income, and the more distant worry of their own future employability (Smith, 1945). At least in the US, destitution was an acknowledged outcome for some who acquired a disability (Hudson & Fish, 1944), so the losses from which patients were to be diverted were potentially substantial. In addition, the impact of the illness or injury itself was compounded by long periods of hospitalisation during which many patients lost both confidence in their ability to return to normal life and the general fitness required to do so.

The diversional therapy offered in mental health settings was intended to divert patients' thoughts away from delusions, anxieties and other symptoms. It was also, at a time when the available medical interventions were limited and patients might remain in hospital for life, the only means of retraining habits, structuring time, exercising capacities and providing a source of personal satisfaction, purpose and meaning. As well as these different goals, the diversional services offered in mental hospitals differed from those in physical settings in two important ways (Haworth & Macdonald, 1944; Russell, 1938). Firstly, it seems that it was considered 'best practice' to have all of the patients engaged in purposeful occupation, within the wards, occupation centre or grounds, unless they were physically or cognitively incapable of doing so. The dual goals of occupying patients were to ensure their good behaviour by giving them something of interest to focus their attention on and to meet the needs of the hospital, by sewing nightgowns, polishing spoons, scrubbing and restraining tables, carting away fallen leaves or rolling a cinder path, for example. For many patients treated in the wards or grounds, this would have meant using rather than making objects. Secondly, because the majority of patients were thus deployed, members of the nursing staff were necessarily involved in allocating and supervising the work done.

From the literature of the times, it seems that patients engaged in diversional occupational therapy were offered some choice about what to make, in acknowledgement of the fact that what appeals to one may entirely disinterest another (Russell, 1938), so long as their choice was deemed to meet their needs (Haworth & Macdonald, 1944). For these patients, the choice of what to make was informed by whether they were perceived to need something stimulating, such as when a patient needed to be roused from depression, or sedative, such as when a tubercular patient was becoming intolerant of the confines of prolonged bed rest. From those beginnings, a progression of graded projects might be offered as patients developed the skills required to produce products of a sufficiently high standard, or an occasional change of occupations introduced so that long-term patients would retain an active interest in their labours. The incentive of being able to keep what they made was apparently not a normal part of the occupational therapy experience, however, or at least not in mental health settings in the 1930s. Despite that,

John Ivison Russell declared in no uncertain terms that disposing of patients' work to the public was "quite outside our province" (p. 115); that with few exceptions articles made by patients would be required within the hospital; and that those artistic creations that female patients did make "must be sold" (p. 115) in annual sales to staff, patients' visitors, and former patients.

Making Things for Remediation and Vocational Training

In contrast to diversional occupational therapy, remedial therapy involved making things "not only for the purpose of occupying the mind but for the restoration of impaired or weakened functions" (Address by Dr Soltau, 1938/39, p. 10). The clear assumption was that these patients would in any case have been making something, but the requirement for remediation of specific functions would now influence what that might be. Certainly in physical health this appears to have been true, at least in those settings where occupational therapy was available. Statements such as "if, in addition, this soldier, or sailor, has injuries to arm and forearm [the mat he is making] may also provide exercise" (Owens, 1944, p. 13) are typical. For these patients, the object they would produce was prescribed or selected for the strength, movement or other abilities it demanded, with a view to restoring lost function and reducing the duration of both hospitalisation and time away from the war effort.

In mental health settings, occupational therapists sought to remediate the 'functions of the mind'. For severely 'regressed' patients, habit training regimes were instituted to both re-educate them into acceptable behaviour patterns and to reduce the incidence of disruptive and destructive actions. 'Occupational work', for instance hemming face cloths for use in the hospital, would have been a standard part of these habit training programmes. Such tasks were, by and large, chosen because they were repetitive, required minimal skill, and produced objects that would remain within the hospital so that poor workmanship could be tolerated. Even amongst those higher functioning patients able to attend the Occupation Centre, however, it was accepted that some would make products of such poor quality that a considerable proportion would have to be "undone elsewhere" (Russell, 1938, p. 82). For these patients, the purpose of attempting

to make something was “not learning something new, but attempting to recover a technique lost in the process of mental deterioration” (Russell, p. 82). In the context of remedial occupational therapy overall, patients’ progression to more challenging products, or to working with equipment that provided less assistance or greater resistance, was governed by the improvement achieved rather than their advancing technical competence. A psychological component was also acknowledged, however, in a basketry instructor’s assertion that monotony “should be avoided as it produces no remedial effect” (Crampton, 1950, p. 15).

As with diversional occupational therapy, it is not clear how much choice patients were offered about what they could make. In America it seems that, where they felt confident to do so, the doctors who prescribed occupational therapy decided which craft, such as woodwork or basketry, they considered appropriate for a particular patient. In this, the patient may have had little choice, although William Rush Dunton (1945) conceded “it may be well to enlist the cooperation of the patient before prescribing occupational therapy” (p. 7). Only when a physician had insufficient understanding of the application of occupational therapy might they permit the occupational therapist “to exercise her judgement as to the best occupation to be given” (p. 10). Having determined which craft afforded the best therapeutic potential, therapists may have offered patients a choice of products to make, a belt or a handbag for example. Even so, the therapist was expected to direct the manner in which the patient worked, to ensure that their heart, joints, muscles, mental processes or emotions were exercised as intended. It is, however, well to remember that Dunton was addressing those American physicians who might use occupational therapy as an adjunct to their medical treatment, so that his perspectives on choice may not have been entirely shared by occupational therapists. As well, practice may have been somewhat different in the United Kingdom. The dearth of specific discussion of the issue of patient choice makes this difficult to judge. Certainly a number of physicians, including Elizabeth Casson, Sir David Henderson, J. B. McDougall and Thomas Tennent were pioneers in the development of the profession in the United Kingdom, and of these Casson at least held that the physician be responsible for prescribing the therapeutic goal of intervention.

Although the provision of remedial occupations for solely biomechanical purposes was not initially the major focus of occupational therapists working in physical settings, the large number of soldiers injured in World War II was soon to change things. For example Joyce Keam (1945), in her post in an Australian military hospital, recorded that due to their small numbers “it would be impossible for the Occupational Therapists to attempt more than the purely remedial Occupational Therapy” (p. 10). In at least some military settings, the work of addressing the tedium of hospitalisation fell to craft workers and volunteer helpers.

The third kind of occupational therapy, vocational, addressed the patient’s potential to “earn his living when restored to health” (Address by Dr Soltau, 1938/39, p. 10). In the United Kingdom, vocational services were initially separated out from the general health services although some therapists did address vocational concerns through increasingly demanding craftwork. During the economic rebuilding which followed World War II, however, this was to become the arena in which occupational therapists’ traditional practice was most strongly challenged. For male patients, the move away from craftwork led to the therapeutic application of industrial tasks and methods (The Future of Occupational Therapy, 1946). In place of weaving and basketry, these men worked on industrial machines manufacturing gloves and the like, undertook heavy manual labour, such as making bricks, and learned light assembly skills as they worked on contracts for local industry. Along with this focus on returning patients to the community to work was concern with how patients would manage everyday tasks. ‘Gadgets’, which were to become the predominant response to this concern, were not mentioned in the literature till the early 1950s (Bach & Bright, 1951a) and only began to take hold in the late 1950s (Wilcock, 2002b).

Person-Occupation-Environment Interaction

Although they didn’t conceptualise it in those terms, occupational therapists of the 1930s and 1940s thought about person-occupation-environment interactions when they provided patients with occupations. Examples of thinking about the interaction between a

person and the occupation in which they would engage include identifying the capacities required by particular occupations. For instance Joyce Baily (1938) noted that cord knotting involved bilateral involvement of the muscles and joints of fingers, wrists, forearms and shoulders but could be completed by individuals with poor vision. Thinking about the patient-occupation interaction is also evident in therapists' concern about how patients might respond to and cope with the activity they were given. Such considerations encompassed the relevance of the product to individual patients, the intellectual demands of learning specific crafts, and the progressive skill development that would ensue. Therapists also noted behavioural responses, like the care and precision patients might bring to tasks such as mixing the exact colour required for fabric printing (Rivett, 1938/39).

Considering the interaction between occupation and environment is evident in therapists' problem solving the management of occupations within the physical environment. In particular, therapists needed to exercise care that the activities they provided did not disrupt nursing activities, encouraged good posture and could be managed independently by bed-bound patients. The long strings required for macramé seem to have posed particular challenges. Accordingly, Baily (1938) advised that the buckle for a knotted belt might be tied "from either side to the legs of a bed table" (p. 21) so that 'bed patients' could sit up straight as they worked. She also recommended making a lady's chain of the long strings required, to prevent them getting tangled. The human environment was also factored into therapists' thinking, as they noted the potential for introducing a competitive element to spur their patients' efforts or the importance of facilitating a friendly and collegial atmosphere in the occupational therapy department, even if that necessitated rearranging the work space several times a day (Lyttleton, 1944).

The early therapists were also concerned about how the occupations they introduced would be received by ward personnel. Violet Cooper (1940) noted, for example, that a particular strength of the embroidery she gave to bed patients was that it would not "spoil tables and make a mess" nor "antagonise a nursing staff overconditioned in polishing" (p. 5). Consideration of the broader human environment is also evident in therapists' concern

that crafts be inexpensive, that there be little waste, and that the objects produced by patients be useful.

Therapists also reflected on their own interaction with the therapeutic occupations they used. This interaction was bi-directional, encompassing both the benefits that making particular craft objects presented for therapists, and the skill and time commitment demanded in teaching and assisting patients to make them. The benefits of particular crafts focused around their versatility, meaning the range of projects to which the craft technique might be applied. Cord knotting, for example, excelled in being suitable for making simple things that might be completed “by the lowest grade of patient” (Baily, 1938, p. 20), such as a finger knitted dressing gown cord made from rug wool, or highly complex objects such as lamp shades, table mats, belts and handbags worked in colours selected and patterns designed by the patient. Versatility was also considered in terms of the adaptability of the craft to different hospital situations, with particular mention made of craft techniques that required no specialist equipment, or that might be undertaken by people confined to bed as readily as if they were seated at a table. While versatility was clearly advantageous, skill and time demands might count against the deployment of particular crafts. The successful application of bookbinding, for example, was noted to have multiple steps and to require “rather more than an introductory knowledge of the subject” (Macdonald, 1938). Fabric printing was considered to need constant supervision, presumably to ensure the quality of the product, while cord knotting might demand high levels of supervision to minimise the possibility of misappropriating the materials in order to commit suicide.

Searching for a Theory Base

As well as these more practical concerns, occupational therapists sought a theoretical understanding of their work. In the first dozen years in which the *Journal of the Association of Occupational Therapists* was published, this most often took the form of attempting to describe the intrinsic qualities of various crafts that rendered them both attractive to patients and therapeutic. Engaging in making a craft product was variously described as being intrinsically fascinating, artistic or practical; arousing interest;

inducing free expression of oneself; stimulating self-reliance and a sense of design; and being rhythmic and therefore soothing. Modelling things out of clay, in particular, was claimed to have healing properties because it provided an outlet for truths patients were otherwise unable to express (Sims, 1949). Just how being interested and soothed by making something would hasten recovery is not described, perhaps because English occupational therapists of the time took this to be self-evident, but it seems that the emotional state induced by occupation was pivotal. Support for this proposition comes from literature from the United States, where William Rush Dunton (1945) directly stated “the creation of a pleasant mental attitude or emotion, and the stimulation of interest, are the bases for successful occupational treatment” (p. 5). Furthermore, he attested, “this holds for its application in physical cases as well as mental” (p. 5).

Occupational therapists sought to develop and apply theories that would guide their work. Gertrude Noyes’ (1939) article titled *Experimental Occupational Therapy in Tuberculosis Wards* is a clear example. Noyes began by dispensing with an outmoded theory, which had held that “work in measured quantities would stir up a [tubercular] patient’s disease and at the same time marshal his forces of resistance and bring them into action to conquer the enemy” (p. 7). She described applying theoretical propositions about the effects of illness and the curative power of occupation developed in the context of mental illness to her work with tubercular patients. (See Table 6:3 for the specific theoretical tenets Noyes applied). She also identified several theoretical explanations derived from her own observations. These included that sedative occupations would keep patients happily occupied without stimulating a desire to be allowed out of their beds, that “it is essential that work should be voluntary” (p. 9), and that patients would cooperate more if given a choice of things to make.

Table 6:3

Theoretical Propositions Employed with Tubercular Patients

Theoretical Propositions of Mental Illness Applied to Tuberculosis
Illnesses such as tuberculosis cause patients to lose self-respect.

Idleness causes loss of morale.

Removing all responsibilities from patients causes them to regress mentally.

Occupational therapy can restore self-respect, counteract the effects of idleness, and make patients happy.

The outcome of occupational therapy is improved likelihood of recovery.

(Noyes, 1939, pp. 7-8)

As well as generating theory from their own experience, occupational therapists of the time were receptive to theories developed in other contexts. A. M. English (1945), for example, having learned how time and motion studies were used to redesign industrial tasks, suggested that these principles be applied with patients preparing to return to the workforce. In addition, occupational therapists applied biomedical concepts and biomechanical principles to their work. They discuss, for example, resting inflamed joints and repetitively working a muscle under load to increase strength. They were also clearly familiar with psychiatric symptoms such as perseveration and therapeutic concepts such as helping people to stay in touch with reality.

Professionalism and Effectiveness

Working from a theory base was evidently important, but so was being professional and demonstrating the effectiveness of occupational therapy. Professionalism appears to have been achieved by an incremental process of adopting formal processes of interacting with other health professionals. There is talk of written referrals signed by a doctor, rather than verbal requests, and accompanying the doctor on his rounds at least once a month for further instructions (Hick, 1948). The American practice of keeping a chart, or record for each patient was reported in the Journal in the late 1930s (Crousaz, 1938/39). A subsequent report that “children are written up for Occupational Therapy in the same way as the adult patients” (Stow, 1946) suggests that keeping written records of occupational therapy intervention had become an accepted part of practice by 1946.

While being seen as professional seems to have come easily, achieving recognition of occupational therapy’s impact on patients was considerably more fraught. A complicating issue in demonstrating effectiveness was that, at least in Norah Haworth and E. Mary

Macdonald's (1944) opinion, occupational therapy could only assist or hasten a cure rather than being curative in itself. This makes effectiveness difficult to measure because of the problem of separating out effects. To further complicate the issue, substantially different outcomes were targeted in different settings. In mental health settings, where remission was an unlikely outcome for 'imbeciles' and patients with dementia for example, the purpose of occupational therapy was to address the "many problems which arise in the nursing and management of patients" (Rees Thomas, 1938, p. viii) with the goal of guiding "them back to a useful life ... in the hospital community" (Haworth & Macdonald, p. 10). In contrast, the focus of occupational therapy for patients who had survived physical illness and injury was the restoration of health, and as rehabilitation came into being, return to family life and employment.

Against this backdrop, the battle for due recognition seems to have appeared hopeless to some occupational therapists, as comments such as the following reveal:

Speaking from my own experience I believe O.T. has a great future if we can only awaken the doctors to recognise its value. ... It seems hard that our light should have to remain under a bushel. So to make our work known to the medical profession should be the aim of those who have it in their power. Meanwhile, those who do the job will need to have great faith and patience. (As a W.E.D. sees it, 1944, p. 9)

A strategy initially employed to demonstrate the positive impact of occupational therapy was to report examples of its success. Typically these are stories of cases that the therapists themselves found notable: the "completely apathetic and seemingly feeble-minded" boy with infantile paralysis who "asked for a pencil, and when he saw his drawing and felt his muscles producing his drawing, a whole new life came into him" (Casson, 1935/1955, p. 99); the "bad spastic case" whose "arms and legs went in all directions" who succeeded in mastering chair caning (Docker, 1938/39, p. 28; O.T. in Australia, 1940); the patient who created two figurines expressing hope and despair, and having done so "felt he could face life again with a fresh outlook" (English, 1939, p. 24). Other therapists reported cases they regarded as more typical of the gains patients made in occupational therapy. In contrast, empirical evidence generated in America, such as

the percentage of patients attending occupational therapy, statistics demonstrating accelerated recovery, and the outcomes of controlled trials of different therapeutic approaches, was reported as early as 1939 (Crousaz, 1938/39). From 1944, calls for research began to feature in the English literature. Initially, these calls were specifically linked to the need to prove the value of occupational therapy to doctors. This soon broadened into recognition of the role research could play in informing occupational therapy itself. Suggestions for research that might prove valuable included ways to best foster patient outcomes, and ways to assess the energy required to perform different tasks, so that patient's ability to sustain performance could be more accurately predicted (Cox, 1947). As well, the Association of Occupational Therapists announced its intention to fund two research positions to investigate using factory outwork in place of craftwork for patients prescribed vocational rehabilitation (*The Future of Occupational Therapy*, 1946).

Context of Practice

Having explored in some detail the status of occupational therapy in the late 1930s and 1940s, it finally remains to briefly sketch the societal and medical contexts in which occupational therapy was developing, so that some of the forces shaping the philosophical direction of the profession are apparent. The preceding discussion has identified a little of the impact of World War II on occupational therapy. At a societal level, the return of large numbers of permanently disabled men to the community challenged attitudes towards disability. Where people with a disability had previously been considered unemployable, the government, in the form of the Minister of Pensions, was taking active measures to prevent returned servicemen becoming invalids, "people outside the normal life of society" (Marquand, 1951, p. 191). However, the assumption that disability renders people incapable of working was deeply entrenched. Even a group of occupational therapists, observing the quality of craftsmanship of men with a disability who were working in a furniture restoration factory, remarked that "one did not easily remember that these men were disabled. Yet at least two of them have to be carried up to their work, and one is legless" (Robertson, 1950, p. 9).

As well as the different attitudinal context, the medical context in which occupational therapists practiced was substantially different from the present day. Glimpses of these differences are afforded within the occupational therapy literature, and chief amongst these were the far longer periods of hospitalisation that many patients experienced and their low expectations of any recovery. For example in 1947, the average stay in a tuberculosis sanatorium was 500 days (Cox, 1947), while in 1948, the usual regime for patients of the Royal National Hospital for Rheumatic Diseases was to spend six weeks in hospital every six months (Hick, 1948). While medical advances were reducing the time taken to effectively treat many orthopaedic injuries, access to modern treatment methods was not uniform. For example it was reported that in 1935, people treated for a fractured patella in a Fracture Clinic were off work for an average of 26 weeks, while those treated outside such clinics averaged 57 weeks off work (Plewes, 1951a). Moreover, admissions for many medical and mental health conditions remained lengthy. For instance Lord Amulree, in his address to the 1951 occupational therapy conference, mentioned that if patients were admitted following a stroke “you may have them for a year or more, gradually improving all the time” (1951, p. 214). He went on to note, however, that because the general population’s experience of strokes was that people weren’t “much good for anything more” (p. 215), therapists would need to convince their patients that they could still do something. Similarly, John Colson (1945) had noted:

Before beginning occupational therapy the patient may not be completely convinced that his injury can be cured, or that it will not prevent him from carrying out normal activities. Once he has been shown the possibilities of certain occupations in his particular case, and finds on starting work that he can do far more than he thought possible, his mental outlook changes completely and he begins to work towards his own cure ... (p. 6)

As Dr Plewes had signalled, however, changes were afoot. In particular, there was a radical shift in thinking about medical management after surgery. Previously, a period of complete rest following any trauma, whether a fracture or a leucotomy, had been standard practice (Sicely, 1950) and the negative consequences of immobilisation taken as a given. In 1938, for example, Dr Elizabeth Casson (1938/39) cited restoration of shoulder movement after a fracture of the humerus as a standard occupational therapy intervention,

thereby indicating the extent to which loss of movement at the shoulder was accepted as a natural outcome. By 1951, active mobilisation immediately after surgery was being widely advocated (Plewes, 1951a). The benefits of active rehabilitation were not a sudden discovery. As early as 1944, occupational therapists had described how full use of unaffected joints while fractures were splinted could prevent the onset of stiffness (McCaul, 1944). However the widespread adoption of such practices signalled a significant change in focus for occupational therapy practice, from restoring function to prevention of loss of function. Furthermore, as Dr Plewes foretold, intervention to restore self-confidence would no longer be necessary since it would not have been lost. In addition, he claimed, “such patients will never produce a nice-looking handbag or a rug for the bedside – they won’t be with you long enough!” (Plewes, 1951a, p. 65). His comment held some truth as advances in medical knowledge continued to impact on the work of occupational therapists. For example, only 10% of those who sustained a spinal cord injury in the First World War survived for any length of time. After the Second World War, with early intervention in specialist spinal injury centres reducing the incidence of severe pressure sores and urinary tract infections, over 90% survived, had their vocational needs addressed, and returned to the community (Marquand, 1951; Smith, 1945).

In summary then, occupational therapists of the 1940s engaged patients in making, working with and sometimes, caring for objects. They did so for diversional, remedial and vocational purposes and were guided by their knowledge of the demands of the crafts they taught, their sedative or stimulating nature, and the different meanings various craft objects held for their patients. As well, they sought to develop theories to explain the therapeutic value of engaging in occupation. Therapists worked to establish their place in the health service by ensuring the objects patients made would conform with nurses’ expectations of a tidy ward and medical expectations of contributing to health outcomes. They reported the materials purchased, finished products sold, and outstanding successes in annual reports and, similar to their American colleagues, created objects, in the form of patient charts, to document their actions and achievements in an ongoing manner. They adapted their practice by introducing industrial machinery and products in response

to governmental directives to address the vocational needs of the war wounded. Finally, they were at the forefront of developments in medical practice, recruiting newly injured patients to make things in order to prevent loss of function.

Perspectives on Identity

The concept of identity was seldom addressed directly in the occupational therapy literature between 1938 and 1950. Nonetheless, the generalised claims made about occupational therapy point to identity outcomes. John Ivison Russell (1938), for example, suggests that patients resident in mental hospitals might “acquire considerable skill in craft technique which affords them a lasting interest and a real consolation” or that “in spite of themselves”, patients may “find a pleasant satisfaction in their superior intelligence and initiative” (p. 61) from being part of an outdoor maintenance gang. That is, these patients might establish an identity as skilled, cooperative and contented, at least in comparison with the senile, feeble or crippled patients who were unable to engage in worthwhile occupations. Some appreciation of occupational therapists’ implicit understanding of patients’ identities can be interpreted from the ways they were considered, dealt with and referred to. Aspects of therapists’ identity are also apparent in their discussion of their relationship with patients, doctors and other health professionals, and assumptions about the directions in which the profession needed to develop.

As discussed in chapter two, Western concepts of identity are highly complex and multifaceted. It is not surprising that not all aspects of identity can be discerned in the occupational therapy literature of that time. Nevertheless, three aspects of identity are readily identifiable. These are the notions of individualism, being active or passive agents, and being deviant or normal. (See Figure 6:3). Underlying each of these is an assumption that individuals are capable of change, and that identity changes over time with changing circumstances. Both patients and therapists are considered in relation to each of these themes.

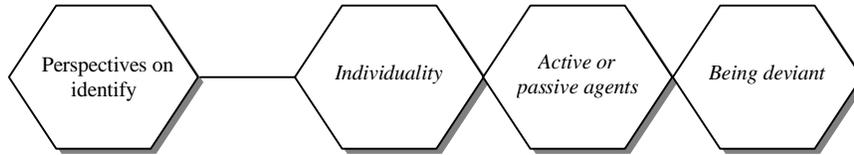


Figure 6:3 Perspectives on Identity.

Individuality

Individuality is a highly valued constituent of Western identities that is subjectively experienced as being recognised by others for our uniqueness. The predominant practice in the early occupational therapy literature, however, was to refer to patients as groups. Consistent with medical practice of the time, occupational therapists referred to patients in terms of their diagnostic categories, using language that would nowadays be unacceptable: the tuberculous, mental patients, orthopaedic cases. Patients were also referred to in terms of their deformities: the legless, the armless and the blind. Although this terminology began to be moderated by the beginning of the 1950s, when phrases such as “those suffering from skin loss and deformity” (Barrington, 1951, p. 21) appear in the literature, the practice of referring to patients in the collective continued unabated. Furthermore, as occupational therapists worked to develop a scientific basis for practice, the guidelines they developed addressed the action, craft, or adaptation to apply to particular dysfunctions or illnesses. Thus specific crafts were deemed therapeutic or contraindicated for particular conditions. For example, woodwork was deemed suitable for amputees (Colson, 1945), cord knotting for weakness of the fingers (Bunyard, 1940), weaving on a rigid heddle loom for plastic surgery patients (Barrington, 1951) and rug knotting but not knitting for patients with rheumatic diseases affecting the hands (Hick, 1948).

The individuality of the recipients of occupational therapy was acknowledged, however, in particularly note worthy circumstances, although this was more strongly evident in the American literature. One place where people’s condition did not take pre-eminence over their individuality was when occupational therapists were reporting therapeutic

successes. This took two forms. The first was when therapists reported their success in enticing a resistant individual to make something. The second was in reports of the outcome of therapy. The important feature of these reports was that they typically identified an individual's success, and these were often successes that had implications for the person's identity. Previously cited examples include the bookbinder radiant in plying his craft and thereby maintaining his identity within the mental hospital; the spastic girl who envisioned herself taking up a vocation in chair caning; or the moral imbecile who made wire netting and became an individual with skills, someone worthy of higher regard than his diagnosis signalled.

Individuality was also acknowledged with respect to tailoring intervention to meet individual needs (Dunton, 1945) and, occasionally, in relation to the individual goal towards which therapy was directed. For example, individual patients in the spinal injury unit were identified in terms of the trade to which they would return or take up when they left hospital, and what they would do to prepare for that future (Smith, 1945). Furthermore, Helen Willard and Clare Spackman's (1947) list of considerations for therapists providing patients with things to make at home demanded considerable knowledge of individual's work habits, including:

1. Know whether the patient is one who is overzealous or indifferent in performing an activity or if he follows directions explicitly.
2. Be sure that the patient understands what he is to do ...
3. At each treatment period check ... how he is doing it....
6. If the patient needs this type of work but cannot be trusted ... (p. 208)

Two further examples of either explicitly identifying or concealing an individual's identity are particularly revealing. The first was the ex-patient who submitted his story of receiving occupational therapy to the *Journal of the Association of Occupational Therapists*. In this case, while the editor assured readers that the submission was authentic, the identity of the writer was carefully hidden. The second appears in the American literature, where Dunton (1945) explicitly identified Judge Corley of Texas, Dr Sutton, "a famous billiard player" (p. 127), and Arthur MacMorrough Kavanagh and held them up as exemplars of individuals who had prospered despite significant disability.

Like their patients, occupational therapists were also at times considered as a collective, albeit in generally more positive terms. Dunton (1945), for example, was moved to remark that “the cleverness of therapists in overcoming difficulties and doing the impossible is sometimes more clever than magician’s tricks” (p. 121). More often, however, occupational therapists portrayed themselves as distinct individuals. Again, this has two facets. Individuality was apparent when individual therapists claimed particular expertise, usually in plying a favourite craft. Therapist’s individuality also became apparent when they took a leadership role, such as theorising the basis of practice, proposing new initiatives such as the incorporation of industrial techniques, or questioning the established wisdom of the profession. Issues of individual identity were less clear-cut, however, in relation to medical authority and professional autonomy. For instance, Casson envisaged occupational therapists working under medical direction and urged the fledgling Association to provide education for doctors to enable them to better fulfil this role, while others waited impatiently to be accorded the respect they felt they deserved and envisaged a time when those with influence would have convinced doctors of occupational therapy’s worth. Actions such as initiating clinical records and attending ward rounds, in this sense, can be interpreted as a growing professional autonomy expressed through taking responsibility to record and report outcomes and to influence the decisions being made about patient care.

The question that remains is what all this tells us. Perhaps what these examples intimate is that in certain important regards, occupational therapists considered and worked with their patients as individuals who had preferences about what to make and deeply personal responses to both their health condition and their therapeutic successes and failures. Their individuality was considered in relation to how tasks were approached and their different health needs depending on the work or domestic roles they might resume or take up on discharge. In the professional literature, therapists were at pains to protect individual’s privacy, even in the context of proclaiming their successes. Therapists acceptance of work of a poor standard from those who could do no better points to attitudes of respect and concern, as well as faith in individual’s potential to improve over time and perform

to the best of their ability. Furthermore, therapists held much the same attitudes about themselves as therapists as revealed by their own efforts to expand their craft repertoire and their theory base, become increasingly professional, and earn the respect of others, and the medical profession in particular.

In other regards, however, patients' health condition rather than their individuality took pre-eminence in occupational therapists' thinking. This is particularly evident as they applied their clinical reasoning to the problem of what best to do to address particular symptoms and avert predictable complications of disease processes and hospitalisation. This is not surprising, since theories to explain individual's occupational performance, formal assessment strategies to gather information about individual's occupational history and goals, and narrative approaches to data gathering that would elicit patient's subjective experience had not yet been envisaged let alone developed. Nevertheless, occupational therapists might be characterised as using holistic reasoning about their patients and themselves, albeit they applied more reductionist thinking to understand patients' health conditions, what they might make to improve their health, and how to modify equipment and the environment to achieve this.

Active or Passive Agents

Consistent with medical attitudes in the 1940s, the occupational therapy literature did not, by and large, portray patients as active agents despite the fact that the intended outcome of therapy was often to return patients to self-reliance. Rather, the identity allowed patients was essentially passive. Patients were directed in what craftwork they might undertake by the doctor's prescription and occupational therapist's judgement. Therapists, craft instructors and nursing staff regulated when and where they might make things, and controlled the supply and quality of materials they would work with. Therapists controlled who owned the products of their labour, how and when the things they made were disposed of, and at what price. Whether they were to concentrate on their workmanship or improvement in their capacities was determined by the therapist's beliefs, which in turn determined whether they were praised for the quality of what they made or their physical, mental or social progress.

For those receiving physical remediation, even the way they were to use their body was determined by the therapist, sometimes forcibly by strapping them to equipment while they worked. Patients in mental health settings, who were ostensibly given more choice about what they would make at the occupation centre, were restricted by others' determination of their readiness to attend and suitability to stay. Furthermore, mental patients' choice was channelled by which part of the occupation centre they were taken to, for dirty occupations such as woodwork were separated from clean occupations such as weaving, and men's occupations from women's. Of the occupations available and evident in the part of the centre the therapist took them to, their choice may have been further constrained by other's perception of their likely abilities and interests.

One manifestation of being positioned as passive recipients of therapy was that patients were rendered dependent both within the hospital system and within occupational therapy. Two mechanisms through which this was actioned were that patients had to wait for therapists to be available to them, and that they were dependent on therapists for their supply of craft materials. Patients were also dependent on hospital policy, implemented by therapists, for the recompense they might receive for their labour, if any.

Against this background of control and direction, it would seem that the openings for patients to assert themselves as active agents were limited to their own attitudes and performance, and the quality of the relationships they formed. They would, for example, have had control over their attitude towards participation and the effort they expended in learning the craft they had been assigned and working at their therapy. However, taking action to modify patients' responses to therapy was considered a legitimate part of occupational therapy practice. The literature records the patience therapists applied to this task and their efforts to entice patients' willing participation through the selection of objects offered to work on. As well, therapists had the power to apply sanctions to 'difficult' patients. These ranged from fairly mild social sanctions, such as leaving individuals to feel excluded once everyone else had something to make, to more coercive strategies such as removing patients' craftwork until their cooperation could be assured.

Against this background of control, depending on their interpersonal skills, patients might have taken an active role in recruiting the therapist into personal relationships in order to be allowed greater choice or dispensation, for example for workmanship that did not meet the therapist's standards or for working at a pace or in a manner the therapist did not consider optimal. It can also be assumed that individual patients determined the extent and manner in which they interacted with other patients, which would have allowed some influence over the social environment. As well, patients may have had opportunities to restrict how much they revealed to friends and family about what they made in therapy. Again, this would have afforded some control of how they were perceived by others.

While occupational therapists' actions and expectations might be interpreted as rendering their patients the passive recipients of therapy, therapists themselves were in many ways also controlled by the medical systems within which they worked. The ethos of the time was that occupational therapy, like other ancillary health services, "should be prescribed and administered under constant medical advice and supervision" (Dunton, 1945, p. 12). Where doctors were not sufficiently skilled or knowledgeable to do so, as previously noted, occupational therapists themselves were advised to educate them so that they could (Casson, 1938/39). Accordingly, the prevailing medical culture cast therapists as acting on instruction, rather than actively determining who might benefit from occupational therapy and how to best deliver that service.

As well as being under the control of doctors, occupational therapists were controlled by hospital administrators and this lack of autonomy accounts for many of the ways in which they controlled and limited patients. The hospital policy of keeping male patients in mental hospitals separate from female patients meant the segregation of men and women into different workshops, with access to different crafts. A less visible mechanism for control was fiscal, whereby therapists were required to justify the money spent on craft materials and account for it against the funds recouped by their sale. Another mechanism likely to have been in operation was to make therapists responsible for patients' safety and the security of the centres, equipment and materials they used.

Accordingly, therapists would have considered it part of their role to supervise patients in the occupation centre, which likely resulted in patients not being allowed to use those facilities at other times.

High workloads and working across services in different locations could also be framed as administrative mechanisms that controlled the extent to which occupational therapists could make themselves available to patients. The literature suggests that therapists accepted that this would mean that patients had to wait for the assistance or materials they needed until the therapist's next visit, which had the effect of placing patients in a position of passivity and dependence, whether or not that was the intention of the therapist. In addition, the ideology of teamwork, which hinges on collegial relationships between individual health professionals also seems to have resulted in therapists endeavouring to cooperate with keeping wards tidy by curtailing the crafts they offered to those the nursing staff would find acceptable. Finally, the ways therapists organised their work rooms, such as keeping messy occupations separate from clean ones, may have also limited patients' knowledge of and access to available craft options. It is likely, however, that such separations would have seemed so natural, such common sense, that these aspects of practice would almost certainly not have been perceived as controlling.

Despite these apparent restrictions occupational therapists seem to have been active shapers of their practice settings, actively working to establish occupational therapy services, and equip and decorate occupation centres. The self-reliance and pioneering spirit they displayed may have its roots in Dorset House, the first school of occupational therapy in Britain. There, ably led by Dr Casson, staff, students and patients worked side by side as they "sandpapered and painted doors and furniture, colour washed walls, stained floors, wove cushion covers, made stools and trays, curtains, tray cloths, rugs and waste paper baskets" (Owens, 1955, p. 96). In addition, therapists appear to have maintained an identity as active agents in the aspect of practice that afforded them most control, their work with patients. This is apparent in comments relating to working hard and continually expanding their repertoire of craft skills and thus the products patients might make, reflections on the theoretical basis of their practice, and in their ongoing

refinement of techniques to adapt and modify the things under their control: the looms, fret saws and other tools used to meet the remedial needs of patients.

Being Deviant

A final, although less emphasised aspect of identity apparent in the literature relates to the extent to which patients' and therapists' identity was construed as abnormal. Unlike other people in society, patients' incapacities, merely by virtue of being patients, were at forefront of their identity. For instance, a continuing thread in the discussion was the extent to which patients were de-conditioned and demoralised by extended hospitalisation. They were less than their former selves, less than their peers, stigmatised as unemployable, and in need of reactivation by an occupational therapist. Particularly in mental health settings, patients' identity was also often cast as one of deviance, of needing to be re-socialised into acceptable behaviour or productive roles.

However, the occupational therapy literature also reveals traces of therapists feeling and perhaps being considered 'abnormal' in the hospital setting. Occupational therapists were the "new kids on the block" and in physical health settings in particular, introduced objects and occupations that might in any other circumstance have been considered utterly out of place. As such, occupational therapists deferred to nurses, particularly in relation to their criteria about the appearance of the ward, rather than negotiating new norms. They 'made do' in wards not designed to accommodate the objects they introduced, and felt undervalued but made the best of relegation to retrieved space in basements or re-fitted out-houses. Just as the cartoon in *Punch* suggested, some recruited patients to the task of literally making their own department, working together to scrape off old paint and sew curtains. Against a backdrop of professions whose place in health was long established, they had to demonstrate their worth despite expectations that they would not cope, that patients would not want occupational therapy, and that the patients could not be changed. In many instances, their service was reported in terms of financial transactions, the materials bought and goods sold, rather than therapeutic benefit of their work. Perhaps most of all, the work they did was incomprehensible to the other staff, who did not share their philosophical belief in the healing power of occupation.

Overall, what is most apparent is the parallel between occupational therapists and those they treated. Both groups were subject to established systems and practices not attuned to recognising and valuing individuality, yet occupational therapists endeavoured to acknowledge patients' individual preferences of what to make or do. Both were constrained by the hospital systems, yet patients could take an active role in influencing their own health by making and using things and therapists could actively determine how they interacted with patients. Finally, both were framed as deviating from societal or hospital norms. Nonetheless, patients were drawn into making things and thereby addressed their return to society while the occupational therapists were committed to finding ways to explain and demonstrate how occupation addressed ill health.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored the status of occupational therapy and occupational therapists in the early days of the profession in England. The discussion has revealed the centrality of objects, both those patients made and those therapists used to practice at that time. In particular, therapists' knowledge of crafting things for the therapeutic benefit of children and adults with physical and mental health problems has been highlighted. As outlined, the purpose of making and using things was diversional, in the broadest sense, as well as remedial and vocational.

As they encouraged patients to make things, therapists found ways to ensure acceptance of their crafts in the hospital setting and ways to match each patient with a craft or activity that would meet their needs. They demonstrated a commitment to developing a theory base for their practice, being professional, and demonstrating the effectiveness of occupational therapy, and continued to do so despite the multiple impacts of World War II, the emergence of specialist medical services, and growing awareness of the benefits of active mobilisation after surgery.

Consistent with medical practice, patients were, by and large, referred to as a collective, often in diagnostic terms. In addition, the literature gives an impression of patients as

relatively passive recipients of therapy, with limited choice about what to make or do, how to apply themselves to the task, or whether they might keep the product of their labour. Occupational therapists also seem to have been regarded as a group, particularly by doctors and like patients, they were relatively highly controlled by the medical system. Mechanisms for control included medical prescription and supervision of their work, hospital policies, and fiscal accountability.

The discussion in this chapter provides a bridge between the chapters that came before, which presented the Romantic and rational assumptions Western people make about the relationship between objects and identity, and those that follow to address the assumptions occupational therapists make in this regard. It has discussed the initial importance of objects in therapy and a rudimentary awareness of identity issues. In the next chapter, occupational therapists' rationalist assumptions are addressed.

Chapter Seven

Rational Assumptions about Objects and Identity: 1938 - 1962

Occupational therapy's heritage includes both rational and Romantic assumptions about the ways objects influence people's identity. In this chapter and the following one those assumptions are explored, along with the practice issues that arose from them for English occupational therapists while the profession was becoming established in that country. Following the pattern of previous chapters, rational assumptions will be addressed in this chapter and Romantic in the next. The chapter addressing Romanticism will conclude with a discussion of how Romanticism and rationalism, which were initially intertwined, came into increasing conflict.

As with the previous chapter, and for the same reasons, the ideas presented are for the most part based on literature from England, supplemented by early American texts. The focus for analysis is the assumptions revealed in discussions of objects or identity issues. In this and the following chapter, however, the time frame is extended to 1962, thus covering 25 years of the profession's early development. To begin, a brief overview of the literature included in the analysis will be given, followed by discussion of rationalist views of objects and identity and the ways rationalism presents within occupational therapy. See Figure 7:1.

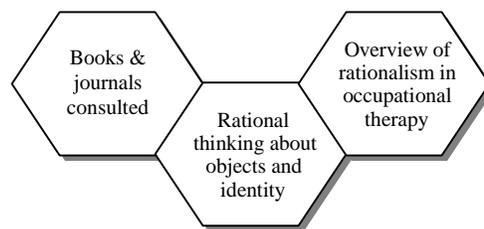


Figure 7:1 Progression of the Discussion in Chapter Seven.

Books and Journals Consulted

As distinct to the analysis that informed the previous chapter, where a broad overview of objects and identity issues was sought, the analysis for this chapter was specifically directed towards uncovering rational perspectives about objects and identity. All issues of the *Journal of the Occupational Therapists' Association* (1938 - 1939), the *Journal of the Association of Occupational Therapists* (1939/40 – 1949), and *Occupational Therapy* (1950 – 1962) were included in the analysis. The books used to inform chapter six were also included. In addition, eight further occupational therapy texts published up to 1960 were analysed, along with an occupational therapy chapter in a general rehabilitation text. The *Proceedings of the Second International Congress* convened by the World Federation of Occupational Therapists (WFOT) in 1958 and the *Proceedings of the Third International Congress* convened in 1962 were also consulted to add an international perspective. See Table 7:1 for a list of these additional texts. Three of the books and the chapter were written and published in England and five books in the USA. The WFOT Proceedings were published in Copenhagen and Philadelphia respectively.

Table 7:1
Occupational Therapy Books and Chapters Accessed for Analysis: 1951 - 1962

Year	Place	Title	Author(s)	Professional Affiliation/Role
1955	UK	Textbook of Occupational Therapy: With Chief Reference to Psychological Medicine	Eamon N. M. O'Sullivan	Doctor
1956	USA	Occupational Therapy in Pediatrics	Muriel F. Driver	Occupational Therapist
1957	USA	Occupational Therapy: Principles and Practice	Dr. William Dunton & Dr Sidney Light	Founder of <i>Occupational Therapy and Rehabilitation</i> Editor of <i>American Journal of Physical Medicine</i>
1957	USA	A Syllabus of Occupational Therapy Procedures and Techniques as Applied to Orthopedic and Neurological Conditions	Marguerite Abbott	Occupational Therapist
1958	UK	<i>Occupational Therapy in Rehabilitation</i> . In: Rehabilitation after Illness and Accident (pp. 84-96)	Barbara M. Stow	Edited by Thomas Ling, Consultant Psychiatrist & C. J. S. O'Malley, Medical Director
1958	Europe	Occupational Therapy as a Link in Rehabilitation: Proceedings of the Second International Congress	World Federation of Occupational Therapists	Doctors and Occupational Therapists
1958	USA	The Objectives and Functions of Occupational Therapy	American OT Association	Occupational Therapists
1959	USA	A Manual for Occupational Therapists on Prevocational Exploration	Jack Granofsky	Occupational Therapy Lecturer
1960	UK	An Approach to Occupational Therapy	Mary S. Jones	Occupational Therapist
1960	UK	Occupational Therapy in Rehabilitation (Reprinted 1961)	E. M. Macdonald (Ed.)	Occupational Therapist plus 19 OT contributors
1962	USA	Cultural Patterns Affecting Rehabilitation: Proceedings of the Third International Congress	World Federation of Occupational Therapists	Doctors, Service Directors and Occupational Therapists

Rational Thinking about Objects and Identity

Knowledge about the requirements for craft work, how to craft things, and how to teach patients craft techniques were the tools of the trade for occupational therapists in the 1930s and 1940s. As befits the step-by-step processes involved in weaving a length of fabric, knotting a handbag or making a basket, occupational therapists thought about these things in mechanistic ways. Their knowledge was extensive and detailed, and has a recipe-like quality. John Ivison Russell (1938), for example, offered the following advice in relation to the woodwork area:

Good solid benches with wood screws and stops are essential, and the workers should be taught that the surfaces are not to be carelessly damaged. When chiselling or sawing on the bench is necessary, a protecting board or bench hook should be used. (p. 129)

Louise McMillen (1951) described in exacting detail how to weave an Indian bed bracelet:

The design made in graph paper must be set up meticulously to avoid difficulties further along in the project... To insure the proper tension, the warp threads must be measured exactly, tied at one end, threaded across the separator on the loom one at a time, and carefully wound on the roller... The weaving process involves picking up tiny beads on a fine needle and holding the threaded beads in position while the return weft thread is drawn back through them. (p. 10).

A further example of the extensive and detailed craft knowledge that occupational therapists were building up is provided by Joyce Baily (1938), who described the strategies she deployed when teaching patients the art of cord knotting:

1. In teaching ‘Solomon’s knots, use strings of different colours – it is then much easier to see which string goes on top than to remember to use first the right and then, the left, strings....
2. Let a patient practise new patterns with odd pieces of string knotted on a knitting needle. It will not matter how often he unpicks them from

the knitting needle; otherwise he would spoil his belt as macramé easily loses its shine.... (pp. 21-22)

Mechanical knowledge of the construction of key items of craft equipment was also well established within the profession. This is evident in occasional references to techniques learned in the course of occupational therapy training, and presented at some length in texts of the time. The following, for example, is the instructions given for construction of a coir mat weaving frame:

This is constructed throughout of redwood. The upright posts, 3 ins. by 3 ins., are slotted about halfway down from the top, to allow the movable top rail to be adjusted and reversed. This rail is in two parts, 1½ in. by 3 ins., held together with ¼-in. bolts, and is held in the slots in the posts by an axle, which is secured to one-half of the top rail and rests on a draw pin, which is adjustable. (Russell, 1938, p. 103)

Occupational therapists' knowledge of how to construct craft equipment is also sometimes evident by omission. For example when Griselda Thornely (1948) ventured to post-war Germany to establish an occupational therapy service she found, as she had expected, that tracking down suitable craft materials was problematic. Her immediate priority, however, was to equip herself with rug-frames and table looms. Thornely's apparent lack of difficulty in having these made in the nearest town suggests that she had taken constructional drawings for these looms with her, or could describe her requirements in sufficient detail to guide a local tradesman in their construction.

Occupational therapists' mechanical knowledge also extended to ways to adapt the equipment they used for particular therapeutic purposes. In particular, they were schooled in ways to alter the biomechanical demands of operating looms, printing presses, bicycle fretsaws and so on, which necessitated a knowledge of angles, resistance and mechanical advantage and the mastery of springs, slings, pulleys and levers. To the uninitiated, the instructions for adaptations are next to undecipherable, as the following description of how to adapt a Fletcher loom to encourage hip flexion with knee flexion and extension illustrates. Having transferred the patient onto a firm bed, supported his head on pillows and pulled the loom over him to about waist level:

A cross-shaped tie, incorporating a D Ring at the intersection, is tied round [the] foot of affected leg, two ends round ankle and the other two ends under sole of foot – the D Ring is then situated on the instep.

The cord from middle of back of heddle is attached to D Ring, and adjusted to obtain backward shed when leg is fully extended. The cord from middle of front of heddle passes through front pulley and back over top of loom, thence for convenience, through a pulley fixed to foot of bed and finally attached to the D Ring on instep. It is then carefully adjusted so that a forward shed is obtained when patient's hip and knee are flexed as much as he can. (Bray, 1953, p. 43)

In order to maximise the number of people who could benefit from the hip abduction, flexion and extension enabled by various adaptations of the looms, three or even four patients might use a loom in the course of a day. To accommodate such high usage, the therapists made logical accommodations such as threading up the looms with long warps, and giving patients turns at choosing the yarn the loom would be threaded in.

As one might expect, occupational therapists built up their knowledge of craft techniques over time, with some input from craftsmen. One focus of this development was determining how best to use the various crafts for diversional or biomechanical benefit. This involved identifying the objects that could be made using particular craft techniques, and the attributes and therapeutic potential of both the process and the product of that craftsmanship. Basketry techniques, for example, could be used to fashion willow, rush, cane or raffia baskets, had remedial potential for a wide range of disorders, and patients found the process of making a basket both interesting and enjoyable (Crampton, 1950). Table 7:2 summarises examples of this kind of knowledge development, as published in the journal. A second focus was adding new crafts to occupational therapists' repertoire, such as wrought ironwork, pillow lace and mosaics.

Table 7:2

Crafts and Products Presented in the Occupational Therapy Journal, by Year of Publication

Craft	Products	Therapeutic Potential	Reference
Bookbinding	Address books etc Binding hospital records	Adaptability, appeals to men, artistic & practical aspects	Macdonald, 1938
Cord Knotting	Belts, dog leads, handbags	Gradable, rhythmical & soothing	Baily, 1938
Weaving	Small pieces to tweed fabric lengths	Develop powers of concentration & good work habits, soothing or stimulating	Jackson, 1938
Fabric printing	Curtains, dress lengths Scenery for plays etc	Concentration for precision & colour matching, creative – surprise element	Rivett, 1938/39
Embroidery	Embroidered articles, gifts	Affordable & familiar, avenue for artistic ability, draws on ingenuity	Cooper, 1940
Glazed pottery	Cup, bowl, pot	Clay as a creative, pliable medium	Whittall, 1948
Basketry	Willow, rushwork & raffia baskets	Interesting and enjoyable, highly gradable	Crampton, 1950
Pottery	Pinch, coil & slab pots	Satisfaction from latent inventiveness	Leach, 1950
Jewellery-making	Necklaces & bracelets	Quick, inexpensive, unusual & attractive	Archer, 1958
Wrought ironwork	Tables, plant holders, magazine racks, candlesticks, screens	Easy to grade, potential for high quality, desirable products	Savage, 1959
Pillow Lace	Lace trims	Fascinating craft with wide variety of patterns, novel craft, suitable for long term projects	Ellis, 1960
Cutting jigsaw puzzles	Boxed jigsaw puzzles	Each puzzle required extensive use of jigsaw	Lock, 1961
Mosaics	Teapot stands, trays, table tops	Attractive to patients, fosters perseverance, abstract thinking, imagination	Bohm, 1962
“Well-dressing” mural	Large mural for display	Suitable for older patients with cognitive and physical disabilities	Lambert, 1962

In addition to the continual expansion of their procedural and therapeutic knowledge of crafts, occupational therapists were building their mechanical know-how. Biomechanical strategies to strengthen muscles and increase joint flexibility were a particular focus. Alongside this growing knowledge base, basic tools were adapted to meet particular needs. An example is the seven different variations on a sanding block developed by an American occupational therapist, including a proximal sandblock for active exercise of the proximal joints, a drilled dowel sandblock for “forced passive motion of the distal joints of the phalanges”, and the opponens sandblock for “exercise of cases with median nerve injury where flexor range of motion in phalanges is limited and function of opposition with opponens is inhibited” (Abbott, 1957, pp. 33 & 35). In addition, increasingly sophisticated paraphernalia to adapt craft equipment was becoming available. The F.E.P.S. (flexion, extension, pronation, supination) adaptation designed by Sidney Lock for use with looms and printing presses is one such development (Weissel, 1961). Therapists’ mechanical knowledge was updated as new models, such as the No. 53 Adana Printing Press superseded existing equipment (Lock, 1962).

At times therapists, technical instructors and some of the more skilled patients were called on to develop specialist equipment to meet a particular need. One example is the *Cane Cutter for the Disabled*, which relieved staff of much preparatory work by making it possible for patients with conditions such as multiple sclerosis, hemiplegia, and rheumatoid arthritis to cut their own basketry stakes (Boak, 1959). Furthermore, various ‘aids to treatment’ were developed; enabling patients to embark on craft projects while healing took place. The occupational therapists at Farnham, Park Recuperative Home seem to have been particularly energetic in this regard, developing a boned glove for use by patients with median nerve injury; a canvas gauntlet that would allow recent hand amputees to wield files, mallets, table tennis bats and the like while they waited for more permanent prostheses; and a working pylon to enable above and below knee amputees to operate bicycle saws, foot-powered rug looms, and foot-powered treadle lathes (Jones, 1953). In addition, the therapeutic potential of games such as puff billiards and a tabletop football game modelled after those found in amusement arcades was advocated (Prior, 1961; Puff Billiards, 1957).

The tenor of these developments was rationalist. This rationalism is particularly evident in the way new rehabilitation and craft equipment was promoted to occupational therapists as more effective or efficient than what had come before. For instance, a specialist metal loom was neat, sturdy and compact and “eliminated the necessity of tying up lams” and “prevented the pedals from moving out of alignment”. Special tubes of paint with a ballpoint applicator for drawing on glass, ceramics or fabrics “eliminated mess and clearing up”. A new cycle saw was designed to eliminate problems experienced with the bicycle fret saw and “could be easily converted into a drilling, sanding or buffing unit” (Oliver, 1958, p. 19).

Those occupational therapists who entered into the spirit of expanding the professions’ repertoire of crafts and applying mechanical know-how to early intervention appear to have had a strong sense of identity. Even those who regarded their own attempts to adapt equipment as somewhat “Heath Robinson” (Bray, 1953) seem proud to have been part of a dynamic profession that was taking its place in the world of rehabilitation. This modern and go-ahead identity was not without blemish, however, with some criticism falling to occupational therapists for too narrowly employing craftwork as a therapeutic medium. Zinovieff (1962), for example, argued that occupational therapists had too little knowledge of kinesiology, and as a result focused too narrowly on particular movements of a joint instead of integrating these into the general movement patterns of the limb. He declared that:

... if a patient is sent to the Occupational Therapy Unit with a request to develop some particular movement or muscle group, he should not be put on only *one* activity, but, whilst one activity may be the principal one, at each visit a number of subsidiary tasks should always be given, if possible related to everyday use. Thus, in a patient with a stiff shoulder, for whom mobilisation is requested, using an elevation loom, reaching objects on a high kitchen shelf, tying on an apron behind the back, and bowling a ball might all be different – and varied – activities that deal with certain aspects of mobilisation. (pp. 14-15, emphasis original).

As well as addressing craft techniques, the adaptation of craft equipment and musculoskeletal functioning in rationalist ways, the early occupational therapists sought to organise their knowledge of patients and the therapeutic process, as well as developing areas of practice in ways that were essentially rationalist. This is the subject of the rest of this section of discussion. An overview is provided in Figure 7:2.



Figure 7.2 Rational Assumptions about Objects and Identity: 1938 -1962.

Organisation of Knowledge

and Occupational therapists’ rationality is also evident in their efforts to categorise the things learned in practice. This ordering of knowledge was, in part, demanded by the sheer diversity of “available occupations and handicrafts, as well as the variability of the patients recommended for treatment” (O’Sullivan, 1955, p. 22). Even more significant was the fact that the success of therapy hinged on accurately matching patients’ diverse capacities, interests and disposition with an occupation. Accordingly, therapists’ understanding of which crafts might appeal to which patients was organised according to age group, for children (Driver, 1956), and gender, things men like to make and do and things women like. Therapists also attempted to categorise the characteristics of particular crafts people might find appealing. For example, the attraction of bookbinding was accounted for by noting its artistic nature, including “the scope for lettering, illustration, paper decoration and cover design” as well as its practical side, the “actual binding processes which can be done in factory fashion” (Macdonald, 1938, p. 23).

To address the particular practical problems of the day, occupational therapists categorised the things patients might make into those suited or unsuitable to working in bed. They also knew which projects lent themselves to cooperative work, which demanded a solitary worker, which would require assistance to put tools and materials away, as well as which tools might be dangerous. They knew which equipment and materials would survive being autoclaved or submerged in disinfectant, and thus which craft projects to offer to patients in isolation wards or sanatoria. Patients were often categorised, in terms of their attitudes towards making things, such as meticulous workers, those who would expect perfection, or inaccurate, and as willing or unwilling. In addition, therapists made judgements about patients' ability to make and do things, and used this information to guide their selection of craft activities. For example the simplest work, such as making doormats and brushes was reserved for the least able patients in the mental hospital in Santpoort, Holland (van der Esch, 1952).

In the 1940s, the arena in which therapists' knowledge was most systematised was in determining which crafts were best suited to which disorders. Texts of that time feature page after page of tables of diagnoses, specific impairments, and the craft or equipment suggested for remedying them. The occupation recommended for arthritics with difficulty with flexion and extension of the fingers, for example, was canework, while those experiencing difficulty with abduction and adduction of the shoulder might benefit from carpentry. Using a bicycle saw, bicycle sewing machine, foot bellows, lathe, or pottery wheel was recommended for those with restrictions to knee flexion and extension (Haworth & Macdonald, 1944, p. 68).

By the 1950s, these craftwork guidelines had been extended to include information about the medical treatment of various diagnoses, and general principles to guide occupational therapy intervention were incorporated. One such was the advice to "plan for positioning of the patient, relative to both localization of exercise and working surroundings" (Abbott, 1957, p. 23). The next advance, which therapists learned about at the 1958 World Federation of Occupational Therapists Congress, was the publication of detailed protocols for specific diagnoses such as poliomyelitis. These protocols identified the

overall purposes of intervention and outlined the treatment focus and adaptive equipment recommended for each phase of recovery, from early convalescence to prevocational treatment. For example Muriel Driver (1958), a Canadian occupational therapist, recommended using crafts in the early phase of treatment, and retraining in functional skills such as ADL and household tasks in the later stages of convalescence. In addition to these initiatives, occupational therapists' knowledge of crafts was organised with respect to children's developmental levels, with suggestions about grading papercraft, carpentry, weaving and others crafts according to children's conceptual abilities, while acknowledging that "the hospitalized child usually performs at a lower level than the well child at home" (Driver, 1956, p. 15).

By 1958, the American Occupational Therapy Association had published a comprehensive document outlining the causative factors, clinical features, contraindications, and therapeutic goals and principles in relation to 40 different diagnoses ranging from communicable diseases, to paranoia and radial nerve injury. In this document, like much of the literature from the 1950s, specific crafts were no longer recommended. In their place, 'treatment media' like treadle saws, floor looms, and self-help devices were identified. Recommendations for their use were made without reference to individual patients, and for the most part in relation to physical health conditions. In contrast, therapists working in mental health settings were warned of the dangers of assuming that "particular occupations were of necessity suited to particular neurotic illnesses" with the obviously different problems of "a company director and a bricklayer with obsessional illnesses" (Munro & Burges, 1951, p. 256) cited as explanatory examples.

This rational ordering of knowledge appears to have been initiated by occupational therapists themselves, perhaps in order to more efficiently hand it on to students and each other. However in both Britain and the United States, some doctors were encouraging a more encompassing rationalism. At times this took the form of cheerfully deriding occupational therapists for being irrational, such as Dr Bach's (Bach & Bright, 1951b) claim, in his address to the 1951 Conference of the Association of Occupational

Therapists in London, that he experienced them as “often charmingly feminine and inconsistent ... one day asking for more fancy work, another day urging me to use my influence to import heavy industry into the hospital department” (p. 218). More often, doctors showed their rationality in what they wrote about occupational therapy and how occupation influenced patients’ health. At times occupational therapy itself was framed as a rational process. One such assertion appears in the foreword to Norah Haworth and E. Mary Macdonald’s (1944) *Theory of Occupational Therapy*, where Sir Woods, the Consultant Adviser in Physical Medicine to the British Ministry of Health referred to occupational therapy as “scientifically selected occupation” (p. iii).

Quantifying Therapy

Consistent with the view that occupational therapy is a rational process of matching occupation to need, some doctors assumed that occupation could be prescribed like other medical interventions, to achieve a specified restorative outcome. One example of this is found in the chapter on orthopaedics in William Rush Dunton’s (1945) *Prescribing Occupational Therapy*:

Occupational therapy has its largest application in arthritis for the following reasons: the work can be made to produce every known movement of any joint of the body; it can be graded to any desired effort and it can be controlled. But best of all, its effects can be charted and measured with considerable accuracy, so that at any time the physician and the therapist can judge the results on the patient. (p. 89, emphasis original)

Dunton’s emphasis on grading, charting (by which he means doctors ordering precisely the type and dose of occupational therapy patients were to receive, just as doses of drugs were charted), control, measurement, accuracy and judgement are pure rationalism. The same concern with providing an exact intervention is evident in Dr Walter Mathies’ (1950) explanation of occupational therapy in Germany. He itemised the persisting weakness, stiffness and so on that patients’ work might address, and explained how their therapy was adjusted “to the degree of the defect” (p. 18).

Occupational therapists rarely quantified therapy in this way. More commonly, the rational discourse of both British and American occupational therapists addressed how therapy worked and what affect it might have. Accordingly, occupation was broken down into its component parts and the outcome of therapy described in terms of explicit, if circumscribed health benefits. Constance Owens (1944), for example, identified making craft objects as providing “exercise”, which she described as “limited, though regular, movement and ... a small amount of exertion” which would “aid circulation and muscle tone” (p. 13). In a similar vein, the purpose of employing patients with mental disorders in occupation was broken down into specific functions: training them to concentrate, reviving “lost powers of initiative”, putting them in touch with reality, stimulating and restoring confidence, driving out delusions and hallucinations (Haworth & Macdonald, 1944, p. 10), and increasing physical well-being (English, 1939). In addition, some therapists sought to understand how occupational therapy aligned with other health professions. For instance, Janet Bunyard (1940) attempted a detailed correlation of the similarities and differences between the various intervention strategies of occupational and massage therapy.

There is also a hint of patients considering occupational therapy from a rational perspective, particularly in Faith Johnson’s (1947) observation of a return to work programme for Scottish miners. The men were toughened up with rigorous outdoor activities including uprooting tree stumps, splitting logs and manufacturing concrete kerbstones, which they apparently considered “reasonable ways of spending time and energy” (p. 17).

A Rational View of Objects

As well as being apparent in the process, outcomes and patient experience of occupational therapy, rationalist thinking is also apparent in changes in the way objects were thought about and referred to. Consistent with the earlier literature, the therapeutic equipment that occupational therapists adapted to suit patients’ physical impairments were discussed with engineering precision, right through the 1940s and 1950s. To assist occupational therapists in this, Mary Macdonald (1960) included in her text a chapter

titled *Mechanics for Occupational Therapy* which provided a brief explanation of fulcrums and levers, and applied that knowledge to the adjustment of bicycle fretsaws, treadle saws, spinning wheels and so on. Something of the same precision was applied to descriptions of lively splints, complete with “elastic pulls for flexion, or spring loading for extension” (Macdonald, 1960, p. 62), the production of which would apparently provide as much interest for the occupational therapist as the patient. A later addition to this discourse was the attention given to the chairs and stools used to seat patients while they worked, and benches and tables they worked on. In this, occupational therapists were informed by standards developed for factory workers (Jones, 1960; Macdonald, 1960).

In contrast, from the late 1940s the objects patients made, which had previously been described in triumphant terms, were largely referred to in practical terms. Mary S. Jones (1960), for example, discussed at some length possible uses for the brushes patients made with the wire-twisting machine, and used a matter of fact tone when reporting the magazine racks, plywood tits, brooches, ashtrays, and bowls that patients constructed. More commonly, the things patients made appear to have been regarded as mere instruments or tools of therapy, or were rendered invisible. Helen Willard and Clare Spackman (1947), for example, described the use of hammers, sanding blocks and coping saws, itemising in some detail the possibilities for muscle action, repetition, and range of movement without reference to what all this hammering, sanding and sawing might produce.

As well, there was a tendency to refer to patient’s possessions that were incorporated into therapy only as broad categories. Accordingly, in one description of treating a child with cerebral palsy a series of interactions with largely unidentified objects was outlined: from “creeping to objects with trunk supported” to “crawling over objects such as steps, pillows etc” to “picking up object from floor” to “pushing weighted moveable object” (Scott-Orr, 1951, pp. 68-69). These objects, along with the “doorknobs, taps, toys and kitchen utensils” Muriel Driver (1956, p. 25) identified as having “training possibilities” for children, were considered from a purely biomechanical perspective – the movement

involved in crawling over them or using them, the postural reactions and balance required when bending over and picking them up. At the extreme, the presence and use of objects was merely implied within a string of functional abilities that patients attending prevocational services should be assessed for – the ability to reach for, hold, lift, carry, push and pull, throw and hammer things (Granofsky, 1959).

One exception in the trend towards glossing over objects was the matter of therapists' uniforms (Uniforms, 1953, p. 117). These particular objects were, one might expect, close to occupational therapists' identity and they were discussed at length over a surprising number of years (Wilcock, 2002b). The goal, "to provide a really satisfactory uniform" (p. 117) for members of the British Association of Occupational Therapists, was however thrashed out in resoundingly rational terms, with considerations such as supply, durability, cost, laundering, reinforcement of the pockets and availability of spare cuffs, collars and fabric for patches all given their due regard. It appears, however, that the complaints received and expert advice given did not address more subjective considerations such as what the uniform was like to wear, or more Romantic concerns such as the sense of authority, practicality or femininity therapists felt when they wore it.

A further instance where occupational therapists might have been expected to express Romantic sentiments in relation to an object was the provision of prosthetic limbs to infants and children. Three factors might reasonably have triggered this response. Firstly there was the tragedy of an otherwise perfect child suffering traumatic or congenital loss of a limb. Secondly, it was thought that early introduction of a prosthesis might result in its complete acceptance and integration into the child's life, so that despite the impairment no handicap would result. Thirdly, this was a pioneering area of medical advancement, and occupational therapists had an undisputed place within it. However reports of this work are unremittingly rationalist, outlining the developmental reasoning used to support early intervention, the principles the team applied to the problem of minimising prosthesis non-acceptance, and the progression of skills in prosthetic use expected of children of different ages (Dennis, 1958).

Although occupational therapists' rationality towards objects is clearly evident in the literature, they did not typically go as far as doctors in viewing patients' emotional responses to the things they made in occupational therapy in purely instrumental terms. Dr. John Colson (1945), for example, reduced the "joy and satisfaction" patients might experience to just one of many psychological benefits of occupational therapy, alongside "working in a happy atmosphere" (p. 6), healthy rivalry between patients, and the companionship of others. Similarly, Dr. Mathies (1950) only acknowledged the self-confidence that making things might bring and how satisfaction with the final product might encourage patients to "do more advanced types of work" (p. 18).

The Rationalisation of Therapy

Alongside this increasingly rational view of objects, occupational therapists in many spheres of practice were adopting a more and more rational view of the therapeutic process, with the creative aspects of making and using objects tending to fade from view. In its place, therapists stressed how engagement in occupation would "demonstrate [to patients] their progress towards recovery" (Haworth & Macdonald, 1944, p. 17). Rather than being important in itself, engaging patients in creative pursuits came to be rationalized as an opportunity to interact with them and observe their behaviour (McMillen, 1951). Such observations included patients' ability to focus their attention as well as their indifference or active engagement; their initiative, efficiency and concern for the quality of their work; their ability to work cooperatively with others, and the change in their performance over time (Russell, 1938). "By their works ye shall know them", Eleanor Whittall (1948) reminded therapists, but rationalism perhaps focused occupational therapists' attention on their objective knowledge of patients more than their subjective understanding of them. Working from this rational perspective, the goals of occupational therapy were described as being "to restore function; in orthopaedic and surgical cases to restore functioning of joints and muscles, in mental hospitals to restore a normal functioning of the mind" (Haworth & Macdonald, 1944, p. 1).

Over the succeeding decades, the purpose of making things in occupational therapy was reduced to merely increasing function. This rationalist perspective is, for example,

evident in the way some therapists began to report the outcomes of therapy to people outside the profession. Rather than making the global claims typical of earlier times, these therapists were careful to give precise and observable accounts of what had been achieved. Two excerpts from Sylvia Docker's report published in the Fourth Annual Report of the Victorian Society for Crippled Children are illustrative:

One little girl of 11 years of age who had not been able to use her right hand until she was taught to do so in making baskets can now write firmly in ink. (O.T. in Australia, 1940, p. 22)

In one badly spastic case the doctor asked whether a girl could be taught a craft by which she could learn co-ordination. Chair caning is one of the best crafts for this purpose. ... Consequently her co-ordination has improved in all her activities during her normal day. (O.T. in Australia, p. 23)

A further outcome of occupational therapists viewing the aims, process and outcomes of their interventions in rationalist terms was that it highlighted a deeply philosophical question that has never really been resolved. The question revolved around whether it was necessary for patients to be interested in the craft they were learning, or the product they were making. While it is by no means clear in the early literature whether patients were given much choice about what project they would work on, it was generally held that it was preferable that they were interested in, involved with, or enjoying what they were doing. Yet in 1951, Francis Bach and Elizabeth Bright (1951b) proclaimed that occupational therapists should "make room for something that was not in itself interesting [to the patient] but was vital to the patient's ultimate happiness" (p. 221). Patients' cooperation, they asserted, could be achieved by using logic to persuade them that making something by using a particular piece of equipment in the prescribed way would have a therapeutic outcome.

The extent to which this call to apply reason to convince patients to do what was asked of them is difficult to gauge from the literature. So too is the manner in which it was applied. For example almost a decade later, Mary Jones (1960) noted that therapists at Farnham Park routinely stressed to patients "that the intention is to find work that

interests each individual” (p. 3). Nonetheless, the foremost consideration was that the work patients would undertake had to fulfil the doctor’s goal of increasing biomechanical function and work fitness. For example Wilcock, who was a student at Farnham Park in 1960 and on staff there from late 1961, remembers that depending on the surgical procedure they had received, patients’ choice might be confined to which colour wood to use, or what shape they might make their table lamp (Personal communication, 5 October, 2003). Patients were expected to be economical with resources, to assist and teach each other, and to contribute to keeping the workshop tidy and tools in good repair. In return, patients were offered the opportunity to purchase the things they made for the cost of the materials. In this way, a potent mix of interest, trust in authority figures, shared responsibility and opportunity for personal gain were invoked to ensure that patients would settle in quickly and apply themselves to their allocated task.

This rational approach to inducting patients into therapy contrasts with the professions’ prior assumption that the intrinsic qualities of occupations would engage patients to perform and that it was this engagement in occupation that was curative. Reasonable limits to logical persuasion were recognised, however. For example, Eamon O’Sullivan (1955) asserted that “compulsion or coercion must never be resorted to” (p. 24), but they did allow that persuasion and inducement might be permissible. Similarly, Barrington (1951), a therapist working in a plastic surgery unit who otherwise described her practice in rational medical and biomechanical terms, declared:

It is my firm opinion that no patient in any circumstances should be *forced* into an occupation for which they have no interest, no matter how remedially valuable is its application. If this is done, I consider the entire value of Occupational Therapy is defeated. (p. 22, emphasis added)

Therapy Driven by Theory

A further manifestation of the ever-increasing rationalism in occupational therapy was a rising tendency to use explicitly identified theory to guide practice. Biomedical theories had, of course, always informed practice so that references to physical and psychiatric symptoms and processes are commonplace in the occupational therapy literature. For

example, McDowall's 1959 description of the paintings created by schizophrenic patients as bizarrely ornamented, autistic, depicting hallucinations and distorted is consistent with the descriptions published ten and twenty years previously (English, 1939; Sims, 1949). Similarly, biomechanical knowledge had long informed therapy for people with orthopaedic and rheumatic conditions.

The 1950s and early 1960s, however, saw a burgeoning of theoretical constructs in the occupational therapy literature, with therapists explaining the purpose of patients' interaction with or creation of objects in developmental, psychodynamic and neuromotor terms. A summary of the large number of articles published in the journal that used theory to explain practice in psychiatric and physical health settings is presented in Tables 7:3 and 7:4. In addition to the theories discussed in their own literature, occupational therapists in England were exposed to further theoretical orientations when they attended WFOT Congresses. One such was 'object relations', which had been developed and promoted in the United States (Azima, Azima, Johnston & Wittkower, 1958). Indeed, Muriel Driver from Canada seems to have captured the mood of the 1958 Congress in her authoritative assertion that "intelligent treatment is founded on sound principles" (1958, p. 106). This claim was echoed in the Azimas' proposal that the "lack of a systematic theory" to guide psychiatric occupational therapy accounted for its "uncertainties, vagueness and fragility" (p. 136).

The sudden adoption of a range of new explanatory models by occupational therapists seems to coincide with the emergence and strengthening of the concept of multidisciplinary teamwork. Indeed, references to being part of a team, taking a team approach to patients, and occupational therapy perspectives informing team decisions and plans are taken for granted within much of this literature. Certainly the Azimas and their colleagues (1958) believed that the absence of clearly articulated theory accounted for the "difficulties of occupational therapist-psychiatrist relationship" as well as the "frictions and confusion between occupational therapy and other ancillary services" (pp. 136-137). The move towards teamwork, then, seems to have been a key impetus fuelling this trend towards adopting and applying theory in practice.

Table 7:3

Occupational Therapy in Psychiatric Settings Driven by Theory

Context	Theoretical Framework	Application of Theory	Reference
Psychiatry	Medicine – Symptoms of schizophrenia	Art works as depicting hallucinations, distorted, autistic, bizarrely ornamented, repetitive and meaningless	*McDowall, 1959
Psychiatry	Medicine – Psychiatric symptoms	Mosaics as counteracting symptoms – restlessness by the perseverance required, confusion with the need for clarity, concrete thinking by the abstract image created, depression by imaginative work	Bohm, 1962
Psychiatric hospital	Psychodynamic	Catharsis through free expression in art work versus cognitive, perceptual and ego-strengthening benefits of structured art work	Böhm, 1958a
Child psychiatry	Developmental: psychodynamic	Improve object relations, work out difficulties in inner life through creative activities, express aggressive impulses, project ideas	Forward, 1953a
Psychotic children	Developmental: Regressed behaviour	Promote maturation beyond infantile level by accepting regressed behaviour (e.g. bottle feeding, smearing), and promoting self-awareness with kinaesthetic experiences, self discovery by watching self in a mirror and dressing, and perceptual training	Forward, 1953b, 1958a & b
Child psychiatry	Psychodynamic	Puppetry as medium for cathartic release of aggression, emotional expression, symptomatic treatment (e.g. stammering), exploration of the family situation, & prolonged analytic therapy	Howells & Townsend, 1954
Child psychiatry	Psychopathology	Revealing and working through psychopathology and using objects (water pistols, clay, paints) and therapeutic relationship	Kotlowski, 1962
Geriatric Unit	Psychodynamic	Catharsis of anxiety and complaints by engaging anxious, confused & disabled elderly patients in craft activities	*Cosin, 1956
Remand Home	Psychopathology	Using art & handicrafts to modify pathological behaviour, through opportunities for self discipline, self expression, social obligations	Barrett, 1953
Penal institution	Psychotherapeutic	Modifying delinquent behaviour through individually selected, meaningful creative occupations that link past and present life	*Lomax-Simpson, 1962

Note: * denotes that the author was not an occupational therapist.

Table 7:4
Occupational Therapy in Physical Medicine Settings Driven by Theory

Context	Theoretical Framework	Application of Theory	Reference
Cerebral palsy unit	Developmental: Control of voluntary movement	Minimal modifications of environment to support function, e.g. chair to support good sitting position, toys selected to particular needs	Miller, 1952, 1953
Spastic Unit	Gesell's maturational scales, neurology	Treat the handicap as it presents itself clinically (p. 11), following a normal developmental sequence, using adapted equipment to correct athetosis, ataxia and tremor	Bartholomew, 1955
Infantile cerebral palsy	Developmental: Neurophysiology, motor development	Re-education of movement patterns to hold, grasp, reach out for, pick up, release and manipulate objects (push & pull, pat, poke, shake, transfer between hands, drop, hurl)	*Bobath & Finnie, 1958
Defective children	Developmental: Hand-eye coordination, socialisation, visuo-perceptual training,	Balance bars, ball games, buttons and shoe laces, modified crafts; Social play, cooperative tasks such as tidying up; Educational toys such as 3 piece jigsaws, using scissors, moving objects	Forward, 1959
Physical: Treatment apparatus	Biomechanical, cognitive, perceptual	Shapeboard (blocks, pegs, spheres, etc) to improve manual dexterity after hand injury or stroke, and assess brain damage (follow instructions, recognise shapes, motor planning, manipulate objects)	Thornely, 1962
Arthritis	Biomechanical	Maintain or increase mobility & strength using light handwork (jigsaws, painting, drawing, needlework etc) followed by specific fingerwork (basketry, toymaking, pottery, typing), then adapted weaving & printing	Weissel, 1961
Hand injury	Biomechanical	Increase range of movement, power & grip, and harden stumps through graduated tool use required to make a turned table lamp	Case History, 1957
Orthopaedics	Biomechanical	Advocating industrial machinery to provide exact remedial exercise (ROM, resistance, repetitions) to develop strength, ROM, coordination	*Plewes, 1951b
Writer's cramp	Neuromuscular	Exercises to retrain writing style (light grasp, free movement of wrist, decreased muscle tension) using chalk on blackboard	Sharp, 1953

Note: * denotes that the author was not an occupational therapist

Occupational therapists' adoption of theory is important to note, because theories are a rational organisation of knowledge that directs people's attention to certain things and explain the relationships between them. Elizabeth Kotlowski (1962), for example, interpreted one ten year old boy's physically violent behaviour towards her as a sign that he was beginning to work through the suppressed aggression he felt towards his rigid and hostile mother. Rather than attempting to deflect or reduce this hostility, she provided opportunities to express aggression by encouraging "clay throwing and messy play with water and paints" and supplying "clay figures – including members of his family, which he enjoyed knocking off the wall" (p. 21). In contrast, G. E. Forward (1959) describes a quite different approach in her visuo-perceptual training of defective children:

... it is necessary that the handling be firm, although demonstrably affectionate, in order both to control any primary behavioural outbursts and to develop the positive rapport with the therapist on the basis of which they will begin to accept suggestions from her.... In this way the child is assisted in achieving and maintaining attention in relation to the training materials provided, not only through the non-stimulating and protected nature of the environment but by the verbal guidance and encouragement from the adult ... (pp. 16-17)

Whilst occupational therapists' shift towards using theory can be interpreted as strengthening practice, of note in this context is the fact that all of the theories occupational therapists adopted at this time had a rationalist base. That is, they all reflect an underlying assumption that life is orderly and predictable, and consequently that disordered or chaotic processes and behaviours can be made more orderly, and the abnormal brought closer to normality. Each of the theories sets out to logically explain apparently uncertain and complex processes. They postulate that objective observations can reveal the meaning of human behaviour or experience, and that change in behaviour and experience can be ascertained and measured.

In addition, all of the theories that occupational therapists adopted at this time implicitly assumed universality, that is, that there are truths about human behaviour that hold irrespective of context. As well, particularly in the case of theories informing mental

health practice, there is an underlying supposition that even the most disordered behaviour can be influenced by reason. With the perspective of time, it seems that the overall effect of adopting reductionistic theories to guide practice was that the objects used and created in therapy were reduced to instruments to be used and the overall goal was limited to restoration of function, rather than achieving a state of good health by healing the body, mind and soul.

Challenges in Adopting Rationalist Theories

While the swing towards using rationalist theories appears to have been widespread, it was not without its problems. One difficulty was that occupational therapists and the health professionals they worked with at times held differing views about the theoretical basis of occupational therapy practice. In some cases, the doctor's view was much narrower than the occupational therapist's. One example of this phenomenon comes from an article in which a doctor introduced a specialty service in which occupational therapy was described as "helping to keep children happy in hospital" by keeping them occupied and "attending to their psychological needs" (Illingworth & Lane, 1960, p. 19). The occupational therapist in that service outlined her role a much more complex way. She identified a mix of developmental, educational, psychological and remedial concerns that focused on basic safety needs, perceptual and social skills, educational readiness and progression, and activities of daily living (ADL) and domestic skills. In other cases, doctors explained occupational therapy using theoretical constructs that seem at odds with therapists reported actions. Dr Cosin (1956), for example, used the notion of catharsis to explain the improvement achieved in an older woman's anxiety, headaches, insomnia and skeletal pains achieved through knitting dishcloths. However catharsis is a notion more in keeping with psychotherapy, which Margaret Mort, Cosin's superintendent occupational therapist during the 1950s, clearly distinguished from occupational therapy. According to Mort, occupational therapy required a more authoritarian approach than that advocated by psychotherapists, to directly address the physical, psychological and social implications of the multiple disabilities, low activity levels and reduced standards and learning capacity of geriatrics (Wilcock, 2002b).

A further difficulty that occupational therapists faced as they adopted a theoretical approach to practice was that at times rival theories suggested quite different approaches to therapy. The literature addressing the treatment of children with cerebral palsy is a case in point. Berta Bobath and Nancy Finnie (1958) emphasised reducing spasticity by placing the child in reflex-inhibiting postures as a first priority, so that the child could learn “to use his muscles in new patterns of coordination” (p. 25). In contrast, Hilary Landis (1960) described gaining the child’s confidence as the first priority, followed by encouraging head and trunk balance in order to promote play. In addition, therapists working from essentially the same theory base drew differing conclusions about how to enhance performance. Hence, also in the treatment of children with cerebral palsy, Etain Bartholomew (1955) promoted the use of adapted furniture to promote good positioning; sandbags, restrainers and splints to block movement; weighted or magnetised toys, restraint and adapted eating equipment to promote function; and weighted shoes and crutches to develop a sense of balance. Jane Miller (1953), on the other hand, advocated that “normal behaviour in a normal environment is the only goal of treatment” for these same children, and frowned on introducing “artificial irrelevancies” because the child would “adapt his behaviour to its use, but still not be in a position to use ordinary furniture in an ordinary manner” (p. 103).

Alongside the adoption of rational theories, occupational therapists were rapidly expanding their field of practice into people’s domestic and working lives. They, like other health professionals, had previously assumed that the restoration of mind and body was the end point of therapy. This changed, and concentrated efforts towards actively preparing people to resume or take up responsibility for self care, and domestic and paid labour became the order of the day.

Rational Practice in Return to Work Programmes

Whilst vocational preparation had long been an accepted part of occupational therapy, from the mid 1950s the concern with employment issues was framed somewhat differently, particularly within mental health. This shift in practice was, in part, stimulated by a broader movement in psychiatric services from confining and protecting

patients to actively working to restore them to normal life (Henson, 1955). In this regard, industrial work was identified as a cultural norm that patients with mental health disorders or mental deficiency should be prepared to return to, or have access to. Occupational therapists were identified as the people who could spear head this “vast new field of work” (Mansell, 1958, p. 24) and both psychiatrists and managers of existing sheltered workshops urged them to take up the opportunity it presented (Arthur, 1951; Carstairs, 1958).

Within mental hospitals, this increasing emphasis on employment appears to have initially manifested as advice about teaching patients skills specifically directed to forms of employment such as shoemaking, upholstery, or repair of “watches, clocks, cycles, radio and cars” (Henson, 1955, p. 47). The common element amongst this eclectic mix was that these were skills that could be taught by technical instructors within the already existing hospital workshops. Whether such schemes were established is not documented in the journal. What did happen was the establishment of Industrial Units, specifically designed to serve the needs of long-term patients who had been unsuccessful in other forms of employment around the hospital (Collins, 1961). In these units, simple repetitive tasks such as assembling cartons and Christmas cards, salvaging the metal from bottle tops, making pot scourers and dismantling gas meters were undertaken on a contractual basis for local industries. The rationale behind such work seems to have been that not working was an additional insult to people resident in hospitals, because they were deprived of opportunities to participate in a normative cultural activity. In addition, some medical staff at least argued that rather than producing poor quality crafts, patients would derive more satisfaction from making products or components that they knew were valued by someone, such as a purchaser or factory owner (Freudenberg & Constable, 1960). Because a central aspect of this thinking was to make industrial units as ‘work-like’ as possible, patients in many cases received a modest payment. At Shenley Hospital and presumably other centres, however, therapeutic values continued to prevail with payments calculated on the basis of effort and improvement rather than productivity.

Somewhat to the surprise of the therapists and nurses who supervised them, many of the “long-stay, stabilized and long-stay deteriorated patients” (Freudenberg & Constable, 1960, p. 24) assigned to industrial therapy at Shenley Hospital were conscientious workers who developed the skills required to assemble, construct or disassemble increasingly more complex objects. Some proved themselves able to take on supervisory responsibility for the pace, quality, packaging or documentation of the finished products, with a few ultimately finding employment in the community. Apparently, also to the surprise of supervisory staff, many patients had clear preferences about which work they undertook. Staff noted for example, that patients were reluctant to work at washing bottles, which made people’s hands rough and raw. While this was understandable, patients’ observed unwillingness to paint toy farm animals was less readily understood. Work involving jigs and tool use was favoured, apparently because it gave a sense of advanced skill.

Consistent with the rationalist perspective that knowledge can be derived from careful observation and collection of information, occupational therapists in mental health settings gathered statistics about the number of hours worked and pieces produced, “in order to understand the production rates that may be achieved” (Freudenberg & Constable, 1960, p. 25). Tasks were graded from simplest to hardest and patients were matched with the task they were thought able to master, and then monitored as they progressed to increasingly complex work. Clearly described systems for calculating payment were developed. Furthermore, studies to examine the value of industrial therapy, as opposed to other treatment regimes were instituted.

Occupational therapists’ heightened focus on preparing patients to return to work was not confined to mental health settings. Some therapists working in physical rehabilitation settings continued to rely on traditional craftwork to assess patients’ abilities and begin a process of retraining. Barbara Stow (1958), for example, advised that:

... unless he has certain definite leanings in one direction or another, he can be started on basketry. This is an extremely good way of assessing

concentration, co-ordination, interest and aptitude, because the articles are not finished in a day, some fine movement is required, but not too much, and co-ordination is necessary. When the patient has been shown how to make one article, he can make another by himself and it is possible to see how far he has grasped what he has been taught. By the time he has made one or two articles the therapist will have quite a good idea of the type of person he is and the kind of work he can do. (p. 87)

Others, such as Mary S. Jones at Farnham Park, employed a 'reablement' philosophy that combined traditional crafts, industrial processes and intellectual pursuits (Jones, 1951). Using a combination of handcrafts, including basketry, metal and wood work, pottery, sewing, and weaving, and household, outdoor, industrial, and office tasks continued to be advocated for at least the next decade (Macdonald, 1960). Many therapists, however, moved away from the hand made crafts and the manually operated machines they had previously favoured, and in a multi-site experiment, evaluated the benefits of using domestic power tools in work hardening programmes (Power Tools, 1957). As well as creating "a 'normal' workaday atmosphere" (Power Tools, p. 36), using such equipment was purported to prepare patients for a return to everyday life. Other therapists introduced industrial machinery to bore, cut, weld and forge metal, which they described as readying injured industrial workers for "the impact shock of hammers on metal" (Occupational Therapy at Condreville, 1957, p. 21). The same equipment was claimed to provide less experienced patients with an opportunity to develop confidence operating metal lathes, or to test their ability to train as welders or engineers. The general enthusiasm for industrial tasks extended as far as providing industrial tasks in geriatric day care settings (Wilcock, 2002b).

A few therapists went so far as to reproduce actual work conditions, such as the model mine complete with coal face, cramped working conditions and railway that was constructed at Astley Ainslie Hospital in Edinburgh (W., J. 1959, no surname given). As well, occupational therapists were informed of a prevocational service for 'the homebound' being established in the United States, and the modifications required to workplace equipment to fit it into individual's home environments (Bastable, 1958). They could also read of the experimental introduction of office machinery in an adult

spastic centre, where the physical and cognitive demands of operating it were analysed and patients' prospects and success within open employment were monitored (Stone, 1960).

H. M. Davidson (1952) discovered, with apparent amazement, that work might in itself be therapeutic, and suggested that:

Sometimes we find that the patient is doing much of his own rehabilitation during the course of his work – like the machine tool maker who showed me the movements which he was doing all day in setting machines. They were all that could be desired for his final treatment after a fractured carpal scaphoid. That man stayed at work: it would have been a waste of his and everyone else's time for him to have tried to attend in the Department. A postman also materially assisted his own recovery of movement after a severe Colles fracture while he was sorting letters and flipping them across to the separate piles for despatch and delivery. (p. 151)

In a health context where the predominant practice had been to remove injured workers to a hospital setting, where they remained until restored to function, such observations may indeed have been quite radical.

Like their counterparts in mental health, therapists working in physical health settings placed their endeavours in a positivist framework, often framing their new ventures as experimental. Accordingly, they articulated specific goals for their innovations and explained the impact of the tasks performed in terms of biomechanical demands, skill development and psychological benefits. Also like their contemporaries in mental health, they observed and itemised patients' responses and monitored outcomes. The rationality underlying these vocational initiatives is evident in the thinking its proponents brought to it. For instance, engaging people with a health condition in industrial work was framed as being culturally appropriate, a realistic focus of rehabilitation within an industrialised nation. This vision provided the rationale for replicating, as far as was possible in a hospital setting, the normal conditions of factory life. This emphasis on realism and normality also accounts for the way that tasks were more valued if there were known to

be vacancies in that field of employment, even when there was little expectation that patients would progress to that level of function.

In the context of these new perceptions of vocational rehabilitation, perceptions of patients' identity also subtly shifted, although perhaps more so in physical settings where there was a higher expectation of discharge from the hospital environment. Rather than patients restored to function, recipients of occupational therapy intervention were cast as workers restored to work, or indeed as "a full-time member of the team" (Jones, 1951). At Astley Ainslie Hospital in Edinburgh, the 'miner-patients' were accorded a hybrid status that encompassed their worker role. Even those patients unable to achieve employment became 'disabled people' who might gain realistic means of augmenting their income from home. The identity granted to patients was, however, essentially rationalistic as revealed in Dr Drake's (1955) romantically phrased assertion that industrial therapy restored "the worker ... to industry, the citizen to society, the man to himself" (p. 54). Despite the phrasing, such notions hinged on merely returning people to what they were, as opposed to a more Romantic vision of reaching one's full potential or even achieving employment that was more skilful or satisfying than what was done before. Moreover, occupational therapists seem to have lagged behind other specialist vocational rehabilitation services in fully acknowledging patients' status as workers by not adopting the language of the workplace. The manager of the training centre operated by the Stockport, East Cheshire and High Peak Spastics Society, for example, referred to the adult spastics who attended as trainees or 'operators' (Stone, 1960). This difference in semantics may, however, merely reflect occupational therapists continuing employment in hospital-based rather than community services.

Rational Practice in the Home

Alongside this extension of occupational therapy's domain into preparation for the workplace, there was an enormous focus on people's domestic lives. Physicians who practiced from a rehabilitative perspective appear to have been instrumental in moving occupational therapy in this direction. Some took a directive approach. For instance, Dr Francis Bach (Bach & Bright, 1951b) simply declared that "the use of gadgets to help

him [the patient] regain the art of living and to be able to earn his living ... come within your domain” (p. 220). Dr Richardson (1952), another physician, argued that occupational therapists working in the field of physical disability should focus on compensatory strategies to rehabilitate the disabled in self-care, because mastery of these tasks was a necessary precursor to re-employment or resumption of home management. He had reached this conclusion on the basis of two critiques of occupational therapy’s ability to strengthen the large muscles of the leg. Dr Cranfield, the author of one of these, maintained that the exercise provided by using bicycle jigsaws in particular, where patients worked for extended periods against relatively light resistance, simply did not demand the degree of muscular exertion required to build muscle bulk (Cranfield, 1947). The physicians who authored the second article concurred, declaring that:

There would be a distinct gain for every one concerned except the manufacturer if all the bicycle jigsaws in existence were collectively junked. Bicycling is a fine exercise for limited objectives and is preferably carried out on a country road. (Mead & Harell, 1950, p. 755)

Instead of even attempting to effect change in large muscles, an enterprise bound to fail because of the difficulty in systematically increasing resistance using such equipment, these doctors asserted that occupational therapists might better:

... keep a score sheet on each patient on self care and daily living activities. With her training in the working of leather and plastics she is ideally suited to the manufacture of splints for pain relief, support and functional activities of certain patients, such as eating and writing supports for quadriplegics. (Mead & Harrel, 1950, p. 755)

Dr Frank Cooksey (1954) took a different line of reason, making an appeal to occupational therapists on essentially ethical grounds by contrasting the governmental focus on wage earners with the dearth of provision for housewives. He despaired that “very little has been done to help the disabled housewife to resume her activities” (p. 133). Instead she was relieved of her duties and provided with services such as meals on wheels, young children were removed to residential care, and other female relatives were called on to give up their paid employment to assist. Based on successes in the United

States, Cooksey, aided by British pioneer in the field of ADL Grizel MacCaul, set out to convince occupational therapists that much could be achieved by adapting the home environment, clothing, kitchen layout, and various cooking utensils.

Thus encouraged, although initially needing to be convinced of the purpose served by the new focus on activities of daily living, occupational therapists embarked on what was to become a central focus of modern practice. One argument put forward in its favour was that the more established practice and this new venture had equivalent outcomes:

It has been argued that P.A.D.L. [personal activities of daily living] sessions are all very well, but are impractical because of the time they take from treatment. However, this *is* treatment; these personal problems are daily routine activities, independence in which, is of equal, if not more, practical and psychological value, as weaving a scarf. Surely the application of the exercise to dressing for example, provides as much if not more movement for a stiff shoulder or poor grip as conventional therapeutic activities. (Tidnam & Hawkins, 1959, p. 17, emphasis original)

Another line of reasoning that was promoted emphasised the psychological and social sequelae of having a dependent person in the family. Joan Weaver (1956) for example, attested that:

When an individual is dependent on others for his everyday needs, his feelings of inadequacy and frustration may give rise to arrogance, highhanded dominance of the rest of the family or an air of silent martyrdom.

If the mother of a young family is disabled, the father may have to undertake her duties as well as his own. This may lead to fatigue, resentment, frayed tempers and often a break-down in health. The children ... will have to fend for themselves and undertake responsibilities far in excess of their years. In some cases, the family may have to split up. (p. 120)

Clearly, anything that occupational therapists could do to ameliorate such dire consequences should be undertaken with haste. Consistent with the goals of rehabilitation and the post-war valuing of effectiveness and efficiency, therapists brought energy and

creativity to the task of enabling higher levels of function in ADL. By the early 1960s, interventions directed towards activities of daily living appear to have become an accepted or perhaps preferred mode of practice. Certainly, a governmental Committee of Enquiry perceived 'normal daily activities' as more purposeful than the traditional handicrafts, although it is uncertain whether they reached this conclusion on their own or were reporting the views of occupational therapists themselves (The Effect of National Reports & Legislation, 1961).

In tackling ADL problems, occupational therapists were thoroughly rational. They worked out the kinds of things people with physical disabilities had difficulty doing, such as "dressing and undressing, going up and down stairs, opening and shutting doors, turning taps on and off" (Stow, 1952, p. 62). They identified the objects patients found difficult to use, including buttons, door handles, cutlery, razors and lipstick. Detailed checklists were developed, such as the Activities Necessary for Independent Living, which encompassed self care, walking, food preparation, accessing house and garden, and managing in the street and at work, to build up a picture of what was required to make patients self sufficient (Bach & Bright, 1951a). Rehabilitation programmes were designed to give patients practise in skills thought to be precursors to everyday tasks, such as "picking up small objects and putting them into a tin" (Marshall, 1958, p. 21). Instead of crafting an object, patients might now polish their boots or rub fat into flour to simultaneously exercise their fingers and make pastry.

To address patients' needs at home, some occupational therapists established a 'daily activities' area in their departments, stocked it with everyday furniture and household objects, and set about teaching patients how to get on and off low beds and chairs, tie their shoe laces with one hand, manage normal kitchen utensils and crockery, and replace buttons with zips (Heywood, 1954). Others set up kitchens with simple modifications that could be replicated in the average home. For example, one had the stove raised on 4-inch wooden blocks to bring the oven to a better working height (Weissel, 1961). Still others incorporated adaptations for patients with particular needs, such as wheel chair users (Hollings, 1961).

As well as establishing new treatment settings, occupational therapists found, devised, and constructed gadgets to compensate for permanent loss of function, things that would fill the gap between individuals' ability and what they needed to do. Despite looking amateur by today's standards, those forerunners of modern assistive devices were designed to meet specific needs and to render people, and particularly women with disability independent in their daily living. Occupational therapists used the materials at hand; wood, cup hooks, wire, elastic, zips, leather, felt and metal pipes to design an impressive range of assistive devices. There were pronged boards to hold vegetables (Weissel, 1961), hot water bottle holders (Tidnam & Hawkins, 1959), stocking aids made of Celluloseacetate (Brown, 1959), door openers (Letcher, 1962), and modified suspender belts (Blunt, 1959). So intense was interest in this advancement in practice that an entire text dedicated to disseminating information about ADL techniques and equipment to help people following stroke would be published in 1966. Much of the equipment was designed to be constructed by the home handyman, (Jay, Walker & Ellison). It seems that in England, gadgets became central to the identity of many occupational therapists, just as they did in Australia at around the same time (Hocking & Wilcock, 1997). Further examples from the journal are listed in Table 7:5.

Table 7:5
Examples of ADL & Domestic Assistive Devices of the Late 1950s and Early 1960s

Assistive Device	Construction Materials	Function	Reference
<i>Self care</i>			
Adapted clothing (corsets, etc)	Zips, front fastening	Replace hooks and eyes, small button for easier fastening	Tidnam & Hawkins, 1959
Built-up cutlery	Perspex	Give large grip	Birkbeck, 1953
Button aid	Dowel, wire	Fasten buttons	
Modified suspender belt	Leather, buttons	Simple method of fastening stockings	Blunt, 1959
Stocking aid	Celluloseacetate (30 thou.)	Pull up stockings or socks	Brown, 1959
Wooden hot water bottle holder	Wood, cup hook, mirror plates (for attachment to wall)	Enabling one-handed filling	Tidnam & Hawkins, 1959
<i>Domestic</i>			
Door opener	Iron pipe, suede, thick wire, leather strap	Grip round door knobs	Letcher, 1962
Grasping aid for quadriplegics	Aluminium, rivets, elastic	Hold toothbrush, cutlery, pencil, etc	Alkan & Hoffman, 1961
Hoists	Ranging from ½ ton hoists to hand-operated chain blocks	Move patients from bed to chair, into bath, up stairs	Aids for the Disabled, 1962
One-handed tin opener	Wood, clamps, screw fitting	Low cost one-handed tin opener	Inexpensive tin-opener, 1957
Reading aid	Microfilm projector with multi-purpose switch	For people unable to turn the pages of a book	National Fund for Research, 1961
Tap turner	Wood, with long lever	Operate domestic water taps	Birkbeck, 1953
Trolley	Slotted angle iron, bolts, castors, wood	Stabilise walking and carry items	Boak, 1958

Despite their efforts to develop gadgets, however, occupational therapists seem to have regarded dependence on gadgets as undesirable. Weissel (1961), amongst others, asserted that gadgets should only be used as a last resort. The reasoning behind her claim was not spelled out but may, to some extent, have been influenced by the knowledge that some patients viewed using assistive devices as ‘giving in’ and refused to use them. In this

regard occupational therapists seem to have been in concert with medics. Dr Zinovieff (1962), for example, declared that it “cannot be stressed too much” that “those deficiencies, which are capable of improvement, *must be practiced at each visit* [to occupational therapy]” (p. 17, emphasis original). Only when further improvement seemed unlikely should therapists consider the provision of self-help appliances. Some occupational therapists, taking a pragmatic approach, advised that avoidance of situations in which the individual’s disability would be a handicap was preferable to giving out aids. Suggestions included adjusting the placement of objects to avoid difficult manoeuvres such as stooping; learning to manage objects in a different way, such as opening all the buttons before attempting to put a shirt on; and finding alternative commercially available products that could be more easily managed, such as a long-handled dust pan (MacCaul, 1957). Despite such strictures, the sheer volume of literature focusing on assistive devices gives testament to the emphasis on and evident excitement surrounding assistive devices.

Few commercially available alternatives existed, and occupational therapists set about designing and making things to assist their patients in their everyday lives. As the list of gadgets grew, occupational therapists once more attempted to systematise their knowledge, this time by matching particular dysfunctions with the aids most likely to prove useful. For people with hemiplegia or upper limb amputation, for example, a Nelson knife, Pyrex flan dish instead of a flat plate, replacement of buttons with zippers, a nail brush fitted with suction cups and elastic shoe laces were recommended (Tidnam & Hawkins, 1959). In addition, general guidelines were developed, such as “clothe the most disabled limb first” and “progress only at the patient’s pace – each achievement will give added incentive to go further” (Brown, 1959, p. 19). Detailed suggestions to solve specific difficulties with dressing were also offered. The advice for donning a corset, for example, is reproduced here:

Corsets. Inability to manage hooks can be overcome by:

a. lying flat on the bed

or

b. stressing importance of first contracting abdominal muscles

or

- c. replacing hooks with a closed end zip, ... at least 3 in. longer than opening, and with loop at end ... A trouser waistband hook, or one of tape attached to several inches of elastic, making the initial fastening at the waist to an eye or button, will be of value particularly for fat people. (Brown, 1959, p. 20)

To gain a more accurate assessment of patients 'failings', occupational therapists ventured out of the hospital to visit people's homes. There, they found themselves faced with "the deeply rooted idea" that people with a physical handicap "can no longer look after themselves or contribute in any way to the family or community" and over-protective or "misguided relatives who have helped them too much" (Weaver, 1956, p. 121). In response, occupational therapists set about instilling the virtues of independence in patients and their families. To encourage hardy self-reliance, friends and relatives, and people with disability themselves were recruited to making the gadgets or adaptations they would need. This approach was in keeping with the times, with the *Committee of Enquiry on the Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons* declaring that:

Many useful gadgets are comparatively simple devices which can be fashioned by a handyman amongst the disabled person's relatives or even by the disabled themselves in the Occupational Therapy Department of a hospital or at a local authority's recreation centre. The Committee attaches importance to this element of self-help by the disabled and those caring for them. (The Effect of National Reports & Legislation, 1961, p. 11)

As well as recommending and supplying assistive devices, domiciliary occupational therapists endeavoured to enable patients to look after themselves by providing advice about their home environments. This included suggestions for rearranging the furniture, lowering or raising the height of beds and chairs, and so on (Weaver, 1956).

Gadgets and Identity

In the course of their efforts to enable function, occupational therapists appraised patient's identities in relation to their use of assistive devices. There were the resourceful, able patients who through their own ingenuity achieved what they wanted to do without resorting to gadgets and those who required them (Lucci, 1959; Robertson, 1960). In

contrast, there were patients who lacked the essential capacity or motivation to achieve things even with assistive devices, and those who had become dependent on ‘over-solicitous’ wives or family members and declined to try (Lucci). They also noted the interaction between identity and the effective use of gadgets. This was particularly evident in relation to hand amputees, whose use of hooks and specialised appliances was noted to depend on thinking of themselves as two rather than one-handed (Mendez, 1962; Robertson, 1960).

Occupational therapists also communicated their underlying assumptions about the identity people with a physical disability could, and ought to aspire to. For in offering intervention, advice and equipment, therapists delivered the message that patients should be more able in self-care and domestic life. Perhaps the most overt statements to that effect are to be found in a talk given to occupational therapists attending a Domiciliary Refresher Course at Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre in Liverpool (Hollings, 1961). There, therapists were told that:

It is very important to help the disabled person to try to find his new identity, to establish his place in the family again and to take some share of the responsibility. This will need ... considerable effort on the patient’s part.

We try to encourage the patient to take a pride in efficiency, and it is up to him to be as little trouble as possible, to be a good planner and to be good company. ...

It is very important that a severely disabled person should have some interest to get on happily by himself while the family are coping with the daily work. ...

An attractive personal appearance is as important for the morale of those around them as it is for the patients themselves. ... comfort and a pleasant appearance contribute to the patient’s ease of manner, so important to the severely disabled person, who has more social obstacles to overcome than most of us. (p. 25)

Patients, then, were to be hardworking and rational. Accordingly, they should value efficiency, even while both their inability to manage normal domestic and personal objects, and their use of assistive devices would reinforce an identity as disabled. This meant both mastering assistive devices to improve their own efficiency and being self

reliant so as not to impede the efficiency of others. Moreover, they were to take responsibility for their own happiness and others' morale and social ease in the face of disability.

Having worked hard to achieve as much independence as they could patients might, at best, achieve an identity as someone living an active life despite disability. In contrast to this demand for rationality, however, Mary Macdonald (1960) allowed that some assistive devices, particularly splints and prostheses needed to look as normal as possible, or to be discarded as soon as possible because they "otherwise become a barrier to return to normal life" (p. 62). In addition, one therapist acknowledged the more rounded view gained from visiting people in their own homes. Where in hospital "we only see people as they are now, the victims of their particular affliction" (Weaver, 1956, pp. 123-124), therapists visiting patients in their own homes met relatives, heard anecdotes of the past and saw wedding photographs that gave testimony to patients' past identity.

As much as patients gained a particular identity through the gadgets they were given, being associated with assistive devices also influenced occupational therapists' identity. One aspect of that identity was as a "make-it-yourself" enthusiast (Allbon, 1955), which had connotations of being modern and proficient with the latest ideas and technologies. Even the 'special pieces' of adaptive equipment designed and built by occupational therapy technicians were identified as enhancing occupational therapists' identity, earning prestige and support for their work (Lane, 1957). Another aspect of this new identity was being skilful in a modern realm of practice, knowing what to give to whom and how to use it, for as Mary Tidnam and Rosemary Hawkins (1959) explained:

When teaching a patient how to manage a new way or to use a new aid, clear and easy demonstration is essential and the therapist needs to be adept herself at using, for example, only her left hand to put on a jacket if the patient has a right hemiplegia. (p. 18)

Proficiency at demonstrating assistive devices and modified techniques for accomplishing everyday tasks was important because patient outcomes depended on it.

Grizel MacCaul (1957), for instance, was of the opinion that “a bad demonstration may be disastrous” (p. 11), negatively influencing the patient’s whole attitude to the problem of coping with disability. Occupational therapists’ emerging identity as modern purveyors of realistic self-care and domestic rehabilitation was not altogether unchallenged however, with one physician declaring that “there is still a great deal to be done to improve and modernise Occupational Therapy” (Zinovieff, 1962, p. 18). Amongst the failings he identified were assistive devices that worked in theory but not in practice, and gadgets supplied but not used because too little effort went into working with patients to gain their perspective on whether aids would be worth having.

Overview of Rationalism in Occupational Therapy

What this discussion has revealed is that rationalism was an implicit part of occupational therapy and shaped the ways in which it developed during the 25 years from 1938 to 1962. While some physicians encouraged occupational therapists to be more rational, it appears that the early occupational therapists were themselves actively employing a rationalist approach to practice. This was consistent with their overall goal of developing the profession and demonstrating how effective creative, and later, self care, domestic and industrial activities could be in addressing the effects of illness and injury.

To move towards these goals, occupational therapists applied rational thinking to their knowledge of craft techniques, the selection of crafts according to patients’ gender and interests, and ways of applying crafts for therapeutic benefit. As they sought to locate themselves within medical rehabilitation settings and embraced the ethos of teamwork, occupational therapists increasingly adopted rational explanations of their work. Accordingly, the purpose and process of teaching patients a craft, their experience of making an object, and the benefits patients achieved came to be increasingly described in visible and measurable terms.

Some of the effects of increasing rationalism on occupational therapy were subtle. Others were more profound. While occupational therapists maintained their concern with individual outcomes, rationally designed remedial therapy and the introduction of

“gadgets” from the 1950s brought with them a greater emphasis on making people independent, so that they would not burden others, and returning them to work, so that they did not burden society. Patients were to become useful citizens, people who could fit within the established social order rather than fulfilling their unique potential as individuals.

Another, subtle shift was that aspects of therapy that were more difficult to quantify, or not directly observable, tended to slip out of the discourse. Within rehabilitation settings for example, occupational therapy goals became circumscribed. Rather than enhancing well-being, the goal became one of enabling people to utilise their remaining capacities. This was a reframing of occupational therapy towards remediating impairments: a deficit model of health. Inevitably, this increasing rationalism affected the ways the more Romantic aspects of occupational therapy were viewed. It is to the early and changing conceptions of Romanticism within occupational therapy that the discussion turns in chapter eight.

Chapter Eight

Romantic Assumptions and the Ascendance of Rationalism: 1938 - 1962

This chapter continues the discussion about the rational and Romantic assumptions English occupational therapists made about objects and identity, and the practice issues that arose from those ideas. It draws from the same literature as chapter seven, supplemented with the works of John Ruskin and William Morris, the key proponents of the Arts and Crafts Movement. The chapter is in two sections. The first addresses therapists' Romantic assumptions over the 25 years from 1938 to 1962. The second, briefer section focuses on the conflict between the Romantic and rational vision during that time, and the debates that arose from it. The purpose in uncovering these debates is to understand the origin of some of the philosophical and practice dilemmas that have existed in occupational therapy through to the present day. The discussion will reveal the shifting balance between Romantic and rational viewpoints, and how that informed the directions occupational therapy would take.

Section One: Romantic Assumptions about Objects and Identity

As stated, the first section of this chapter presents occupational therapists' Romantic views of the objects people make and use, and their identity. The discussion progresses through the early assumptions, how those came into question, and the decline of Romanticism within occupational therapy. A summary of subject headings is given in Figure 8:1.

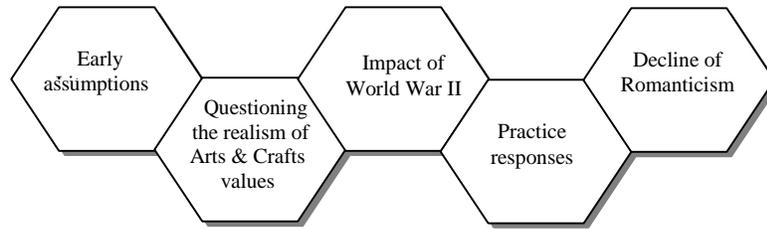


Figure 8:1 Progression of the Discussion in Section One of Chapter Eight.

Early Assumptions

The art of occupational therapy appeared, at least to some physicians, entirely Romantic. This Romanticism is most clearly evident in occasional allusions to sentiments expressed by the Romantic poets or the Romantic struggle to produce great poetry. One example of this is a line of poetry attributed to Shelley, “The soul’s joy lies in doing,” which was offered as an inspirational dictum to new therapists at their graduation ceremony in November 1938 (Address by Dr Soltau, 1938/39, p. 11). The students were assured their joy would lie in their work as therapists, as much as their patients’ would lie in the opportunity to create things. Similar sentiments are apparent in an article titled *The Occupational Therapy of John Milton*, in which Dr Wilson (1959) drew a parallel between Milton overcoming his blindness to write *Paradise Lost* and the work of occupational therapists. Describing a scenario of a “successful man of today [who] may find himself suddenly bereft of wind, of limb, of security” (p. 15), Wilson continued:

... no demands on medical skill will restore them. He may call on inner reserves, as Milton. He may play out his own struggles as Milton did ... He may find in the ingenuity, skill and intuition of the Occupational Therapist the interest which will enable him to transmute the suspicion or angry despair into work not only interesting in itself, but bringing him into touch with people and connections of whom he had never dreamed. (p. 15)

Like these physicians, occupational therapists working in England in the 1930s through to the early 1960s harboured Romantic thoughts, particularly about the therapeutic potency of creating objects and the transformative potential of occupational therapy. In perceiving occupation as health giving, occupational therapists represent a continuation of wisdom accumulated over centuries. As Wilcock (2002a) has revealed, knowledge of

the relationship between occupation and health existed in one form or another all through the history of the Western world. Rather than taking a generalised approach to occupation, however, the early occupational therapists focused their attention on the health-giving properties of craftwork. In this, the profession might be viewed as an extension of the Arts and Crafts Movement, which urged a revival of traditional handcrafts. In England, this influence has been directly traced through Dr Elizabeth Casson's work with Octavia Hill, who was strongly influenced by John Ruskin.

The specific health benefits attributed to crafting things by hand are revealed in William Morris's various works, and encompass physical, emotional and spiritual aspects. In particular, Morris viewed the lesser arts, as he called them, as an "occupation fit for a healthy body and an active mind" (1885/1915c, p. 25). Moreover, he assumed "that to all living things there is a pleasure in the exercise of their energies" (1885/1915d, p. 100) and that "the happy exercise of manly energies" would bring emotional well-being if it were "illuminated by the certainty of usefulness & the hope of applause from the friends and neighbours for whom it is exercised" (1888/1901a, p. 16). For Morris, creating things of beauty was a natural expression of human nature, motivated by "a love of beauty and an interest in life, which, in the long run must stimulate them to the desire for artistic creation, the satisfaction of which is of all pleasures the greatest" (circa 1884/1936b, p. 138). Furthermore, he believed that "speaking broadly, all men can learn some useful craft, and learn to practise it with ease" (1886/1936a, p. 489). While he acknowledged that there may be exceptions, such people were so far from the norm that they must be regarded "as diseased persons" (p. 489).

From Morris's perspective, it was:

... reasonable & right that men should strive to make the useful wares which they produce beautiful just as Nature does; and that they should strive to make the making of them pleasant, just as Nature makes pleasant the exercise of the necessary functions of sentient beings. (1889/1901b, p. 27)

In particular, Morris associated the pleasure experienced through making things with individuals' natural talents and with the skilful execution of their craft. With reference to objects on display in a British museum, Morris declared that:

... I have seen work so delicate, so careful, and so inventive, that nothing in its way could go further. And I will assert, without fear of contradiction, that no human ingenuity can produce work such as this without pleasure being a third party to the brain that conceived and the hand that fashioned it. Nor are such works rare....

... art is the expression by man of his pleasure in labour. I do not believe he can be happy in his labour without expressing that happiness; and especially is this so when he is at work at anything in which he specially excels. A most kind gift is this of nature, since all men, nay, it seems all things too, must labour; so that not only does the dog take pleasure in hunting, and the horse in running, and the bird in flying, but so natural does the idea seem to us, that we imagine to ourselves that the earth and the very elements rejoice in doing their appointed work; and the poets have told us of the spring meadows smiling, of the exaltation of the fire, of the countless laughter of the sea. (1883/1914b, pp. 41-42)

The Arts and Crafts assumptions Morris extolled are readily apparent in the early occupational therapy literature. In particular, notions of craftwork exercising capacities, providing pleasure, and promoting healthy bodies and minds by channelling energy away from frustrations and worries are foundational. Therapists assumed that making something useful that friends and family would appreciate would enhance these outcomes. They appear to have never doubted that all patients had a natural talent for one craft or another, and that people's natural love of beauty would feed their desire for creative activities.

In concert with these Romantic assumptions about arts and crafts, some occupational therapists held Romantic notions of the tragedy of illness. The endlessness of neurosis, for example, was conveyed in a paper by Dr Munro and M. Burges (1951) using a line of Shakespearean verse: "Tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow creeps on this petty pace from day to day to the last syllable of recorded time" (p. 257). While there is little evidence of people who suffered them holding Romantic notions of illness or disability, there is some suggestion of their Romantic aspirations about life. One such is the group

who assembled at a 'wheelchair party' to swap stories of their adventures in Britain and abroad (Penrose, 1960). Certainly, some occupational therapists shared the viewpoint that disability does not necessarily mean a life devoid of Romanticism. One therapist, for instance, quoted from a poem by Tennyson in which Ulysses declared his intention to drink life to the lees. Even if this attitude to living were not true of all people, she declared, most would agree with the sentiment expressed by an old warrior:

How dull it is to pause, to make an end,
To rust unburnish'd, not to shine in use!
As tho' to breathe were life. (Robertson, 1950, p. 8)

Noting that people with a disability might equally hold this stance towards life, Robertson argued their right to employment, contrasting the experience of having "a full life as productive members of society" with being "condemned to a life of frustration and bitterness" (p. 8).

As well as drawing on the Romantic poets, occupational therapists referred to the leaders of the Arts and Crafts movement as authorities of note. In the introduction to John Ivison Russell's (1938) chapter outlining the art of designing objects and decorative patterns, for example, John Ruskin was quoted as saying that "design is not the offspring of idle fancy; it is the studied result of accumulative observation and delightful habit" (p. 120).

While specific references to leading Romantics and Arts and Crafts personalities provide direct evidence of the Romanticism of occupational therapy, it is more commonly apparent in the assumptions embedded in broader discussions. There, therapists' Romantic sentiments about working with and using objects coalesced, almost exclusively, around three facets of occupational therapy. The first was claims about the transformative potential of creating or using particular objects, the second the difference occupational therapy had made in people, and the third the virtues of some particular objects, notably things found in nature such as leaves and fir cones. Occupational therapists' expressions of Romantic philosophies are explored in depth in the following

sections: creating and using objects, Romantic outcomes, natural and traditional things, and Romantic identities. See Figure 8:2 for a diagrammatic presentation of these topics.

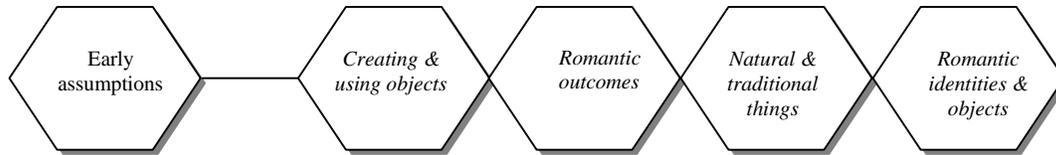


Figure 8:2 Early Assumptions about Objects, Outcomes & Identity.

Throughout the discussion that follows, it is notable that therapists did not establish their Romantic claims by using logical argument or providing supporting evidence. Rather, such claims were presented in the manner of magnificent and self-evident truths. In addition, and equally true to the spirit of Romanticism, such claims were cast in emotionally intense language. People were raised to lofty heights or plunged into the depths of despair.

Creating and Using Objects

As discussed in chapter five, Romanticism centres on notions of vivid emotional experience, expression of emotion and creative genius. For proponents of the Arts and Crafts Movement, emotional expression and creativity came together in the process of fashioning objects for everyday use, such that Morris proclaimed in a lecture given in 1888 that “pleasure and interest in the work itself are necessary to the production of a work of art however humble” (Morris, 1901a, p. 14). These same sentiments are repeated in therapists’ assumption that the success of occupational therapy was founded on stimulating interest and inducing a “pleasant mental attitude” (Dunton, 1945, p. 5).

Occupational therapy’s roots in Romanticism are also evident in therapists’ confidence that getting “every patient working” would “rouse them out of their hopeless lethargy” (Thornely, 1948, p. 24). This heritage is also betrayed in occupational therapists’ certainty that emotional intensity was an essential element of therapy, and in claims made about the quality or strength of interaction between patients and objects that therapists

should strive to achieve. One such is the recommendation to “find work that absorbs their whole attention” (Haworth & Macdonald, 1944, p. 20). Such ideas continued to be published through to the mid 1950s. For example, one therapist’s conviction that the success of the craft competition she organised could be attributed to every one of her patients giving “his best” and putting “so much ardour and love into his work” reveals Romantic sentiments (Neu, 1953, p. 107). Another therapist related the story of a nineteenth century woman prostrate with grief over the death of her son, who found her cure in piecing elaborate patchwork bed hangings. She concluded that:

The once glowing colours are faded but the exquisitely tiny stitches give evidence of the meticulous care that went into the making of the hangings. ... The unwearied fingers that worked so patiently have been dust for over a century but the work remains – a silent witness to an occupation that brought healing and restoration to one soul groping in the lonely darkness of mental disturbance. (Hall, 1957, p. 34)

As well as expressing Romantic notions in positive terms, at times they were voiced as a warning. One example was the directive that having a patient work on something “that because of its complication fails to stimulate” would bring “disappointment and disillusionment” (McLuskie, 1940, p. 8). A similar assertion was that presenting “a collection of dingy, crumpled looking pieces of material, dun coloured or black stockings, meaningless looking pieces of wood, tangled masses of odd wool” could “plunge the patient still further into a confused, depressed state of mind” (English, 1940, p. 18). Fifteen years later, the warning was again repeated:

If the work prescribed does not prove congenial and make a personal appeal to the patient, then it resolves itself into an undesirable task that has to be performed, somehow. Fatigue and ennui will replace the delight and satisfaction that would normally ensue in performing and completing the work. The therapeutic effect aimed at will be nullified and the possibility of negativism and other objectionable traits, making their appearance, may add to the difficulties of the situation. (O’Sullivan, 1955, p. 23)

In this context of recognising patients' interests and capacities, and their human need to be positively involved in what they were doing, there was an ethos of equality. Patients were accorded an identity as crucial and appreciated assistants in the therapeutic process, whose contribution equalled that of the supervisory therapists. For those therapists informed by Romanticism, patients' identity became one of budding craftsmen, so that getting the interaction between patient and object right meant teaching the "true art in our crafts" (Challoner, 1948, p. 21). However simple the product, patients were given responsibility "for the form and character" of their work and thus the "opportunity for self expression" (p. 21). If they achieved this, despite limitations of staff and time, occupational therapists would meet their responsibility to regenerate their patients' spirits and develop the whole person.

As well as drawing directly on Romanticism, occupational therapists, like the crafts instructors they worked with, incorporated into their work certain philosophies and beliefs about the interaction between people and objects that had been promoted by the Arts and Crafts Movement. Indeed, induction into an Arts and Crafts mentality, and the skills to match, seems to have been implicit in occupational therapy training internationally. Faith Johnson (1947), for example, noted the "high degree of craftsmanship achieved particularly in such training schools as St. Loyes" (p. 16). In America, Dunton (1945) declared good craftsmanship to be an essential qualification of occupational therapists; while Holland Hudson and Marjorie Fish (1944) commented that the respect therapists developed for expert craftsmanship "often widened their horizons" (p. 232).

From both a Romantic and an Arts and Crafts perspective, creative outlets are held to be essential to human development and the process of hand crafting an object presumed to have a transformative effect on the maker. For the most part, this absorption of Arts and Crafts thinking is evident in the language and concepts occupational therapists used. References to craftsmanship and creativity were frequent, and the ideal of creating objects of both utility and beauty was regularly repeated. In 1951, the key tenets of the

Arts and Crafts movement, along with its anathema of mass production, were exhorted at some length:

Craftsmanship is that combination of a love of beauty with utilitarianism ... The efficiency and economy of machine-made articles has threatened to entirely stifle the expression of that beautiful and fitting human desire to make with our own hands the things needed for household and personal use and adornment, and if we are wise we will teach not only our children but ourselves the value and superiority of hand-made things. We will not neglect this wholesome and useful form of aesthetic self-expression.

This projection of the self, especially the emotional self, into objective and permanent forms is highly valuable as a means of materialising the life of the imagination. It is essentially an expression of feeling ...

The love of *Beauty* is in itself probably the highest form of aspiration of which the human soul is capable. It is love in its most impersonal, and therefore its most spiritual, form; it is passion sublimated to the *n*th degree; it is also an emotional outlet, and he who has not yet learned the joy of an appreciation of beauty in some form is indeed barren and drear. (Severn, 1951, pp. 115-6)

In this passage, several ideas promoted by William Morris in the late nineteenth century were synthesised; the union of beauty and utility found in handcrafted objects, that we project our feelings into the things we make, and the soulfulness of true craftsmanship. Selected excerpts from Morris's writings illustrate the faithfulness with which his ideas were reproduced in the occupational therapy literature. The first comes from an address to the London Institution given in 1881, where Morris drew an essential link between utility and beauty.

When a man turned the wheel, or threw the shuttle, or hammered the iron, he was expected to make something more than a water-pot, a cloth, or a knife: he was expected to make a work of art also: he could scarcely altogether fail in this, he might attain to making a work of the greatest beauty: this was felt to be positively necessary to the peace of mind of both the maker and the user; and this is it which I have called architecture: the turning of necessary articles of daily use into works of art. (1881/1914e, p. 144)

The second excerpt, from *The Aims of Art*, was penned in 1886, and epitomises Arts and Crafts Movement assumptions about craftsmen pouring their deepest emotions into their work. In this instance, Morris was asserting that medieval craftsmen embodied this ideal:

The mediæval craftsman was free in his work, therefore he made it as amusing to himself as he could; and it was his pleasure and not his pain that made all things beautiful that were made, and lavished treasures of human hope and thought on everything that man made, from a cathedral to a porridge-pot. (1886/1915b, p. 90)

Finally, assumptions about the engagement of the human spirit in the act of crafting an object are also rooted in Morris's work, as illustrated in this extract from his essay *Useful Work Versus Useless Toil*, originally published in 1885:

... a man at work, making something which he feels will exist because he is working at it and wills it, is exercising the energies of his mind and soul as well as his body. Memory and imagination help him as he works. Not only his own thoughts, but the thoughts of the men of past ages guide his hands; and, as a part of the human race, he creates. (1885/1915e, p. 100)

The implicit relationship Morris perceived between the work of the hands and people's mind and will is clearly echoed in Mary Reilly's 1962 declaration that "man through the use of his hands as they are energized by mind and will, can influence the state of his own health" (p. 2). Occupational therapy's heritage in the Arts and Crafts Movement is also clearly evident in the profession's choice of crafts to ply, for weaving, woodwork, pottery, bookbinding, printing, basketry and needlecrafts are traditional crafts, each with its own proud history of craftsmanship. An Arts and Crafts mentality is also revealed in occupational therapists adherence to making things by hand. As Russell explained in 1938:

Equipment should be as simple as possible and preferably home-made. Machinery should be excluded almost entirely, and the temptation to adopt modern means of increasing output should be avoided. The most pleasing features of good therapeutic work are its old-fashioned methods and a quiet rural atmosphere; a labour saving device therefore should be introduced only when the slower method is unpleasantly tedious. (p. 102)

Again, this perspective has clear roots in Morris's utopian vision. For despite acknowledging that machines might release "people from the more mechanical and repulsive part of necessary labour," Morris envisioned that in an ideal society where "it seems to them that a certain industry would be carried on more pleasantly as regards the worker, and more effectually as regards the goods, by using hand-work rather than machinery, they will certainly get rid of the machinery" (1885/1915c, p. 24).

The influence of the Arts and Crafts Movement is further apparent in therapists' acknowledgement of the need for good quality materials to work from and the necessity of good design. Most striking, however, is their concern about the quality of workmanship of finished products, which was expressed in very direct terms. The objects patients made were proudly described as "really beautiful", perfect, "absolutely true" (Docker, 1938/39, p. 26), "excellently made" and as having a high standard of workmanship (Johnson, 1947, p. 17). Muriel Crousaz (1938/39), on returning from a study tour of the United States reported with satisfaction that at Pilgrim Hospital on Long Island, "slipshod work is not tolerated" (p. 16). Despite occupational therapists' avowal of Arts and Crafts values, however, the craft instructors who worked with them occasionally admonished their lack of care or insufficient skill to teach crafts, and lack of insistence on good workmanship and good design (Leach, 1950). As these concerns were central tenets of the Arts and Crafts Movement, this critique perhaps indicates that therapists, even then, moderated their Arts and Crafts values with therapeutic considerations.

Therapeutic assertions that echo Arts and Crafts thinking include the claim that patients would be spurred on to greater effort as their developing craftsmanship allowed them to create larger, and increasingly complex and beautiful objects (Jones, 1951). Another claim was that even simple objects "successfully made by our own efforts" (Hick, 1948, p.18) could be a source of delight and pride, as well as giving a sense of accomplishment, which was deemed essential to a successful medical outcome. Although few offered any explanation of how this success came about, William Rush Dunton (1945) noted the

“healthy exercise of mind and body” involved in “the production of a well-made, useful, and attractive article” (p. 13), and insisted that “standards worthy of entirely normal persons must, as a rule, be maintained for proper mental stimulation” (p. 12-13). As well as such cognitive effects, creating things could “draw on the ingenuity and gifts of self, and provide outlets for the personality” (Cooper, 1940, p. 5). Making and doing things with our hands would feed our minds with experience and give back “all the beauty and invention” of our intellect (Bunyard, 1940, p. 10).

The process of making things was also recognised as having emotional and transformative power. Painting a picture could provide an outlet, a mental purging that would allow the “hidden potentialities” that illness “may enhance, distort or release” (English, 1946, p. 13) to be expressed. The completed paintings were intimate records of the human soul’s “pain and struggle – its defeat and brokenness – its triumph and resurrection” (Champernowne, 1952, pp. 157-8). Similarly, printing wrapping paper or fabric might “open up vistas” and lead to the discovery of personal qualities “hitherto unknown and unsuspected” (Rivett, 1938/39, p. 20) whilst inducing free expression, dissipating feelings of uselessness, and stimulating self-respect and self-reliance. Even children, suddenly cut off from an active life and reduced by their hospitalisation to passive acceptance of inactivity could become thrilled, beaming at their success at weaving woolly flowers (Docker, 1938/39). The strength of such sentiments is implied in Phyllis Lyttleton’s (1944) critique of the first edition of John Colson’s occupational therapy text, for neglecting to acknowledge the value patients gain “from joy and pride in construction” (p. 5). While examples of such full-blown Romanticism slipped out of the literature in the early 1950s, its vestiges are evident in later references to the “absorbing interest” or “intense interest” that crafts such as pottery could inspire (Occupational Therapy at Condreville, 1957, p. 21).

For some therapists, the need to heal their patients’ spirits stemmed from greater societal conditions as much as the illness or injury that had brought them to hospital. Patients, they assumed, arrived “spiritually stunted and undeveloped” because of the “unnatural conditions of modern life” (Challoner, 1948, p. 20). Chief amongst the identified faults of

modern living was the lack of emotional outlets and opportunities to engage in restorative and creative occupations, and the deprivation inflicted by industrial processes. Morris (1880/1914c), like other social activists of his time, declared factory work to be “the greatest of all evils, heaviest of all slaveries” because it was work “which at the best cannot interest them [the workers], or develop their best faculties, and at the worst ... is mere unmitigated slavish toil” that “degrades them into less than men” (p. 66). As well, industrialism was accused of having “destroyed so much of the natural instinct for good form and the right use of material” (Whittall, 1948, p. 24).

Perhaps the most blatant example of this antagonism towards industrialisation in the occupational therapy literature was penned by a group of students who, observing women working in a production line in a drug manufacturing company, labelled their work soul destroying. One worker reportedly assured the students that she did not experience it as such, and their own observations were that “the girls seemed perfectly happy” (Students of Northampton School, 1947, p. 12). These assurances, however, only fuelled the students’ concerns over the degeneration of the human race, rather than stimulating a reappraisal of the ways that people might experience and value mechanised work. Such assumptions clearly echo Romantic beliefs about the necessity of emotional expression, the possibility of individual creative genius and personal responsibility for self-development. Also evident in occupational therapists’ assumptions are Romanticism’s antipathy with industrialism and the societal constraints that stifle emotional expression and stunt personal development.

In drawing part of their philosophical base from the Arts and Crafts Movement, occupational therapists were apparently not out of tune with the broader society. For example one patient, describing the benefits he had derived from his experiences in occupational therapy, related how he realised “that I could still use my creative powers to produce articles of use and beauty” (From an Ex-Patient, 1947, p. 19) and experience great pleasure in the process. This alliance of utility and beauty epitomises Arts and Crafts thinking, as does the patient’s further assumption that “this Industrial Age” (p. 19) seldom affords people the opportunity to experience the pleasure of crafting things.

Romantic Outcomes

The examples in the previous section of discussion illustrate Romantic notions about the transformative potential of using or making objects, where a process of being drawn into interaction with an object and the emotions experienced and expressed during that process were described. As well as these, claims of relatively permanent changes in the status and identity of the person were sprinkled through the literature. Patients were, for example, described as finding “real consolation” through mastering a craft and being able to produce things to a reliable standard (Russell, 1938, p. 61). Similarly, becoming a skilled craftsman was professed to be “the best help to counteract the inferiority complex that all people with a physical disability must get” (Docker, 1938/39, p. 29).

As well as these global outcomes, Romantic stories of individual’s heroic accomplishment or emotional transformation were told. One, mentioned previously, involved bookbinding, a craft that William Morris had helped to revive by founding the Kelmscott Press (Stansky, 1985) and one’s man’s return to this craft albeit within the confines of the hospital. Another man working with him was reported to be “full of the joy of achievement” (Macdonald, p. 24). A further example, also mentioned in chapter six, involved the personal, social and physical transformation of a moral imbecile set to work making wire netting (Russell, 1938, p. 93). Another patient, for a long time considered unemployable on the ward and too dangerous to go to occupational therapy, was transformed into someone with “marvellous demeanour” (Russell).

Such stories continued to appear in the journal well into the 1950s, sometimes endorsing the therapeutic value of a particular activity as much as recounting individual triumph. In particular, working with clay and art were widely recognised as expressive media. For example, one story tells of a female patient who experienced a “most wonderful sense of release” from modelling a lifelike baby’s head and realising how deeply she had mourned not having a child of her own (Sims, 1949, p. 19). One therapist held up the mundane task of knitting dishcloths as having Romantic possibility, with one patient’s “extreme nervous prostration” cured through this familiar activity (Don’t Despise the Dish Cloth, 1953, p. 54). Another reported that her severely disabled geriatric patients ‘blossomed’ as

a result of their involvement in a puppet nativity play, despite the feelings of alarm some experienced during its production and the difficulties encountered manoeuvring their wheelchairs in the confined space of the puppet theatre (Payne, 1959). The achievements of a group of 'severely sub-normal' children who exhibited little potential for learning were also described in Romantic terms, when a simple change in their regular painting class elicited an unprecedented response. Instead of giving the boys blank sheets of paper to paint, as she had previously, the occupational therapist tried to make the activity more meaningful by having the boys paint 'balloons' for a 'Balloon-man' she had drawn. The boys expressed delight as they selected a string and glued their balloon in place. In the therapist's eyes, painting something that made sense to them had transformed the boys. Where they had previously destroyed their artwork immediately it was finished, they became keen exhibitors of their work who actively monitored change in the art room and sought new learning (Jordan, 1961).

As well as the power of creating things, the transformative power of having, mastering and taking responsibility for objects was also recognised in the literature of the 1950s. For instance, as occupational therapy practice expanded into people's domestic and working lives, the motivational impetus of being surrounded by personal possessions, and wearing one's own clothes was recognised. The power of this drive was framed in largely Romantic terms, as the following excerpts drawn from a description of an assessment unit for older people attests:

However kind the Hospital Staff, (and the patient always speaks of their kindness), however clean and hygienic the ward, however good the food, it is not 'Home.' Better to them a handful of cornflakes and a glass of beer among their own things in their own room, where they belong....

Immediately these old people get into their clothes their spirits rise and they suddenly become very determined individuals. No longer is it an invalid preparing for a final stay in Hospital but a person once more eager to get on and get home. Their progress from then is remarkable....

This independent person living alone and coping is the person we remember such a very short time ago as the frail little old lady in the hospital night shirt, faded dressing gown, and worn bedroom slippers, who would not and could not stand and who had resigned herself to the narrow world of a Hospital bed. (Howie, 1959, pp. 24-27)

A further example concerns older men residing in a German camp for people displaced from their homelands by the Second World War. Reportedly, they began “to regard themselves as people again” as they found opportunities to teach others how to use equipment introduced by the occupational therapists; assist with organising wheelchairs and tools; or were provided with extra clothing and thus a means of managing incontinence (Johns, 1957, p. 28). Finally, a rare example of transformation in response to a piece of ADL equipment appeared in a 1962 presentation to the WFOT Congress in Philadelphia. The story centred on an older Tamil woman with “no hands to speak of” as a result of advanced leprosy (Nimbkar, 1962, p. 88). Her response to her initial assessment had been “What is the use of living, I cannot even feed myself”. A mere 20 minutes later she had been fitted with an adapted spoon that she could take on and off by herself, and was reportedly “a changed individual from then on”.

As previously noted, therapists related such stories without attempting any explanation of the mechanisms by which such outcomes may have come about. A possible reason for this apparent shortcoming lies in Romanticism itself, whereby creativity was taken to be inherently transformative, and experiencing and expressing emotion was the acknowledged pathway to self-knowledge. In being inherent and obvious, the importance and impact of creativity and emotionality were considered self-evident and required no explanation. Just occasionally in the early occupational therapy literature, however, notions such as occupational therapy “satisfying the deep instincts of mankind” (Owens, 1944, p. 13) offer a glimpse of an explanation. From a rational perspective, human nature and instincts were viewed as base, unpredictable and in need of civilising influences rather than satisfaction. In contrast, the Romantics decried the social conventions and mores that constrained human behaviour and stamped out the natural responses they perceived in children. From their perspective, instinctual responses were pure and true, a font of unrestrained creativity and honest emotion that should certainly be acknowledged and satisfied. It is this creative potential that occupational therapists such as Constance Owens were invoking.

In adopting a Romantic philosophical perspective, therapists spoke of occupational therapy in heroic terms and portrayed their work as literally remaking people by unleashing their creativity. Those establishing new services saw themselves as pioneers (Neu, 1953), with all the romance of triumphing against overwhelming odds that that implies. Furthermore, this Romantic view of the profession was not restricted to occupational therapists themselves. One self-proclaimed industrialist likened occupational therapists to the knights of old, working with people whose minds “have been torn by the stresses and strains of our modern way of life ... souls who have lost their way in a sea of troubles” (Viewpoint of an Industrialist, 1958, p. 22). Through their efforts, occupational therapists transformed these people so that they could face life anew, and “live out their destinies here in this difficult world” (p. 22).

Natural and Traditional Things

As indicated earlier, the final context in which Romantic notions were expressed was in relation to objects found in nature and brought into therapy. The Romantics had celebrated nature as a source of uplifting emotions, a venue for extreme experiences that would reveal the limits of the self, and a sanctuary from industrialised society. Building on these notions, proponents of the Arts and Crafts Movement held that “everything made by man’s hands has a form, which must be either beautiful or ugly; beautiful if it is in accord with Nature, and helps her; ugly if it is discordant with Nature, and thwarts her; it cannot be indifferent” (Morris, 1877/1914d, p. 4). Accordingly, therapists were told that the most beautiful designs are adaptations from nature (Russell, 1938) and that, inspired by plant life, patients could develop their own decorative motifs to use, for example, in fabric printing (Rivett, 1938/39). Therapists bold enough to lead art classes lauded flowers and landscapes as the best subjects for patients still learning the technical skills of water colour, pastels, charcoal, pen and ink, and oil paints, and proclaimed such artwork a means by which troubled spirits might find “a sense of harmony and healing” (Collingdon & Gardner, 1956, p. 25).

Therapists also assumed that natural things could be uplifting and attractive, and consequently that objects made from natural products would provide a sense of being in

nature. For example, a therapist who viewed clothes and wall hangings made from hand spun wool coloured with vegetable dyes, unabashedly described them as giving “one a sense of repose and refreshment comparable to a walk in the country on a warm spring day” (The Exhibition of Weavers, 1938/39, p. 31). Accordingly, therapists took for granted that collecting dried seed pods would generate “a great deal of interest” and that patients would obtain “a great deal of pleasure” from the opportunity to paint them as decorations for Christmas (English, 1940, p. 20). It appears that merely labelling something as ‘natural’ or suggesting that something might be made to appear natural, such as painting it in autumn colours, was to enhance its value.

The Romantics, however, also recognised that nature includes potent symbols of death and decay. One story related from personal experience clearly illustrates the importance of recognising this symbolism, and choosing the objects patients will work with accordingly:

A patient was sent to cut off the dead roses in the garden and later the gardener found to her horror that she had cut off all, alive and dead. When expostulated with, she gave the despondent reply ‘Well they would all be dead tomorrow’. If this patient had been given seeds to sow or young plants to set, hope would have been inspired instead of despondency. (Address by Dr Soltau, 1938/39, p. 11)

Here, the confident assertion is made that this hapless patient would have experienced hope in place of despair had she been assigned to tending seeds or young plants, which symbolise new life. A coming together of patient and dying blooms into an interactive and intensifying process is implied. Similar processes of mutual interaction between a person and an object repeat throughout the early literature. These stories betray occupational therapy’s philosophical roots in Romanticism through therapists’ focus on, and legitimisation of, intense emotional responses to lived experience.

Romantic Identities, Romantic Objects

Within occupational therapists’ Romantic view of therapy, elements of patients’ identity may be discerned. As befits Romanticism, this identity was cast in dramatic and

emotional terms. When they came to occupational therapy, patients were perceived as soulful, but souls that might be stunted by the degradations of industrial life and broken by the tragedy of illness or injury. Their natural instincts for well-formed objects and appreciation of quality materials might equally be blunted. Nonetheless, patients were seen as capable of great depths of emotion and pregnant with possibility. They might believe themselves condemned by their disability to a life of frustration, bitterness and fatigue; their life circumstances or poorly selected craft activities might plunge them into hopeless lethargy, confusion and disillusionment. However, occupational therapists also perceived them as having the potential for heroic accomplishment, emotional transformation and renewal of self. Patients were considered capable of being utterly absorbed in creating beautiful objects, projecting themselves and their love into the things they made and in return experiencing pride, great joy, and intense interest.

For some patients, disability held the possibility of enhancing or releasing hidden talents and revealing unsuspected personal qualities. For others, the creative self-expression and craftsmanship they learned in occupational therapy might be a real consolation for the reduced life opportunities disability might bring. The transformation wrought by occupational therapy meant “crippled patients, tentatively at first, beginning to realize that they are not useless after all, but can make and create beautiful things” (Stone, 1961, p. 21). To occupational therapists, these patients were budding craftsmen, given dignity by making things of which they could be justifiably proud. As such they were regarded as equals, and as crucial assistants in the therapeutic process.

Occupational therapists who shared this Romantic vision perceived themselves to be craftsmen and women who applied their skills and intuition to transforming patients’ identities and their lives. Many were pioneers, establishing new services and achieving remarkable outcomes at home and in the far-flung corners of the British Empire. However despite their hopeful vision of the power of creative activities, occupational therapists were not immune to the attitudes of the times, whereby people with a disability were perceived as unfortunate and less able than others to gain employment or lead a happy life. Nonetheless, therapists steadfastly believed that through an emotionally

intense process of creating or mastering the use of objects, patients could achieve joy and satisfaction, and live out their destiny as human beings.

In the years between the late 1930s and the early 1960s, the detail of this vision changed. Where it had initially hinged on developing the craftsmanship to create beautiful things, the possibilities for transforming a patient's identity began to encompass creating things to a standard considered high for that person. In this regard, Mary Macdonald (1960) held that:

Emphasis should be on the simplicity of technique and design, which may help in the production of an acceptable article by a worker who has no great ability. It must be remembered, however, that at times it is almost impossible to achieve what could be termed 'a good standard' in the eyes of the buying public, but this does not necessarily indicate a poor result in treatment. (p. 26)

Over the same period, occupational therapy's vision broadened to encompass triumphing over disability to take up a productive role at home or within society. In assisting patients to achieve this outcome, occupational therapists recognised other aspects of their identities, revealed by seeing them dressed in their own clothes and surrounded by their personal possessions in their own homes.

As occupational therapists' views of patients changed, the objects they included in their Romantic vision broadened out. In the earlier days, the objects patients made, natural objects that inspired them, and the tools and equipment they used were the focus. By the 1950s, this Romance had spread to encompass those possessions that gave patients dignity and a sense of self, established their place in the world, and that gave them a purpose in living.

Questioning the Realism of Arts and Crafts Values

Overt questioning of some of the profession's more Romantic notions appeared in the literature from the early 1940s, as some occupational therapists began to worry about how achievable they were in the cold light of reason. One concern was that rather than

providing a sense of satisfaction, an unfamiliar craft might only succeed in worrying patients. Equally, their amateur efforts at making something might leave patients “with a further horror of their own shortcomings” when their standard of work fell far short of readily available commercial products, for:

It is far too rarely realised that most of the crafts handled by occupational therapists have long been adapted to machine production, and no beginner, and few experts, can compete with the machine, except on the higher levels of individual design, etc., which are far from the conception of mental patients or many normal individuals. (Cooper, 1940, p. 5)

A further concern hinged on the assumption that having developed their artistic abilities and found an outlet for their personality, patients would naturally want to continue to express themselves in this way by making things once discharged. The problem, Violet Cooper argued, was that most crafts taught by occupational therapists were hopelessly impractical in people’s everyday lives: the materials were unobtainable, the tools an impossible luxury, and most homes lacked a suitable space to pursue them. In a sense, this objection suggests that occupational therapists did their patients a disservice by instilling in them a Romantic yearning to pursue their skills as craftsmen, because they would be unable to realize that end. In effect, occupational therapists were accused of being too successful in fulfilling their Romantic vision.

At the same time, however, therapists were accused of teaching patients to make ‘arty’ things that were “poorly designed and lacking in utility” (Hudson & Fish, 1944, p. 235). The crux of this critique was that even though these things were satisfying to the maker, they were completely unsuitable as a means of earning a living. Patients would be better served, it was claimed, by mastering “sound utilitarian forms” (Hudson & Fish, p. 235) such as shopping baskets and well-proportioned pottery pieces. While the well designed, aesthetically pleasing utilitarian objects epitomised Arts and Crafts values, it is uncertain that patients would, in fact, have earned a living by such means. The proponents of the Arts and Crafts Movement themselves had struggled with the fact that although

handcrafted objects might be valued in society, they were too expensive for most ordinary people to buy.

Despite these challenges, occupational therapists did not easily abandon their allegiance to their earlier values. They are, for example, strongly evident in Dorothy Leeming's 1961 account of her work with adolescents in an in-patient psychiatric hospital. She describes how these teenagers entered the ward with a pervading sense of failure. The structured programme of craft activities that she provided saw the boys engaged in crafting things in carpentry and pottery sessions, and painting pictures. In their sessions, the girls were busy making baskets, sewing dresses and cooking. Consistent with the Romantic notions of the Arts and Crafts Movement, Leeming explained that their successes in making things and the discovery of unexpected talents helped to bring about changes in their behaviour, a sense of achievement, and the confidence they would need to take on a role in the workforce. Of most interest in the context of this discussion, however, is Leeming's framing of craft based occupational therapy as "a realistic approach" (p. 29). Throughout her discussion Leeming emphasised the need for realism. The boys needed to relate the things they made to their home life. The girls needed realism in the crafts they undertook. Carpentry, Leeming claimed, "more than any other craft, illustrates what can be achieved by realism in Occupational Therapy" (p. 30). What Leeming attempts to achieve is an alignment between rationalism and Romanticism by framing the concrete processes of crafting objects, and thereby crafting change in her patients as a realistic and, by implication, a rational process.

The Impact of World War II

The tension between Romanticism and rationalism was intensified by the nationalistic feelings stimulated by the Second World War, which "brought to the fore the need for utilising human economy to the utmost" (McDougall, 1942, p. 13). This meant ensuring that patients had the attitudes and skills required to be in the 'fight' or later, to take up employment. In this regard, occupational therapists were urged to take care in their selection of remedial activities, for:

There is a danger, if you just give him handicrafts and pretty things to make, that he will develop a disability complex, which will make him feel he can only make little bits of embroidery and things like soft toys; later on he won't find a living ... (Heaf, 1951, p. 227)

Indeed similar concerns had been voiced by William Morris (1885/1915c) more than 60 years earlier, in his vision for a socialist community where each contributed fairly to the necessary work:

... whatever else it is, [it must be] reasonable work; that is, it must be such work as a good citizen can see the necessity for ...

... I will not submit to waste my time and energies in making some trifling toy which I know only a fool can desire; I will rebel sooner than that. (p. 20)

In addition to ensuring that patients were engaged in work in which they could rightly take pride, occupational therapists were urged to relinquish their Romantic valuing of handcrafted objects in favour of the efficiencies of mass production. In place of hand tools, they were told, machinery should be installed wherever possible so that patients would master one process efficiently rather than several processes indifferently. Bringing industry into therapy would serve their patients better, it was argued, since only the gifted few could make a living as a craftsman. Indeed, attempting to do so would result in the indignity of charitable sales and a fixation on incapacity. In contrast, patients taught to use machinery would be equipped to re-enter industrial life, albeit in a sheltered workshop.

This call, although understandable in its context, pitted the crafts Morris (1881/1914e) had characterised as “human, serious, and pleasurable” against “machine-like, trivial, or grievous” (p. 139) industrial processes. Yet Morris himself recognised both the costs and benefits of machines and industrial processes. In 1888, for example, he proclaimed that “as a condition of life, production by machinery is altogether an evil; as an instrument of for forcing on us better conditions of life, it has been, and some time yet will be, indispensable” (1914f, p. 156). In the event, the Occupational Therapy Association was quick to take up the call to advance the profession, to make it more realistic, by forging

links with industry and incorporating industrial processes. Arts and crafts, it was asserted, would retain a place in the early phases of treatment and continue to have a recreational value as an outlet for people's creative instincts. This call to refocus practice perhaps held sway because during the war the majority of occupational therapists had been deployed in physical rehabilitation settings, where they engaged patients in manufacturing of items needed for the war effort rather than traditional craftwork (Wilcock, 2002b). By war's end, the Association forthrightly asserted that "Occupational Therapists must be prepared to relegate the arts and crafts to their proper place" (The Future of Occupational Therapy, 1946, p. 11), which was not, apparently, in preparing patients to return to the competitive world of work. However, not everyone was prepared to so easily dispense with the Romantic vision of occupational therapy or to assign crafts the status of mere hobbies, arguing the importance of interventions targeting the development of satisfying leisure pursuits. As Mary Challoner (1948) argued:

We have had several articles and letters in the Occupational Therapy Journal urging a realistic approach in the choice of work to be carried out, and the introduction of more utilitarian crafts and of light machinery, so that treatment may be allied to the industrial life from which the patients come. While fully admitting the need for this retraining to conditions to which the patient must return, it would be disastrous if this type of occupation were allowed to outbalance the more creative side. Surely the aim of the Occupational Therapist, and of all treatment of the disabled, injured or medically unfit, is to restore the patient to wholeness of body, mind and spirit. ... if the Occupational Therapist continues to ignore these needs in her anxiety to be realistic she will miss the opportunity to re-create the whole man. (p. 20)

Mary S. Jones (1947), whose holistic vision demonstrably championed biomechanical rationalism as well as Romantic potential, had similar views. She argued that despite any criticism occupational therapists might receive, the craft skills they taught 'the disabled' were a vital alternative to the strenuous recreations enjoyed by healthy people. Such skills, she held, were necessary to counteract the extra nervous strain of working with a disability. In 1950 the editor of the *Journal of the Association of Occupational Therapists* joined the discussion, adding that "much of the misery, irritation and boredom, which retard the recovery of the patient" was due to not having a hobby. This fact necessitated

the discovery of “a latent talent or hidden interest” that could be used to gradually restore the individual to “the fullest productivity” (Editorial, 1950, pp. 3-4). A subtle feature of these assertions is the positioning of crafts as hobbies that both protect and enhance health, in order that patients might be able to work. Similar sentiments were expressed within psychiatric circles, in assertions such as that “the proper place for hobbies is with people who will soon be well again” (Carstairs, 1958, p. 17), presumably because they would resume a productive role outside the hospital. In contrast, engaging long-term patients in craft activities was roundly decried. Occupational therapists were informed, for example, that “a patient can deteriorate just as fast sitting making a rug day in day out, as he can sitting unemployed in a ward” (p. 18) and assured that the tailoring, carpentry, gardening and bricklaying workshops established by one psychiatrist were “not hobbies like Occupational Therapy” (p. 18).

Notwithstanding the forcefulness of this debate, occupational therapists did not en masse abandon craftwork, not even within vocational rehabilitation services. Jones (1960), for example, employed woodwork, basketry, rug weaving and stitched leather work alongside metal work, light engineering and gardening as the mainstays of the therapeutic occupations offered at Farnham Park, a service established explicitly to bridge the gap between hospital treatment and re-employment. Furthermore, Jones encouraged patients to make things of their own design, so long as the aims of treatment were met, because doing so was recognised to “satisfy and absorb the attention” (p. 10). In stark contrast, Jones’ attempt to replicate the successes of the war years, by contracting with local industry for light assembly and production line tasks was an outright failure. Without the moral incentive of contributing to the war effort, patients felt their efforts were exploited and completed the work carelessly. The work was discontinued.

Practice Responses

In the face of the accumulating critique of the professions’ valuing of crafts and craftsmanship, a number of shifts in practice can be discerned. One is that the certainty therapists had evidenced in the 1940s, about specific crafts being suited to the restoration of distinct elements of function, quietly slipped out of the literature. In consequence, one

therapist working in a mental health setting in the mid 1950s observed that “the particular craft selected [by a patient] seems to be of less significance” (Addison, 1957, p. 17). From her perspective, so long as the craftwork patients embarked on provided an emotional outlet and demanded concentration, initiative, sustained effort and new learning, therapists could be confident that self-confidence, awareness of aptitudes and interests, a sense of achievement, care over personal appearance, and regular work habits would follow. Moreover, these rational considerations were apparently sufficient to restore a healthy, or at least a functional identity. From this position of denying the professions’ heritage of crafts, it was a short step to relocating practice in the mastery of everyday objects used at work and in the home, and the provision of gadgets to replace capacities lost through disease or injury.

Another apparent response to the professions’ loss of confidence in craftsmanship was to decrease the level of skill required of patients. One example is Sidney Lock’s (1957) description of the need for simplicity in the tasks assigned to patients attending his printing workshop. The rationale offered was that short-term patients could be quickly progressed through graduated exercises, within a restricted or full range of movement, without being impeded by lengthy instruction. A further reaction to the devaluing of crafts was to reframe the purpose of engaging patients in making things. One such proposal was that “any activity, including crafts” (Conlan, 1957, p. 29) might serve as a medium for developing a deeper relationship with each patient or forming a group within which to foster interpersonal relationships amongst patients. Either would enable the therapist to provide a “living picture of the patient” (p. 29) to other team members. In the context of this perception of craft as interchangeable with other therapeutic strategies, Margaret Conlan went on to suggest that the “field can better be described as ‘Therapeutic Occupation’ than as ‘Occupational Therapy’” (p. 29).

Overall, occupational therapy’s move away from the Romantic philosophies epitomised by the Arts and Crafts Movement seemed to leave occupational therapists in a position of uncertainty. At times this manifested as a reinterpretation of occupational therapists’ previous concern with craftsmanship. For example, therapists were advised to ‘never

accept shoddy work' from blind people, because the crafts they were taught in rehabilitation might later become their hobbies (Drake & Potts, 1960). This reframing of the meaning of an oft repeated refrain belies its origin in Arts and Crafts philosophy, where high quality craftsmanship was integral to the ideal of ennobling labour rather than mere pastime.

The undermining of Romanticism also diluted therapists' accounts of the successes achieved in therapy. Sometimes it was simply left indeterminate whether the transformations reported were due to the occupational therapy or some other factor. Hansi Böhm's (1958b) account of 'painting and pottery with psychotics', for example, tells of the remarkable transformations achieved. At the outset, the patients were so bewildered that they drank the paint-water, painted their faces or the chairs, and had no apparent control over their paintings of table lamps turning into flying crocodiles, and rabbits into aeroplanes. Some months later, many had remarkably improved in their appearance, deportment, behaviour, and conversation. One woman who had been admitted to the hospital 19 years earlier, painted watercolours of such sensitivity that they "would never have been credited to a chronic schizophrenic" (p. 25). Yet in the end it is unclear whether Böhm attributed the re-emergence of personal, social and artistic abilities to her experiment in artwork or the antipsychotic medications that had been introduced at much the same time.

In other cases, Romantic stories of patients being transformed by making things were reappraised as insufficient because, for many, the experience merely ignited a desire to return to normal life but did not make them fit to do so. At its extreme, this uncertainty surfaced as a questioning of the whole therapeutic enterprise:

The age-old striving after healing of all kinds of sickness makes us feel we must continue to do all we can, and yet there come those awful moments of doubt when we wonder whether we have any right to interfere with the comparative security of the mental illness into which a patient's defence mechanisms have led her, until we have an ultimate end in view to lay before her when we have done all *we* can to help. (Drouet, 1959, p. 26, emphasis original)

By the early 1960s, the eclipsing of Romanticism had advanced to the point where some therapists seemed not to recognise the Romantic potential of their practice. A striking example of this is the almost apologetic report by Grace Wilson (1962) of her work in a leprosy village in Angola. While most of the inhabitants were engaged in raising their own food, or employed in the carpentry, building and the other trades necessary to sustain the village, around 60 were too handicapped to participate in this work. Some members of this group spent their days making sleeping mats from the local river reeds, “large drying trays from grass and soaked tree bark,” ... “smaller trays and oval baskets from roots and bark string” ... “spinning thread from locally grown cotton,” carving “wooden spoons, ladles, combs and other useful articles” or “fish nets from strong, green twigs and bark” (p. 22). All of these items were recognised to have utilitarian value and to be in fair demand. Making these things was acknowledged to give their makers a purpose in life, as well as being valued crafts that might provide a means of livelihood should these individuals be cured and allowed to return to their villages. In this account, all the elements of the Arts and Crafts vision are present. The lepers were fashioning handcrafted products from locally available, natural materials. Their simple creations were inspired by the indigenous traditions of the area, provided them with physical activity, and bestowed the dignity of using their creative powers and contributing to the community. Should they be discharged, their craftsmanship gave the possibility of self-determination. Yet the therapist was moved to admit that “it is true that many of the above-mentioned activities are not particularly therapeutic for a physical disability set-up” (p. 22).

The Decline of Romanticism

Section One of this chapter has described how, in the early years of occupational therapy in England, Romantic assumptions about life, human potential and how to live were embedded in the profession. Furthermore, a range of physicians who were influential to the establishment and development of occupational therapy in Britain supported this vision. In particular, occupational therapists’ Romanticism underpinned the use of traditional creative activities for therapeutic benefit.

This first section of the chapter has also shown that, in what came to be termed somewhat disparagingly as ‘diversional’ therapy, occupational therapists taught patients how to make things with their own hands. True to the tenets of the Arts and Crafts Movement, they did this in the belief that by creating beautiful utilitarian objects patients would recreate themselves as valued and productive members of their community. In addition, they believed that through their craftsmanship patients might express themselves, discover unsuspected talent, ameliorate the damaging effects of industrial life, and to some extent, find consolation for the limitations that disability imposed.

In tracing the history of occupational therapy, however, it has also been revealed that Romantic notions came increasingly under threat. Initially, concerns were raised about whether crafting objects actually provided the sense of satisfaction that occupational therapists assumed, and whether the craftsmanship patients developed had any practical value in everyday life. Such concerns intensified during the war years and in their wake, when all members of society, even those in hospital or permanently disabled were needed to contribute to industry. The accumulating critique of craftwork in occupational therapy served to undermine the confidence in craftwork that occupational therapists had previously expressed, and to decrease their emphasis on patients achieving a high level of craftsmanship. It also led to a dilution of the claims of patients being transformed by crafting objects.

In Section Two of this chapter, the pattern of interaction between Romantic and rational assumptions in the 25 years between 1938 and 1962 will be addressed. As will be seen, both perspectives were initially intertwined with each other. Increasing tension between these philosophical traditions, however, fuelled an ongoing debate about whether the process of occupational therapy or its products were more important.

Section Two: The Ascendance of Rationalism

Section two of the chapter addresses how rationalism came to the fore within occupational therapy. The discussion opens by reviewing the ways that rationalism and Romanticism were initially intertwined. It then charts how tensions between the two philosophical bases arose and how, over time, Romanticism slipped from occupational therapists discourse. Figure 8:3 gives an overview.

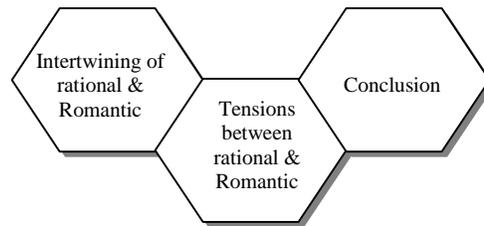


Figure 8:3 Overview of Topics in Section Two of Chapter Eight.

The Intertwining of the Romantic with the Rational

At times, particularly in the earlier occupational therapy literature, Romantic and rational perspectives were presented alongside or intertwined with each other. One example of this is a 1920 definition of occupational therapy, which William Rush Dunton (1945) identified as from the Boston School of Occupational Therapy. It reads:

Occupational therapy aims to furnish a scheme of scientifically arranged activities which will give, to any set of muscles or related parts of the body in case of disease or injury, just the degree of movement and exercise that may be directed by a competent physician or surgeon. Stimulating heart action, respiration, and blood circulation accurately, as prescribed, and at the same time yielding some of the joy and satisfaction that wisely selected wholesome occupation provides in normal life. (pp. 3-4)

Similarly, Dunton combined in a single sentence the rational “exercise [of] mind and body” with the Romantic arousal of “interest, courage, and confidence” (p. 13). There was no apparent discomfort in marrying the rational, the exercise of specified muscles in

specific directions and intensities, with the Romantic art of practice and its wholesome joys. What is evident, however, is a subtle separation, with rational thinking more apparent in descriptions of the purpose and process of therapy, and the capacities the patient was using, while Romantic sensibilities were more commonly expressed in relation to what attracted patients to participate in therapy and its outcomes.

Accordingly, therapists happily presented Romantic and rational perceptions side by side. They set goals, devised interventions and measured progress in rationalist, functional terms while accounting for their successes in language reminiscent of the Arts and Crafts Movement – the burgeoning of craftsmanship, the delight of making something with their own hands (Hick, 1948), or being completely absorbed and effecting their own cure (Jones, 1952). A glimpse of how therapists held their competing Romantic and rational perspectives together is afforded in a report of the ‘Brains Trust’ staged at the conclusion of a conference in 1951. In response to a question about the psychological effect of repetitive movement, the Trust members replied as follows:

Miss MacCaul felt a patient would not be unduly conscious of repetitive movement if he was doing something in which he was interested ...

Mrs Jones felt that so long as patients had explained to them what an article was going to be used for and the object of the exact exercise, they did not object to repetitive movements.

Miss Thompson thought there was a tendency to forget some patients found a repetitive task quite satisfying and preferred it to any other.

Mrs Jones said Those who had no leisure interests with which to occupy their minds while on a repetitive job often suffered from gastric ulcers, industrial neurosis, skin diseases and so on. (Brains Trust, 1951, p. 270)

In this interchange, there is no sense of the Trust members disagreeing with each other. They are simply building a complex vision of therapy. Yet Grizel MacCaul alluded to Arts and Crafts values in her reference to interest, Mary S. Jones proposed offering a rational explanation to the patient, Mabel Thompson offered a rational explanation of people’s differing responses to the audience, and Jones responded with a Romantic perspective of importance of leisure interests to counteract the ills of industrialisation. In

concluding the exchange, Mary S. Jones added that it was “important that the patient should be treated as a whole” (p. 270). In this context, Jones’ remark brings together not only all aspects of the patient, but occupational therapists’ allegiance to the philosophies of both rationalism and Romanticism. This interplay of Romantic and rational considerations in relation to crafts and craftsmanship, the prescription and process of therapeutic activities, and the outcomes of occupational therapy is presented graphically in Figure 8:4.

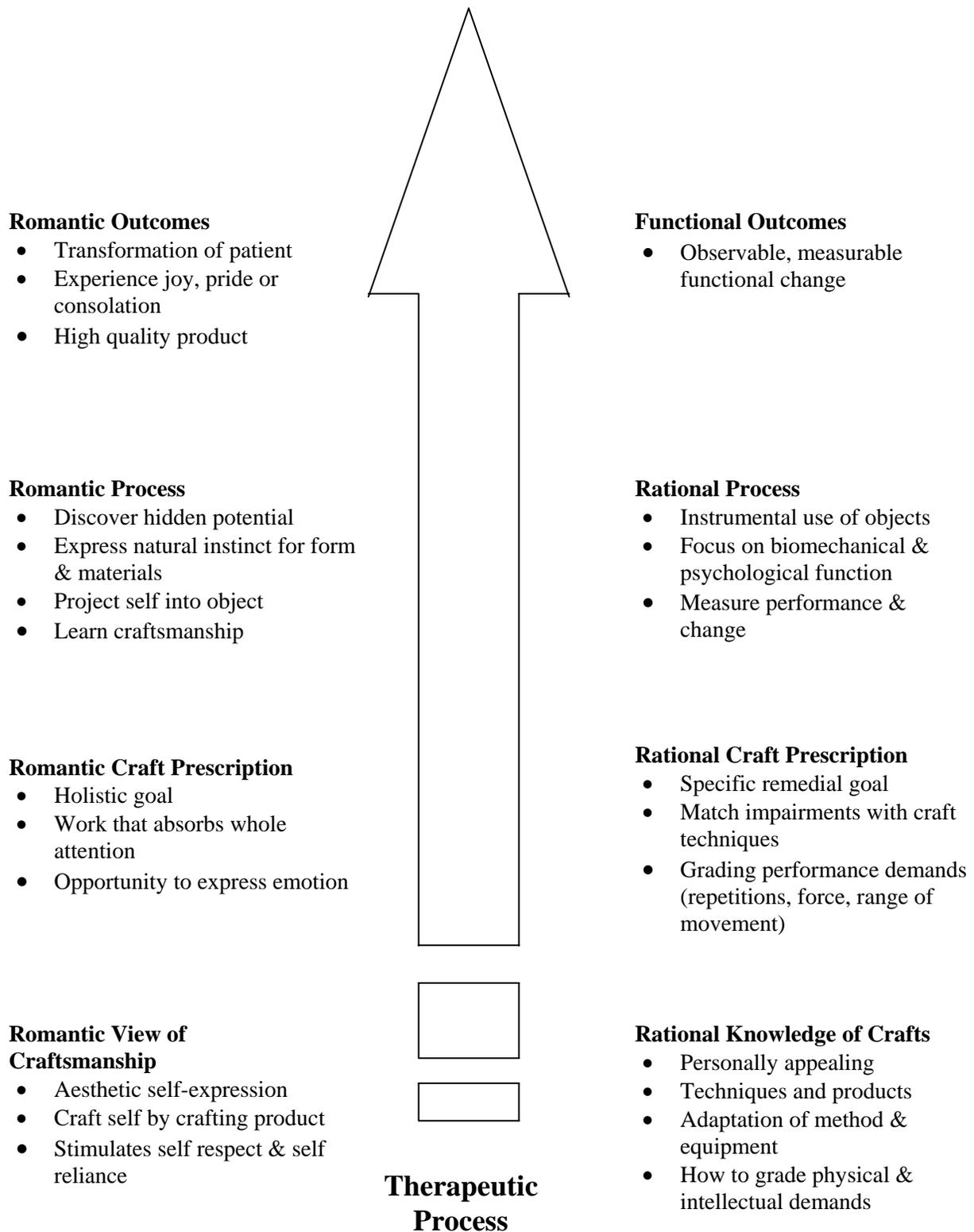


Figure 8:4 The Intertwining of Romanticism and Rationalism.

Occupational therapists' unselfconscious practice of intertwining these dual worldviews continued through to the late 1950s. Frances M. Robertson (1957), for example, evidenced rational thinking in her report of treating a young 'mental defective' with spasticity using a "special gadget which was attached to the beater of a floor-loom" (p. 30). Using this contraption, "considerable improvement in extension of the left forearm and some finger mobility were effected within a few weeks" (pp. 30-31). While this was clearly a pleasing result, it was the unanticipated changes made by another patient that elicited Robertson's Romanticism. The woman concerned was in her thirties and had been considered an idiot, but her 'unbelievable perseverance' with attempts to minimize her physical handicaps saw her 'blossoming' into one of the most trusted patients, renowned for her sense of fun and responsiveness to kindness. She was 'inspirational'. Notable in this story is the lack of any sense of having a preconceived endpoint to guide the intervention, as well as the lack of explanation of how this transformation was achieved, both of which are clearly evident in the story of treating spasticity. Rather, this woman is simply reported as progressing from bed to wheelchair, from having things done for her to taking responsibility within the ward.

Similarly, Brian Haggett's (1957) declared intent to make the lives of long-stay psychotics in Park Prewett Hospital happier has a sense of the Romantic. The instance cited by Haggett involves the way 15 "burnt-out schizophrenics who were of faulty habits and away from reality" progressed through "simple peg-rug making ... to making hooked rugs, and sandpapering stools" (p. 34) on the ward, to attending the Occupational Therapy Centre. At the Centre, like other patients, they were "encouraged to progress through brushmaking to painting furniture, simple carpentry, turning and book binding" (p. 35). Although the nature of the progression from one craft to the next is not stated, occupational therapists of the times would presumably have been able to interpret the increasing demand that this succession of crafts implied. Also unexplained is just how making brushes, painting furniture, working with wood and binding books might render hospitalised patients happier. From an Arts and Crafts perspective, however, attaining a level of craftsmanship to reliably turn out quality products is sufficient explanation in itself.

In contrast, K. S. Pollard (1960) attempted to provide a rational explanation for all aspects of her account of working with patients after surgical intervention for Parkinson's disease. She designed a process of pre and post-operative assessment that would enable her to quantify the benefits of the operation. It encompassed toileting, feeding, dressing and general activities such as striking a match, unscrewing a jar, dialling a telephone, getting on and off a bus and so on. Pollard also had patients complete a dot test and a maze test, and both timed them and recorded "a brief word picture ... to show the manner of his performance" (p. 14). As well, Pollard itemised their inability to hurry, difficulties initiating movement, failures of the grasp-release mechanism, emotional state and how quickly they tired. She hypothesised that "having accustomed themselves over a period of sometimes as long as twenty years to using their hands in an abnormal manner" it was not surprising that many needed to be taught the very basics of life, such as how to hold pens, cutlery and soap. Yet, in drawing her entirely rational account to a close, Pollard allows an altogether Romantic perspective, declaring that "to many this new operation is like the 'miracle' they have been praying for" (p. 16).

Similarly, Frances Robertson's (1960) story of a young woman she worked with in Portugal combines rational processes with a Romantic ending. Maria, the woman in question, had lost her hands at an early age. Nonetheless, she effectively managed everything the occupational therapists asked her to do, from macramé and money handling, to threading a needle, weaving and scrubbing the sink. They determined that Maria would not benefit from being fitted with functional prostheses, and had no need of gadgets save a simple elastic cuff with slots for pencils and eating utensils. Yet Maria's wish to have 'dress' hands for social occasions was indulgently supported, even though they would be only marginally functional.

In mixing Romantic and rational, occupational therapists were not entirely out of step with prevailing medical practice. For example in a joint medical/occupational therapy presentation to the Second National Congress of the Association of Occupational Therapists, Dr Ursula Shelley (1960), a children's physician, declared that occupational

therapists “have the opportunity to learn the potential life spirit of each child and ... also his personality, his intellectual capacity and, not least his spiritual response” (p. 21). That said, Dr Shelley went on to describe in rational terms the normal stages of reflex development and the functional difficulties that arise when primitive reflexes are not integrated. Following on from him, the occupational therapist described the various intervention strategies she applied. A sense of the child’s spirituality pervades the whole, with references to arousing the child’s interest, the enjoyment the child derived from interacting with objects, the need to stand back to allow the child to experiment for itself, and so on (Landis, 1960).

Tensions Between Romantic and Rational Thinking

This thesis has shown that in occupational therapy beginnings, Romantic and rational perspectives had co-existed in relatively equal balance. However, while many therapists continued to intertwine Romantic and rational ways of thinking, other individuals expressed a clear preference for rational explanations. This inclination towards rationalism suggests that occupational therapists, like other health professionals and other members of society, viewed these philosophies as competing.

In the literature from the United States, the tension between Romanticism and rationalism is apparent somewhat earlier than in Britain. For example in William Dunton’s (1945) work we find an assertion that for arthritic patients, “*the method of the work is far more important than the work itself*” (p. 89, emphasis original). Dunton went on to argue that the patient’s gratification would lie in the improvement in range of movement not the “joy of the work or its perfection” (p. 89). Clearly, Dunton’s preference is for observable, measurable change over more Romantic notions such as joy in the process of crafting an object or the production of a high quality product. A few pages further on, however, Dunton related a story of a patient who became so absorbed in the carpentry tasks he was assigned that he did not realise he had stopped protecting his injured left knee until this was pointed out to him. From Dunton’s account it is clear that the patient was not focusing on “the method of the work”, that is, working in such a way as to normalise knee function. Rather, he was absorbed in his craftsmanship, ensuring that he applied

sufficient pressure to effectively plane planks of wood. Although this patient was clearly gratified by the restoration of knee function, it had been achieved by becoming thoroughly engaged in doing a good job; not by being mindful of the way he was using his knee. This story is important because it reveals the extent to which Arts and Crafts assumptions were embedded in the therapeutic application of occupation, such that even those who espoused the rational slipped into Romantic perspectives. In particular it suggests that while therapists need to be attuned to rational considerations, the success of therapy equally depended on patients being captivated by its Romantic elements. Nonetheless, Romanticism was to face increasing critique.

Over time, Romanticism and rationalism were to become increasingly opposed. Two debates that arose within the profession exemplify the increasing tension. These disagreements centred on whether or not to adapt craft equipment to achieve a particular therapeutic effect, and whether it was the products patients made or the process of making them that was more important. It is to these areas of conflict, identified in Figure 8:5 that the discussion now turns.

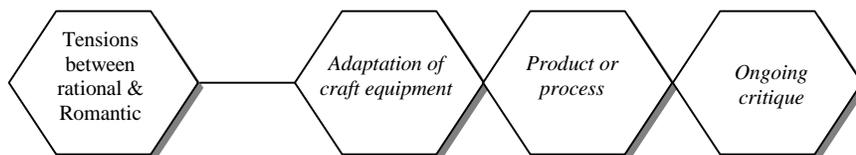


Figure 8:5 Tensions Between Romantic & Rational Thinking.

The Adaptation of Craft Equipment

As stated, the issue of whether it was best to adapt craft equipment or to use it normally was to become a widespread controversy. From one perspective, adapting looms, fretsaws and the like ensured patients would use the specific movement pattern prescribed to remedy their dysfunction. By adding resistance or using slings and pulleys to provide support, therapists could manipulate the effort patients exerted as they wove, sawed, or sanded. Such adaptations, it was presumed, enhanced biomechanical outcomes

and provided “psychological support” by removing “some of the emphasis on the disabled part” (McCaul¹¹, 1944, p. 18). Patients were thus enabled or encouraged to use their injured limb, while not entirely forgetting their disability. This was important because, it was reasoned, each patient

... should be treated as a normal intelligent being who would want to be told why he is given his particular work, and to be taught how to carry it out – he should, in fact, from the start, be made to share the responsibility for his progress towards recovery. (McCaul, p. 18)

The emphasis on intelligence, explanation, responsibility and mindfulness of one’s actions reveal the rational underpinnings of this view.

From a Romantic perspective, being rigged up to adapted equipment to work in strange and unnatural ways was fatiguing and unpleasant. One therapist, expressed the view that “the value of the treatment from the psychological angle is lost if too many gadgets are attached or the tools are altered to any noticeable degree” (Book Review, 1945, p. 18). Because of this, patients would focus on their disability, pain and discomfort instead of forgetting it as they became absorbed in the process of making something (As a W.E.D. Sees It, 1944). Yet, as the focus shifted towards achieving the required movements, the importance of considering patients’ interests and the pleasure to be found in creative pursuits was increasingly challenged (Bach & Bright, 1951). For those committed to the Romantic vision, it must have seemed that the very essence of occupational therapy would be lost.

As well as illustrating the tension between reasoned action and the romance of being lost in creative activity, it is interesting to note that therapists on both sides of this argument resorted to ‘psychology’ to support their point of view. On the Romantic side, it seems that ‘psychology’ was called into play to capture the subjective experience of being fully engaged in an occupation, which might nowadays be called flow (Csikszentmihalyi,

¹¹ The original text identifies the author of this passage as G. McCaul. This appears to be a spelling error and it is likely that Grizel MacCaul was in fact the author.

1990), as well as the transformative and curative properties of occupation. On the rational side, references to ‘psychology’ seem to encompass motivational processes.

Product Or Process?

The controversy over whether to adapt craft equipment was not the only area in which Romantic and rational clashed. Helen Willard and Clare Spackman’s (1947) advice that “high standards of workmanship and skill should be maintained, but not at the cost of losing the value of the treatment” (p. 144) points to the crux of the problem. Because it was, ultimately, indeterminate which was more important - the process of developing craftsmanship by working on an object or the fulfilment experienced from satisfaction with the product. At heart, this is a debate over the curative basis of occupational therapy. If it is exercising one’s capacities in order to regain function of body or mind, then *how* the patient works is more important. In this case, the focus should be on what the occupation requires of patients and what they actually do. To optimise the health benefit of making something, everything should be logically thought through so that each aspect is tailored towards addressing individual patient’s impairments, be they physical, mental or spiritual. The right occupation would specifically remediate impairments and, preferably, be sufficiently interesting to “delay mental fatigue” (Colson, 1945, p. 6). This would ensure that patients worked longer, focused less on their pain, and unconsciously used movement patterns that would be resisted if presented as exercise. When patients were fully involved in the process of doing what they had been directed to do, that might be explained in terms of developing their concentration, or integrating the desired movement pattern, or being motivated, or simply that they understand the purpose of the occupation and were prepared to work for their own recovery. Throughout the process, however, patients would be responsible for monitoring their own performance, or at least working the equipment in the way they had been shown. Whatever satisfaction patients might experience in relation to the final product would become just one of many psychological factors that might influence overall well-being, and motivation for and attitude towards further treatment.

Alternately, if the curative factor is the experience of skilfully applying oneself to a creative act, of becoming one with one's tools, of being a skilled craftsman who makes and handles honest products, then the craftsmanship is the focus. To optimise the health benefits, patients might be stepped through a graded process of skill development and receive coaching on the craft technique. In this case, the intent would be that they develop sufficient skill to experience deft mastery of technique and materials. The Arts and Crafts philosophies informing this alternative are that achieving a level of mastery would optimise patients' involvement in the work, because in all things that require a degree of skill people naturally experience pleasure in doing as well as they can (Morris, 1881/1914e). People would, it was assumed, strive to make each piece work better than the last, and some might endeavour to achieve perfection for no reason other than their own pleasure and honour as an artist (Morris, 1879/1914a, 1884/1936b). Moreover, patients would feel motivated to continue working because "every worthy work done and delighted in by the maker and user begets a longing for more" (Morris, 1881/1914e, p. 148).

In accordance with this perspective, patients would be encouraged to focus on the object they were making in the belief that as they made the object so the object or the making would transform them. The pleasure of the creative act would restore hope and banish misery, irritation and boredom. The hidden interests and latent talents that were revealed would help patients adjust to disability and loss, maximise productivity, and support a healthy life (Editorial, 1950). While therapists would consider specific remedial purpose in their selection of what to make, matching people with an appropriate craft might more fully reflect the art of practice, that is the art of divining individual's latent talents. Being fully involved in the process of crafting an object and the satisfaction gained from the final product would be an expected component of a transformative process of unleashing human potential.

With hindsight it might be argued that Romantic and rational perspectives need not have been viewed as competing, that both Romantic and rational processes could plausibly be happening at the same time. Alternately, the balance might have depended on the

individual patient's orientation towards rationalism or Romanticism, and the extent to which they sought rational explanations or embraced the experience of the therapeutic occupation they were engaging in. This, however, was not the case. Statements such as "the Treatment is only judged by its effect on the patient in each case, whether the products show inferior workmanship or not" (O'Sullivan, 1955, p. 26) were repeated over the years. Equally though, therapists were advised that there was a tendency:

... to use the therapeutic emphasis as an excuse for accepting a low standard of work which *could* be better. This is a poor compliment to, and poor business for, a patient who genuinely needs to earn, and who needs the stimulation of finding his goods are in demand. (Macdonald, 1960, p. 26)

That is, therapists must walk a line between focusing on the change wrought in the patient even if that meant an inferior product, and failing to extract the maximum therapeutic and economic benefit by ensuring the quality of the product was as high as possible. At times, this was a difficult balance to achieve, as one case study attests:

During first week, patient made an apron in attractive colours, using cross-stitch embroidery, necessitating concentration and counting threads. Enjoyed the work but was careless and had a low standard. When corrected sulked or swore, but after a few minutes would return with an ingratiating manner. Blamed her own carelessness on other patients, who had given her wrong advice or had disturbed her. It was necessary to keep her up to standard of which she was capable. (Macdonald, 1960, p. 168)

A brief passage embedded in a general rehabilitation text sheds further light on what was happening to fuel the debate.

There is sometimes a tendency for occupational therapists and technicians, who are excellent craftsmen themselves and like to see a job well done, to strive too much for absolute perfection in the work the patient is doing. Rather than see a thing badly finished they will do it themselves ... The therapist does not realize that the patient no longer has the complete satisfaction of knowing that all the work is his. If a patient is being particularly slow, both mentally and physically, it is much easier to do a thing for him ... (Stow, 1958, pp. 87-88)

What Barbara Stow revealed in her chapter was that in an effort to live up to the ideals of craftsmanship, staff members were reworking the things patients made. This workplace practice nullified, from a rational perspective, any possibility of psychological benefit while simultaneously removing any hope of Romantic transformation of the patient.

In contrast to this excessive valuing of the quality of the product, medical observers of occupational therapy point to instances of overvaluing the process of making things, as the following passage reveals:

Another source of disagreement between patient and therapist [in addition to wanting to make what interested them, rather than what was therapeutic] concerns the value of the activity versus the completion of a task. Some therapists we have known are almost violently opposed to completing a project, feeling that as soon as the patient shows a real proficiency he should be transferred to a new enterprise. But the patient stubbornly insists on finishing the article, perhaps from pride of achievement, perhaps from mercenary motives.... we have concluded that it may not only be useless but perhaps detrimental for the therapist to insist that the patient appreciate basic values of functional occupational therapy and that he act on those values. Though we grant that the patient's attitude toward the purpose and end result of the activities may be short-sighted, we feel that the therapist should accept the situation philosophically. (Mead & Harell, 1950, p. 755)

Where the occupational therapists in the previous example were charged with putting too much weight on the Romance of craftsmanship, these physicians were citing occupational therapists too driven by rational considerations. Rather than the well-intentioned but misplaced loyalty to the ideal of a quality product exhibited by the therapists in the first example, one might imagine the therapists Mead and Harell observed being driven by the need to feel competent in what they were doing. In medical settings in the post-war era, that meant not only being able to explain *how* their interventions worked but how, like medicine, they would improve their methods to get even better outcomes over time.

Occupational therapists' resultant emphasis on measurable change in the patient, even at the expense of any satisfaction they might have experienced from completing a product, makes sense when considered in relation to the state of knowledge development at the time. For the technologies that existed, or that were being developed at around this time, that therapists might use to demonstrate patients' response to occupation were quantitative. When therapists drew on their knowledge of medicine, kinesiology, psychological processes, biomechanics, and psychodynamic functioning they had ways to describe what they were trying to achieve, and the means to measure specific components of performance, such as range of movement, strength, and force. These were things that could be directly attributed to aspects of the process that could be observed, counted and manipulated, like the extent of the movement required, number of repetitions, and resistance. When they focused on these aspects of intervention, occupational therapists had a language to explain the process and report the outcomes of their work. Focusing on the more Romantic outcomes such as the rekindling of hope, restoration of dignity, or finding a meaning in living made it difficult to account for how these came about through either the process of making and using things, or in response to the craftsmanship of the product. As Dunton (1945) identified:

Like much human knowledge, occupational therapy is dependent upon other branches, and especially on psychology, for its own advancement. As yet, psychology has not determined with sufficient accuracy the physical and mental effects of emotions upon the individual. Until some method of determining those factors is discovered, occupational therapy must lag as a science, for it is believed that the creation of a pleasant mental attitude or emotion, and the stimulation of interest, are the bases for successful occupational treatment. This holds for its application in physical cases as well as mental. (p. 5)

Given occupational therapists' desire to develop a conceptual understanding of their practice and doctors' expectation that they would, it is little wonder rationalism began to dominate practice. Despite a flurry of correspondence published in the journal that argued the relative merits of diversional and ADL approaches in domiciliary services (Burden, 1961; Castle, 1961; Mobile Occupational Therapy, 1961; Pollard, 1961; Targett, 1961), diversional therapy, which had not aimed to restore isolated functions as

much as restore spirit and to nourish and sustain people with permanent disability, fell by the way side. With it, occupational therapy's traditional craft activities also declined, even though authorities such as Mary Macdonald (1960) argued that the growing prejudice against them was mistaken:

There has been a tendency, in the last few years, to swing away from the use of art and craft work for treatment. This has, in part, been brought about by the mistaken interpretation of occupational therapy as 'giving the patients something to do', resulting in a series of unattractive rugs, unoriginal and badly-made felt toys, or baskets or embroidery of poor design or in poor quality materials. The swing has gone over almost too far to production, and 'industrial work' or 'out work' on contract is considered a more up-to-date form of treatment. It cannot be claimed that one or other activity is more therapeutic and/or economic. Problems and abuses arise in the use of either and both have their place in the application of treatment....

It is quite clear to the occupational therapist that in certain cases well applied art and craft work can be as useful, or more so, than any other activity. Training in craft-work, too, forms the basis of the skill, dexterity, ingenuity and precision that are so essential for many jobs, and, in fact, for an occupational therapist herself. (pp. 25-26)

Notwithstanding such protests, the rationalist theories occupational therapists adopted contributed to a narrowing of focus and came to frame the problems to which occupational therapists would attend. Those theories also changed therapists' understanding of the nature of their practice, marked by a shift in terminology from restoring people's souls to achieving subjective and objective psychological benefit, and a shift in practice from craftwork to purposeful activities.

Ongoing Critique

The impetus for change unleashed by the war continued through the 1950s, broadening in its scope over time. Some of the ongoing questioning of the value of occupational therapy's traditional craft based interventions was relatively benign. One instance is Constance Henson's (1955) summary of the ways the profession had progressed from merely keeping patients occupied, to appreciating that "something creative was needed – hence our use of our Arts and Crafts" (p. 43), and finally to the addition of social and

recreational activities. Another example lies in one therapist's story of the accumulation of patients' work she faced on taking up a role in a mental hospital:

... it fell to my lot to organize a sale of patients' work. The stores clerk listed the items (46 pages of them) for which I was required to sign. The collection of objects with which I was confronted was indeed multifarious; tarnished belts and indeterminate leather articles; shapeless pochettes [envelop shaped handbags] in canvas and wool; untidy slip-mats; toys, stodgy or bizarre after their kind; eccentrically-stitched cushion covers, tray-cloths and tea-cosies, across which cavorted parrots and crinoline ladies picked out in colour schemes which schizophrenic ingenuity alone could devise. Warriors, battered but triumphant, they had survived sale upon sale. (Robertson, 1952, p. 22)

While Frances Robertson's intention was to argue the merits of using scrap materials in her craft based occupations, so that all articles could be priced accordingly and would be sure to sell, she also exposed the reality that producing high quality articles was not always a realistic expectation. In so doing, she, like others, brought into question the applicability of Arts and Crafts values within a service with therapeutic intent.

A more rigorous critique centred on the lack of realistic vocational possibilities arising from craft skills. A report on the matter was presented to the Hospital Practice Conference convened in 1955, detailing the training requirements, job openings, and likely remuneration in the fields of book binding, embroidery, hand weaving, soft toy and dressmaking, woodwork, basketry, leatherwork and other crafts taught by occupational therapists. The report emphasised the challenges individuals would face in securing employment, including the high or very high standard of work required; the paucity of openings, particularly for older people or people with a disability; the precarious nature of employment and long working hours in many of these fields; the limited market for handcrafted items and considerable competition from alternative products; as well as variations in regional demand. Only wooden toy making and woodturning were identified as offering plenty of scope and a ready market, while metal work and machine embroidery offered some possibilities. One textile-printing factory was identified as

offering training to disabled workers, under a Ministry of Labour scheme (Jackson et al, 1956).

As well as these concerns over the vocational outcomes of crafts-based interventions, some therapists began to openly question the therapeutic value of making handcrafted objects. A particularly forthright example of this was published in 1957:

The Limitations of Craft Work

There has been a growing realisation ... of the limits of craft work as a therapeutic measure. By the sole use of crafts the patient has been treated only in part, not as a whole, so that when he leaves hospital he is no better fitted to deal with his environment than before ...

It has been found that:-

1. craft work alone does not provide adequate outlet for emotional expression; a far more satisfactory means is through interpersonal relationships;
2. patients will use crafts as a means of escape, i.e., from interpersonal contact and reality;
3. crafts can be used to prolong isolation ...
4. by concentrating on craft work the standard of the articles becomes the most important thing, consequently there is little time for observation of the patient other than superficially ...
5. one of the biggest disadvantages of the scientific evaluation of crafts is that each person is an individual; the principles applying to one case do not necessarily apply to others, e.g., an occupation soothing to one person is often disturbing to another. (Conlan, 1957, p. 28)

Three lines of reasoning are evident in this excerpt. Firstly, the locus of therapeutic change had shifted, from the healing nature of occupation to the restorative possibilities of interpersonal interaction. This shift exemplifies occupational therapists' adoption of the theories of other disciplines when they failed to elucidate the curative basis of their interventions for themselves. Secondly, it points to the lack of satisfactory resolution of the controversy over whether it was the process of crafting something or the finished product that held the therapeutic power. In essence, this debate pitched craftsmanship against rehabilitative principles. Margaret Conlan, like some psychiatrists (Moross & Gillis, 1957), accepted the view that crafts were not inherently health promoting and

might even allow or accentuate pathology. Thirdly, Conlan's reference to the scientific evaluation of crafts points directly to occupational therapists' failure to develop a theoretical explanation of the interaction between person and occupation that could encompass individual difference. In titling her article *Living Occupational Therapy*, Conlan signalled that in her opinion, occupational therapy must evolve with the times. Her clear belief is that this evolution would entail shedding the profession's ties to Romanticism in general and Arts and Crafts philosophy in particular. A diagrammatic summary of these tensions within occupational therapy practice, in the context of medical advances and wartime influences, is presented in Figure 8.6.

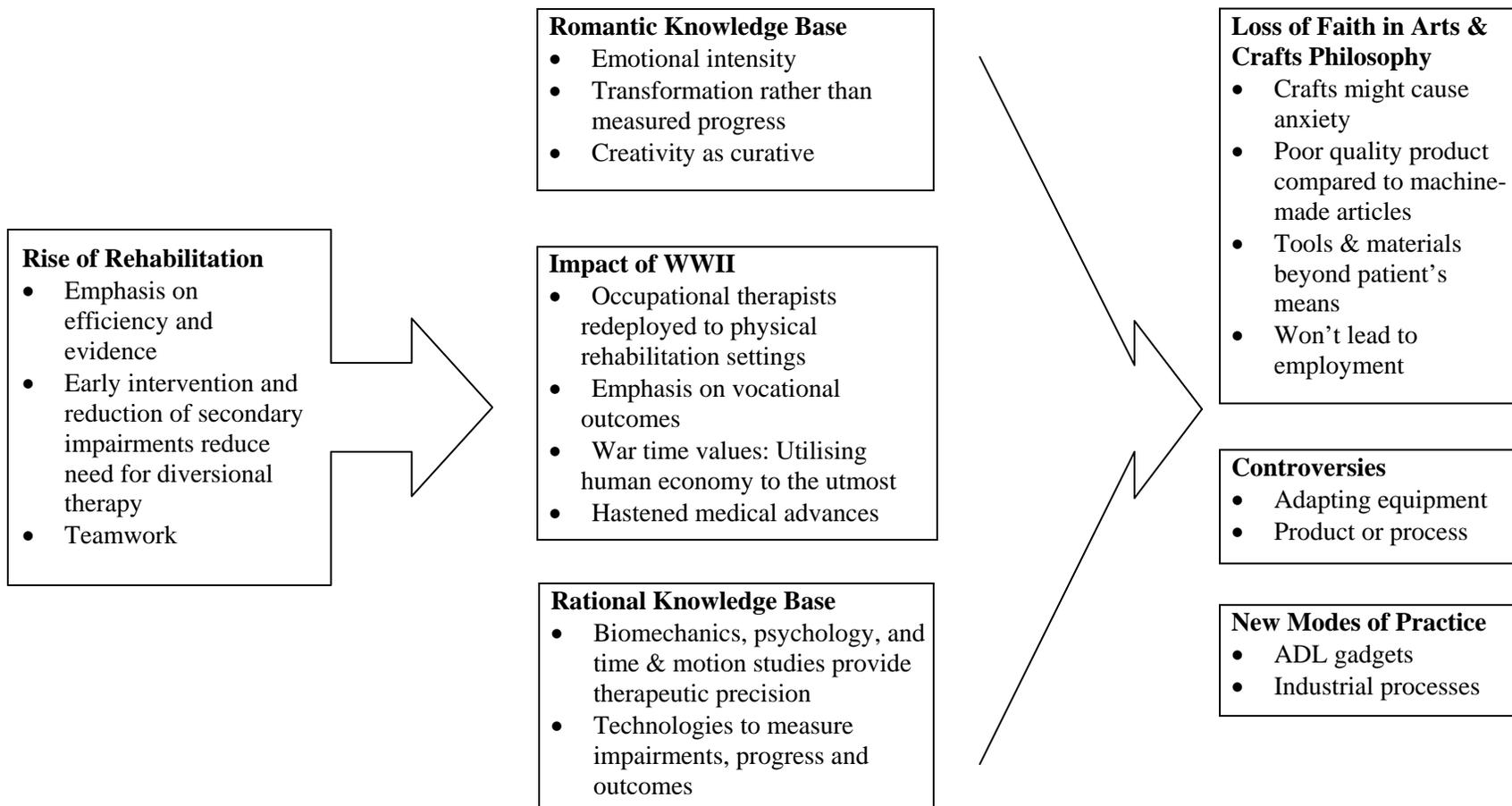


Figure 8:6 Overview of Increasing Tension Between Rationalism and Romanticism in Occupational Therapy.

Conclusion

Occupational therapists in England initially intertwined Romantic and rational perspectives. They used rational approaches to order their craft related knowledge, determine how to address biomechanical problems, explain some motivational aspects of making and doing things, and describe the specific observable outcomes of their interventions. At the same time, they drew from Romantic philosophies and Arts and Crafts perspectives to understand that people might craft themselves whilst crafting a product. Achieving this meant becoming totally absorbed in the craftwork, developing a high level of craftsmanship, and projecting oneself into the object created. The outcome would be an object to be proud of and the regeneration of spirit.

Over time, however, understandings of the problems occupational therapy might address, the therapeutic process and the outcomes that could be achieved became increasingly rational. In part, this came about because of occupational therapists desire to be able to articulate the theoretical basis of their practice. In part it was brought about by the challenges of and support from physicians and the emergence of interprofessional teamwork. The theories occupational therapists adopted were rational rather than Romantic, so the vision of transforming people through occupation and counteracting the ills of mechanised work through creativity came under increasing pressure.

The tensions between the Romantic and rational were largely played out in two key controversies. One was over the relative benefits of adapting or not adapting the equipment patients would use, with occupational therapists on both sides of the argument claiming to achieve better outcomes for the patient, one by making the patient conscious of what was happening, the other by allowing the patient to become lost in the creative process. The second contested area revolved around *how* occupational therapists might achieve the best outcome for their patients. The rational argument was that they should focus on how patients actually carried out the tasks they were set. The Romantic view held satisfaction with the final product to be more important. Ultimately, occupational therapists were overtaken by outside

forces. The war experience, advances in rehabilitative medicine, and the widespread adoption of teamwork all played their part in undermining occupational therapists' Romanticism. In the final chapter, the underlying reasons for the profession's loss of Romanticism and the present day implications of this failure of the profession's original vision are explored. Actions to address the identified issues are suggested.

Chapter Nine

Integrating Rationalism and Romanticism into Future Practice

The objective of this study was to uncover the assumptions about the relationship between objects and identity embedded in occupational therapy, and to critique current practice and ideology from that perspective. The study was based on an initial surmise that there is in fact a relationship between the objects people have, use and are associated with, and their identity. The specific questions that guided the research were:

1. What do people understand the relationship between objects and identity to be?
2. What are the philosophies that explain that relationship?
3. Are those philosophies consistent or inconsistent with occupational therapy's philosophy?
4. What are the implications for occupational therapy?

The extent to which the study has answered these questions, and the insights it has generated that might inform the future are the subject of this chapter. An outline of how the discussion will progress is provided in Figure 9:1.

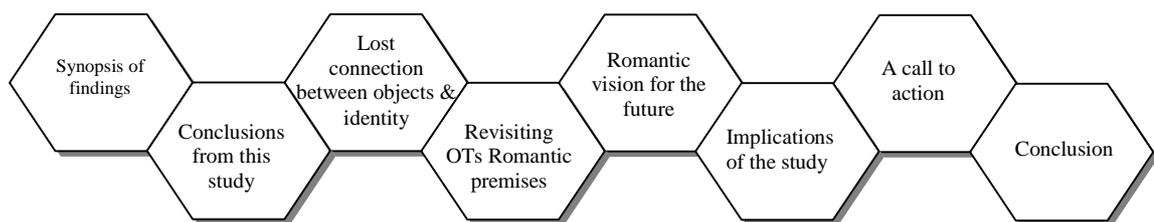


Figure 9:1 Progression of the Discussion in Chapter Nine.

Synopsis of Findings

Determining whether a relationship exists between objects and identity, and uncovering its philosophical nature were the first questions the study addressed, and

this was the subject of chapters two and three. As the opening discussion revealed, philosophers and theorists have taken a variety of approaches to considering both objects and identity. Those most relevant to this study were that it is the personal and cultural meanings of objects and individualistic notions of developing and expressing identity that are important in this context. Similarly, it was found that the relationship between objects and identity has been addressed from a variety of theoretical perspectives within a number of disciplines. Interpretive analysis revealed that running through all these perspectives are taken for granted ideas that point to the relationship between objects and identity having a dual nature, incorporating both the rationalist and Romantic philosophies that inform modernity. In the course of the discussion, the culturally embedded nature of people's perceptions of identity and their understandings of how objects relate to identity were uncovered, and initial thoughts that the study should sensibly be confined to Western philosophies were affirmed.

In order to develop a depth of understanding of both rational and Romantic perceptions of the relationship between objects and identity, the next task of the study was to explore those philosophies in some depth. This was the subject of chapters four and five. Guided by scholars who had each considered rationalism and Romanticism from the unique perspective of their discipline, key figures in the rise and development of these approaches to living were identified. Detailed analysis of the works of Bacon, Descartes, Locke and Hume, as well as Wordsworth, Shelley, Coleridge and others ensued. This analysis revealed that each philosophy had its own stance on the nature of the world, the nature of being and how we might live. These ways of viewing the nature and circumstances of human life in turn give rise to quite different perceptions of the relationship between objects and identity. The rationalist perspective on constructing, expressing and conveying an identity through objects emphasises impartially weighing the relative merits of available objects and being able to justify one's choices. It became evident that the primary motivations for having and using objects might well centre on concerns such as their usefulness and reliability, and whether they are good value for money or offer improved functionality. One's identity as a rational person might also be expressed through the orderly placement of objects or the establishment of routines to care for

them. In contrast, a Romantic perspective of the relationship between objects and identity might emphasise the creativity unleashed by making something yourself, being enriched by using utility objects of good design, or choosing objects that are in harmony with nature. It might equally be expressed by forsaking material possessions for the pleasures consumable products might bring, such as the best food or wine, or being transformed by an object that lifts you out of your humdrum existence. The direct link that Wilcock (2002b) had earlier identified between occupational therapy and John Ruskin and William Morris, two Romantics who were instrumental to the success of Arts and Crafts Movement, was also found to be important in this context.

Thus informed, an analysis of occupational therapy literature published in England in the 25-year period between 1938 and 1962 was undertaken in chapters six, seven and eight. The focus of this part of the analysis was on the ways occupational therapists had addressed the relationship between objects and identity in the past. Its purpose was to determine the extent to which the ideas embedded in the profession's ideology and practice were consistent with rational and Romantic understandings of the relationship between objects and identity. Context for this discussion was provided in chapter six, which described the theoretical roots and practice conventions that guided the early years of practice.

The analysis of the early occupational therapy literature revealed that the ideas embedded in occupational therapy at that time were consistent with both rational and Romantic perspectives on the relationship between objects and identity. It seemed that rationalism was inbuilt by virtue of the profession emerging in societies that were informed by that philosophical history, at a time when rationality was both pervasive and highly valued, and in the context of medical contexts where rationality was embraced. Romanticism was bedded in via the profession's links to the Arts and Crafts Movement. The discussion described how rational and Romantic ideas about the relationship between objects and identity had initially co-existed and complimented each other. Rationalism informed the practical concerns of the day such as which craft activity to offer to which patient, and how to modify crafts and adapt craft equipment to serve a specific remedial purpose. It guided the

organisation of therapists' knowledge of craft techniques, and informed their thinking about how their interventions worked and why patients responded to their health condition and occupational therapy as they did. Rationalism provided some strategies for demonstrating the effectiveness of occupational therapy intervention. From a rationalist perspective, patients were framed as people with impairments arising from both their illness and extended hospitalisation that could be addressed by making things. Occupational therapists were positioned as experts in selecting what patients might make and guiding them towards mastery of craft-related tools and techniques.

Complimenting this view, Romanticism framed patients and therapists alike as having a natural instinct for form and material that might be uncovered in the process of creating something. It fostered a belief in the therapeutic potential of craft activities that absorbed people's attention and offered opportunities for self-expression. As patients crafted objects they might craft themselves, restoring self-esteem and self reliance, and experiencing joy, pride, delight or consolation in their disability. Romanticism balanced rationalism by keeping therapists open to the possibility that a patient might be transformed beyond anything they could rationally predict. At this point in its history, occupational therapy might be characterised as embodying the Romantic vision described in chapter five, of rationality and passion coming together. Peloquin also made this connection both in relation to professional empathy (1995) and in her study of the early vision of the profession (2002). In the more recent study, she asserted that the core of occupational therapy is about practicing with our hearts as well as our hands, "both at the same time, all the time" (2002, p. 523). Similarly, Hooper and Wood (2002) characterised occupational therapy's history as a 'long conversation' between pragmatism and structuralism, the former addressing how we might restore people to satisfying lives and the latter concentrating on fixing body parts. Rather than viewing these different focuses as oppositional, they describe how, early in the profession's history, pragmatic views of humans worked in tandem with structuralist views of knowledge as objective, neutral, context free and universal.

Gradually, however, tensions between occupational therapists' rational understandings and their Romantic spirit intensified as they responded to war time demands, changes in rehabilitative medicine including the introduction of assistive devices to support independent living, and the move towards teamwork. As discussed in chapter eight, two influential debates crystallised within occupational therapy at that time. The first was about the relative importance of developing craftsmanship or producing a saleable product. The second was whether it was better to adapt craft equipment to elicit a precise rehabilitative effect or to minimise adaptations so that patients would attend to what they were making rather than their impairment. These debates gathered strength as practice became more rationally driven. Over the years, rationality won out and patients came to be viewed as people with impairments that compromised their ability to live independently or return to employment. Crafting things was also reframed as carefully regulated activity that might ameliorate the effects of disease or injury. In this way, the link between patients' identity and the objects they made was largely broken, because it no longer mattered what the product was as long as the intended capacities were exercised.

Furthermore, patients' relationship to the equipment and tools they used was seen from the perspective of a damaged worker preparing to return to a productive role in society, rather than a person whose spirit was damaged by the stultifying effects of an industrial lifestyle and the tragedy of illness. The transformative potential of creating objects thus came to be framed largely in societal and economic terms. Within rehabilitation settings, occupational therapists viewed restoration to previous levels of function as the goal of intervention, and the possibility of a Romantic transformation exceeding all rational expectations receded from view. Alongside this changed view of making things, assistive devices were conceptualised as not only replacing patients' lost function but also providing occupational therapists an identity free of the disparaging connotations of being craft workers. Notwithstanding these trends some occupational therapists, particularly those working in mental health, maintained a more Romantic allegiance to craftwork. However where return to the community was unlikely, as was the case for individuals with severe psychiatric conditions, some therapists questioned the ethics of providing interventions that might rouse people from their lethargy but not

restore them to life. In sum, the rational and Romantic notions about objects and identity that were evident in occupational therapy philosophy and practice in the post-war period might be described as being:

- That using objects in carefully designed occupations can exercise weakened capacities and restore an identity as a productive member of society.
- That carefully prescribed assistive devices can replace lost function, thus restoring patients' identity as independent in self-care and some domestic tasks.
- That craftwork has a special potency to release creativity and enhance well-being, but is only relevant as therapy for people without potential for independent and productive living.

While these assumptions are honourable in themselves, they fall substantially short of the earlier vision that occupational therapy could transform people and their lives. This shortfall is particularly evident when it is acknowledged that by the 1960s, only a small proportion of patients referred to occupational therapy were offered craftwork, and with it the possibility of experiencing creative occupations.

Conclusions Drawn from this History

Viewing occupational therapy's history from the perspective of objects and identity has revealed how both rationalism and Romanticism initially informed the profession. These philosophical approaches appear to have co-existed in relatively equal balance, and together provided a solid foundation for practice. Rationalism gave therapists ways to organise and extend their knowledge base, while Romanticism gave therapists heart. Rationalism addressed what they knew and sought to know; Romanticism addressed what they experienced. Informed by this dual heritage, occupational therapists had a strong identity as competent innovators who were making a worthwhile contribution to the lives of people with disability. However the balance between these complimentary philosophies was disrupted over time. As described, a combination of socio-political, medical and professional factors seem to have contributed to the shift in balance that resulted in Romanticism being largely eclipsed by rationalism.

Occupational therapy's allegiance to rationalism has remained strong. There are abundant examples of recent efforts to describe the steps involved in occupational therapy (e.g. Moyers, 1999), catalogue occupational therapy terminology (AOTA, 1994), develop an organised theory base (e.g. CAOT, 1997; Kielhofner, 2002), and to evaluate the effectiveness of occupational therapy interventions (e.g. Bach, Bach, Bohmer, Fruchwald & Grilc, 1995; Carlson, Fanchiang, Zemke, & Clark, 1995; Nelson et al., 1996). Electronic systems to facilitate access to published articles, such as OTDBase, are well established. Evidence based occupational therapy practice websites are in development. It is notable that these are essentially the same ends to which occupational therapists had applied rational thinking in earlier times.

Accordingly, considering the implications of losing touch with the Romantic vision that energised the profession in its infancy seems a worthwhile endeavour. This is the focus of the discussion that follows.

How the Romantic Connection Between Objects and Identity Was Lost

As described in chapter eight, many occupational therapists working in post-war Britain had moved away from using crafts as the centrepiece of practice. Patients attending occupational therapy seem, on the whole, not to have been given something to make, although many were given assistive devices to use or industrial products to assemble. As a consequence, the Romantic connection between crafting objects and recreating an identity was also displaced from being a central philosophy of the profession. It seems that the Romanticism of the Arts and Crafts Movement had adhered to the particular craft occupations Morris, Ruskin and the like promoted, and to the crafted objects and the tools used to make them. Accordingly, the Romantic vision once embraced by occupational therapists fell away as craftwork fell from favour. Moreover, crafts were displaced by the very things the Romantics had reacted against; managing the mundane routines of everyday life and mechanised work that lacked both creative possibility, and opportunity for emotional expression and transcendence of one's circumstances and oneself. The fact that these new aspects of practice were the antithesis of Romanticism was apparently not recognised by occupational therapists. Certainly,

no objections were raised at a philosophical level. Nonetheless, a number of the professions' leaders knew from experience that a central component of the profession was under threat. As noted in chapter eight, there was an extraordinary volume of correspondence debating the relative merits of craftwork, and industrial and ADL activities. These efforts to preserve creative occupations as an important part of the profession's work were not, however, successful in turning the tide.

It seems that occupational therapists' lack of ability to articulate the Romantic potential of making things was a large part of losing sight of this foundational philosophy. As the literature of the time amply demonstrates, occupational therapists repeatedly observed the transformations wrought by making things, but had few ways to account for this beyond a simple rendition of Arts and Crafts beliefs. One causative factor in this dearth of terminology was that the founders of occupational therapy had not made the philosophical and conceptual foundations of the profession explicit. Neither had they incorporated "an explicit philosophical rationale into the educational curriculum of the therapists" (Breines, 1990, p. 46). This might seem a curious failure of vision. One explanation advanced by Serrett (1985) and Hooper and Wood (2002) was that, in the manner of the times, the founders' expectation was that female occupational therapists would work under the tight control of male physicians. This working arrangement meant that occupational therapists did not need to learn to critique the coherence or consequences of what they were taught. As Hooper and Wood note, this was consistent with gender roles at that time. As well, the initial courses were of short duration, which did not allow for much theory of any kind. In fairness, it needs to be acknowledged that when the first occupational therapy school established in an academic institution in the US in 1918, the major emphasis of the curriculum was 'handwork' and the teachers were craftsmen (Woodside, 1971). In addition, at that time the Arts and Crafts Movement was on the ascendance. As noted in chapter five, Jane Addams was an important figure in the early development of the profession and was involved in the establishment of the Chicago Arts and Crafts Society. In this context, it may not have seemed necessary to teach occupational therapy students that part of the profession's philosophical heritage.

It is possible that the omission of taught philosophy was apparent to some occupational therapists internationally, in that the World Federation of Occupational Therapists identified that “the philosophy, history, function and scope of occupational therapy” should be included among the theoretical subjects taught to occupational therapy students (WFOT, 1971, p. 11). This brief mention, embedded within pages of details of basic sciences, health conditions and prescription for using activities as treatment, was repeated in all revisions of the minimum standards for education up until 1993. What philosophy was intended, however, is open to interpretation, as is the depth to which it might be addressed. Whatever the case, the early occupational therapists seem to have lacked a sophisticated conceptual base or the language they needed to articulate the nature and value of the transformation in patients’ identity brought about by creating things.

An additional factor that likely contributed to occupational therapists losing sight of the Romantic relationship between objects and identity relates to the status of knowledge development in the early and mid twentieth century. Credible theories that might explain phenomenon such as the human transformation brought about by creative activity were not readily available. For example it was not until the 1930s that George Herbert Mead, Blumer and other academics at the University of Chicago mooted symbolic interactionism, which was identified in chapter one as a useful perspective to inform this study. Thus even though Mead was an important figure in the establishment of the National Society for the Promotion of Occupational Therapy in America, this involvement pre-dated symbolic interactionism by more than a decade. To further underline the limitations of theory development in the post-war period, there was no overarching theory that brought together an understanding of people engaging in occupation in interaction with their environment. Reilly’s pioneering work, which was the precursor of the Model of Human Occupation, did not begin till the 1960s. Law et al.’s (1996) Person-Environment-Occupation model was only formulated in the mid 1990s, and reports of its being applied in practice came even later (See for example Strong, et al., 1999). Occupational science, with its emphasis on the subjective experience of occupation, was only founded at the end of the 1980s, and has yet to address the

transformative potential of making and using objects. Wilcock's (1998) occupational perspective of health was still later.

The pioneers of the profession were equally constrained by the research methodologies available to them. Those grounded in symbolic interactionism, for example, did not gain recognition till later in the century. This meant that little or no research into the curative properties of occupation was undertaken, despite the necessity of such research being recognised in the 1917 document that founded the National Society for the Promotion of Occupational Therapy in America (American Occupational Therapy Association, 1967). Schwartz (2003) also noted this absence of suitable methodologies in her account of the profession's history. In contrast the positivist scientific methods arising from empiricism and rationalism were well established, and it was these that various occupational therapists employed in their efforts to build a knowledge base for the profession (see for example Bastable, 1955; Bohm, 1958a; Forward, 1953a; Hick, 1948; Marshall, 1958). Nonetheless, awareness of the need for research into more Romantic concerns, such as the impact making things has on people, was not entirely lost. For example, in 1967 Yerxa declared that "the scientific attitude is not incomparable with concern for the client as a human being but may be one of the best foundations for acting on that concern" (p. 1). In later years, however, she became a vocal supporter of qualitative research methodologies as best suited to unravelling the subjective experience of occupation. In so doing, she acknowledged that rationalist approaches have limited application to uncovering the nature of creativity and the transformative process it might elicit.

This reading of history paints the early occupational therapists as embedded in the circumstances of their time, and subject to the limitations of their own knowledge and the strategies for knowledge development that prevailed at the time the profession was being established. From this perspective, the therapists who spoke out against the abandonment of craft activities might be seen as ahead of their time for holding onto a Romantic vision that largely pre-empted the development of research methodologies suited to uncovering the meaning of contextualised experiences and subjective understandings. In its absence, and because occupational therapy's Romantic heritage adhered strongly to crafts, the possibility that ADL

retraining and industrial therapy might hold transformative potential does not appear to have been considered. This limitation in vision, compounded by occupational therapists' ignorance of their philosophical roots, meant that the theory development and research effort in these practice areas has not systematically incorporated a Romantic perspective. In short, the Romanticism of making things did not flow into occupational therapists efforts to assist people to overcome the challenges of day-to-day living using assistive devices or vocational retraining. This historic legacy has not yet been substantially addressed.

Revisiting the Romantic Premises of Occupational Therapy

This investigation has shown that something was lost from occupational therapy when the profession lost sight of the potential objects have to transform people, and that this loss came about when craftwork ceased to be the mainstay of the profession. It also seems clear that occupational therapy will never again be a predominantly crafts-based practice. Nonetheless, something can be learnt from this period of the profession's history. What this study has shown is that, true to its roots in Romanticism and the Arts and Crafts Movement, occupational therapists were initially confident of a number of things. They believed firstly that patients would get more from occupational therapy if they were interested in what they were doing, and secondly that people's creativity might be unleashed by making something. They also believed that this was best achieved through crafts.

The first of these premises has a ring of familiarity. In modern parlance, being concerned about patients' level of interest seems to be captured in the current emphasis on therapeutic occupations, and their intended outcomes, being meaningful to clients. A trace of the second, which emphasises the transformative power of creativity, has survived as ongoing rhetoric. Histories of occupational therapy sometimes refer to it. For example, Bing's 1981 account of the evolution of the profession suggests "craft is a way in which man may create and cross a bridge within himself and center himself in his own essential unity" (p. 515). Repeating a familiar refrain of the Arts and Crafts Movement Bing continued, saying "his material modifies him as he modifies it". Other references are more oblique, merely noting occupational therapy's early assumption that people are by nature

“productive, aesthetic, playful, creative, and reflective” (Kielhofner & Burke, 1977, p. 681). Still others cite creativity but link its place in the profession to recent sources (Hasselkus & Rosa, 1997). In some pockets of practice, creativity is cited as an indicator of the therapeutic value of an occupation or as contributing to well-being (Yerxa, 1998). Children’s play has been assumed to develop the repertoire of cognitive and behavioural skills needed for creative endeavours later in life (Parham & Fazio, 1997). In addition, creative occupations have recently been identified as having the potential to invoke people’s spirit (Rose, 1999) or to provide opportunities to express one’s spirit (McColl, 2000). Being creative has also been associated with experiencing flow, Csikszentmihalyi’s term for transcending awareness of self, place and time (Collins, 1998; do Rozario, 1994; Toomey, 1999). Moreover Howard and Howard (1997), echoing earlier assumptions, reached the conclusion that disability “separates us from our active, creative, reflective potential” (p. 183). Despite the fact that such references have been ongoing, however, the professions’ assumptions about creativity have not been substantively researched. Also of note is that ideas about creativity are not generally applied to ADL or vocational outcomes.

The third premise of the early occupational therapists encompasses the dual vision that crafting something by hand has transformative potential, and that the crafts best suited to this end are those promoted by the Arts and Crafts Movement. That is, weaving, book binding, pottery, woodwork, leatherwork, tapestry and the like. In today’s world, this vision seems too narrow. It omits the new ‘crafts’; scrap booking, creative writing, photography or computer graphics for example. It omits other creative pursuits: car restoration, home decorating, or cooking. Perhaps more importantly, the crafts espoused by the leaders of the Arts and Crafts Movement were a very select rendition of the Romantics’ vision of transformative experiences, events and objects. This is not a critique of the Arts and Crafts Movement per se. Rather, it is an acknowledgement that John Ruskin, William Morris and other proponents of the movement were applying Romanticism to their own purpose, which was, in part, to revive public interest in the ancient crafts and particularly those that were dying arts such as book binding. Moreover, this was a goal formulated in direct opposition to what they perceived to be the stultifying effects of

industrialism and mass produced products. It could be argued, with the benefit of hindsight, that because occupational therapy has a different purpose it might have been better served in the long run by a somewhat different approach to the philosophy espoused by the Romantics.

A Romantic Vision for the Future

For the Romantics, as discussed in chapter five, transformation of the self occurred through fully experiencing and expressing one's emotions. Such experiences might be found in human relationships, extreme and exotic experiences, encounters with nature, or in the rich variety and detail of daily life. Recall Wordsworth's idyllic vision of a family carding and spinning wool, the harp-shaped needle case he initially decried, or his ode to his friend's trusty spade. If occupational therapists were to look back, beyond Ruskin and Morris to the Romanticism that inspired them, broader possibilities for personal transformation stimulated by experiences that excite the emotions might become apparent.

In the context of this study, the possibilities inherent in creating, having and using objects have been the primary focus. Being open to the Romantic potential for personal transformation might mean being alert to the possibility that interactions with objects might transform people. Such transformation of self might happen at the mere sight of an object, as in the change in mood Wordsworth described when he saw a field of daffodils. Wordsworth's experience implies that transcendent experiences brought about by interactions with objects might be dramatic, and almost instantaneous. This possibility is consistent with current consumer research, which has investigated the compelling attraction felt towards objects people come across in the course of their shopping. More typically, the Romantics linked personal transformation with enduring experiences such as being in love. The sustained nature of such experiences suggests that making or handling objects over time might equally transform individual's perception of themselves, their possibilities or the nature of the world they live in. This unfolding of transformative experience over time would be more in line with Wilcock's (1999) notion of doing and becoming.

The possibility that making or using an object might transform someone can be seen to exist in all occupations that involve making, acquiring or handling objects in the physical world. An example from current literature is Jackson's (1998) story of a therapist taking her client Sandy shopping, which was a favourite occupation. Although the outing was planned, when they arrived at the mall Sandy was unable to think of anything to shop for. The therapeutic potential of the intervention was saved when the therapist suggested they look for a tablecloth she wanted to buy for a special occasion. Although this object was for someone else, the search for "the perfect tablecloth" (p. 468) galvanised Sandy into action and was remembered as an experience of rebuilding herself through occupation. Such possibilities might also exist in the figurative world of imagining oneself using an object. For example, Clark (1993) recounted a story of foreseeing interaction with an object that elicited just such a transformative effect. It involved her friend and colleague Penny Richards whose mobility was impaired after a stroke. As she worked to improve her walking, Richards approached the point where graduating from a walking frame to a walking stick seemed possible. With Clark's guidance, Richards shifted her perception of using a stick from one of disability to one akin to the British aristocracy. In so doing, she was empowered to take to the streets and shopping malls with a sense of panache.

One element of both these stories is that the clients concerned did not craft the object that was pivotal to their transformation. Furthermore, the objects were not necessarily handcrafted. Rather, the transformation Jackson and Clark document was elicited by objects encountered or imagined in the context of valued occupations. It seems that it was the process of shopping for or ascribing meaning to an object, rather than the process of making one, that crafted the client into an able participant in their continuing life story. This shift of focus from handcrafting and handcrafted objects to any interaction with an object in the context of a meaningful occupation is the essence of the difference between the proponents of the Arts and Crafts Movement and contemporary occupational therapists. For where their focus was on the quality of the object, occupational therapists focus on the qualities of the occupation. This observation points to an essential insight of this study. That is, it throws up the obvious conclusion that the Romantic transformations occupational

therapists might elicit in their clients will be in the context or possibility of occupation. Rather than restricting their Romanticism to notions of unleashing people's creativity through a process of making something, occupational therapists might regard any and all interactions with objects as having transformative potential. Indeed this possibility was partially, but unknowingly foreshadowed when occupational science was identified as a relevant theory base informing this study. Nonetheless, there is a sense of irony in having initiated this investigation with a concern for the relationship between objects and identity, only to find myself discovering that relationship to be embedded in occupation. Where this insight might lead is the subject of the next section of discussion.

Implications of the Study

This investigation has several implications. They are discussed in order of those closest to the topic of the study, meaning those most centrally involving objects and identity, and working outwards to those with far-reaching implications for occupational therapy. Again, a diagrammatic representation is provided in Figure 9:2, to assist readers to follow the sequence of the argument.

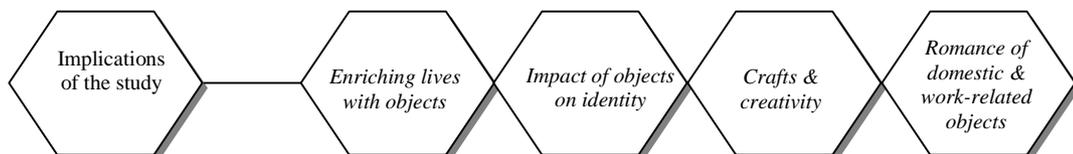


Figure 9:2 Implications of the Study.

Enriching Lives with Objects

A very specific implication of the study arises from the knowledge that objects carry meanings, and that people use them as a concrete expression of self as well as for the possibilities they offer to participate in occupation. This observation has special relevance for occupational therapists working with people with severe and enduring mental illness. Anecdotal evidence suggests that therapists are often struck by the extreme paucity of some clients' possessions. Although the reasons for this

have not, to my knowledge, been explored, the observed outcome of not having things to use is that it contributes to having a paucity of things to do.

A similar observation was reported in Whiteford's (1997) report of the occupational deprivation experienced by inmates in a special unit in a New Zealand prison. More extreme was the experience of one woman confined to a back ward in an Australian psychiatric hospital, whose personal possessions comprised not much more than a comb, toothbrush and half a box of tissues (Iovan, 2002). Considered dangerous and with no potential for learning, it was thought she would never leave the institution. A chance interaction with an object caused the occupational therapist on the ward to reassess that verdict. Guided by my previous work examining the personal, social and cultural meanings of objects (Hocking, 1994b, 1997a), she systematically worked to build up the woman's belongings. Some the woman made herself, such as the paintings that were displayed above her bed. Others directly represented her, such as photographs of herself in various places around the city. A number were purchased for her and given into her care. These objects, the therapist conjectured, would establish a sense of self and a sense of belonging.

A remarkable transformation occurred. The woman is now living in the community. There she receives substantial support, but nonetheless has a positive sense of self and leads a far richer life than previously. While this account tells the story of only one client, it suggests that considering the objects clients have and use may supplement established intervention strategies with people who are institutionalised or experience occupational deprivation.

The Impact of Objects on Identity: A Cultural Perspective

Another implication of the study is that occupational therapists need to be alert to the meaning of objects. One practice context in which the symbolic meaning of objects may be cogent is in the therapeutic use of crafts. Where they are used, therapists might be well advised to use them in more sensitive ways than our forebears. For instance, it seems that the early practice of confining the choice of crafts, for the most part, to those therapists learned in their training was too restrictive. This was particularly evident when therapists went to offer services or

establish the profession in other countries. In the absence of knowledge of the philosophy of the Arts and Crafts Movement, those pioneers were unaware of its emphasis on crafts that were true to local artisans' tradition, using local materials. This resulted in the export of the traditional crafts of Britain, complete with upright rug looms and other craft paraphernalia used at home. Local crafts were undervalued and thus not exploited for their therapeutic benefit. Recall for example Wilson's (1962) report of her work in a leper village in Angola, which was discussed in chapter eight.

Even in those early days, some patients resisted therapists' imported craft techniques and equipment. For example, one man hospitalised in Israel was a weaver by profession, but refused to use the occupational therapist's looms because he reportedly maintained that was "not the right way to work" (p. 31). Instead he rummaged through cupboards for materials, constructed "a most primitive kind of loom", and steadfastly "refused and ignored" (p. 31) the therapist's suggestions for improvements. Clearly she found his preference for local technologies inexplicable (Levy, 1962). Other patients resisted certain crafts or materials because they contravened their social and religious beliefs. An example is the patients in India who refused to work with leather or declined to continue the craft they had been taught outside the occupational therapy centre because it was inappropriate to their caste (Oza, 1962). In these cases, the therapists exhibited a lack of social awareness that must have been palpable, but apparently did not recognise the part they played in this mismatch and were not, it seems, moved to re-evaluate their practice.

While it is virtually unimaginable that any occupational therapist today would endeavour to base practice purely in those crafts espoused by the Arts and Crafts Movement, there is still a lesson here that warrants exploration. It relates to the ontological stance that all knowledge is contextual, and what this implies in relation to the cultural appropriateness of intervention strategies and goals. Insights about the need to tailor crafts and other occupational therapy interventions to the local setting may find application when therapists or students venture into situations where they are offering services divorced from or in the absence of local occupational therapy input. Equally, the potential for simply transplanting familiar

theoretical frameworks and modes of practice onto people with a different craft and occupational heritage is high when therapists offer services to people immigrating to their country. An especially vulnerable group is the political or economic refugees currently housed in camps or filtering into communities around the world. The same warning applies to occupational therapy academics or leaders providing a consultative service to occupational therapy programmes or services in different countries. Evidence that this warning deserves repetition comes anecdotally from delegates to the World Federation of Occupational Therapy who report 'foreign' occupational therapists repeatedly offering advice that is unachievable and unwise in their local context. This is not to imply that all therapists who cross cultural divides deliver culturally inappropriate services. Good examples include the Australian therapists implementing a community based rehabilitation model with remote aboriginal communities (Glynn, 1993).

It is not only therapists working in foreign lands, or with displaced, immigrant or culturally divergent populations, who need to be mindful of the cultural fit of the ideas, objects, therapeutic strategies and objectives they bring with them. Kielhofner and Barrett's (1998) analysis of a goal setting group employed with mental health consumers in the United States illustrates differences in people's daily lives and ways of being in the world that exist within cultures. In the context of the day-to-day struggle for survival faced by those consumers, setting goals and systematically working to achieve them had no salience. The intervention was ineffective. This example suggests that cross-cultural perspectives are relevant in every therapeutic encounter, because a concordance of therapist and client worldviews can never be assumed.

The potential for mismatched perceptions of assistive devices also seems to be high, considering the high proportion of clients that reject them. For therapists, these objects may well be commonplace and unproblematic because they are used to prescribing and handling them. However as Lund and Nygård (2003) cogently argue, these objects have "manifold and often contradictory meanings" (p. 67) that occupational therapists have not adequately explored, but which may radically transform individual's occupational self-image and result in withdrawal from valued

occupations. The necessity of research effort into the social and subjective meanings of objects occupational therapists introduce into people's lives is readily apparent. The contribution this study makes to that endeavour is to alert researchers that both rational and Romantic meanings are likely to be uncovered. Moreover individuals will respond differently to those meanings and, true to Romanticism, their responses may be of transcendence or tragedy.

Crafts and Creativity

Another implication of the study concerns the place crafts and creativity might have in the profession, and the knowledge base required to support that position. Creativity is an enduring concept within occupational therapy around which Romantic notions coalesce. The fact that it has recurred in the profession's literature over a long period suggests that investigating creative processes might be informative. A first step would be to move beyond the rhetoric identified earlier to a scholarly exploration of the literature that addresses the concept. Aspects pertinent to occupational therapists might be the circumstances that foster creativity and any links that have been drawn between creativity and well-being. Occupational aspects such as whether creativity emerges from 'creative chaos' or arises from carefully honed skills, and whether it best thrives as a solitary act or in the company of others would also be of interest. Initiatives towards this end are already afoot. These include a scheduled occupational science symposium focusing on creativity in Britain in 2004, another mooted for Australasia for 2005, and an edited book on the topic currently in preparation. In addition, creativity might well reward research effort. Questions might include things such as how illness and injury impact individuals' creativity, and how clients experience creative occupations orchestrated by occupational therapists.

Another useful focus might be the development of knowledge of occupations generally considered to be creative, or to require or develop creativity. Given occupational therapy's history in craftwork, and the ongoing application of crafts for therapeutic purposes in some practice areas, this endeavour might sensibly include craft occupations. Occupational therapy's need for information of this kind is underlined by theoretical developments within the profession. Kielhofner's

Model of Human Occupation (2002), for example, identifies occupations as existing within and being shaped by their cultural context, yet the profession's knowledge of the cultural meaning of specific occupations is largely nonexistent. Similarly, Nelson's notion of occupational form teases out in more detail the types and levels of knowledge people have about occupations they perform, and how that knowledge informs their performance (Nelson, 1988; Nelson & Jepson-Thomas, 2003). Having such knowledge would inform occupational therapists who assist clients to identify and participate in occupations that define who they are and make life meaningful, by alerting them to some of the meanings those occupations might hold.

Noteworthy beginnings in this regard are Hill and Ross's (1999) exposition of quilts created by women in Western Australia in the 100 years since 1899, when women in that state won the right to vote. The stories of both creators and creation of the quilts reveal the depths of subjective meanings they express. Complimenting that work, Dickie (2003) has described quilt making as an ongoing process of learning creative techniques and learning to be part of a community of creative women. Of note is the fact that both of these publications have occurred outside the occupational therapy literature, one as an independent publication, albeit under the auspices of a university housing a school of occupational therapy, and the other in the occupational science literature.

Further research that might directly inform occupational therapy is that which investigates the transformative nature of creative occupations, including crafts. Two examples have recently been published in the Canadian literature. One teased out the transformative nature of gardening for three women with breast cancer. It uncovered potent meanings about the controllability of life processes, and the possibility of experiencing transcendence beyond everyday experience and finding meaning in living, even in extreme circumstances (Unruh, Smith & Scammell, 2000). The other explored the nature of a craft group attended by a group of women with severe and enduring mental health issues. It proposed a conceptual model named occupational spin-off that explained the transformation the women experienced in their beliefs about themselves and what they might be able to accomplish (Rebeiro & Cook, 1999). Neither of these studies interpreted the

findings from the perspective of Romanticism, but the relevance of this aspect of occupational therapy's heritage is clear. Again, what this thesis contributes to such research is a broader foundation against which to view clients' subjective meanings. Rebeiro and Cook's findings in particular might be interpreted as revealing something of the process of being transformed by making things, and contribute to understanding transformative processes in general.

The Romance of Domestic and Work-Related Objects

This thesis has shown that prior to World War II, occupational therapists' Romanticism strongly adhered to craftwork. Partly because of the strength of that alliance, the industrial machines and assistive devices they incorporated into practice in the post-war era were not conceptualised in Romantic terms. Stated more broadly, therapists' efforts in self care, domestic and vocational rehabilitation were described as a rational rather than a Romantic endeavour. This lack of transference occurred despite the fact that prior to the war, therapists had engaged patients in work tasks within the hospital setting, and described their successes in terms of personal transformation and reclaiming an identity as a productive member of the hospital or outside community.

An additional factor that likely contributed to vocational rehabilitation not being thought about in Romantic terms relates to the perceptions occupational therapists had of industrial labour in the 1940s and 1950s. Their view of the work to which patients would return, so far as it is reflected in the professional literature, was that it was monotonous and soul destroying. Such employment was dehumanising, stifling human potential and creativity. To overcome its negative effects, occupational therapists assumed that workers needed to engage in restorative leisure and recreational pursuits. These views seem to align with earlier critics of industrialisation, including Marx, and the Romantics and other social activists who had fought to improve working conditions within factories and mines during the industrial revolution. Nonetheless, patients generally wanted to return to employment. Subsequent research has shed some light on why this might have been, identifying the positive social and personal meanings of work and the ill-health effects of not working (Pettifer, 1993). As well, health-promoting experiences of

flow have been reported to occur more frequently in work than leisure occupations (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). It also seems probable that work, like other fields of human endeavour, has transformative potential; that working might allow people to transcend an identity as disabled and to be recognised as individuals with a past and future role in society. The fact that people with disability value work highly, and mounting research showing the positive health outcomes of work, may therefore indicate that it is time for occupational therapists to philosophically break from their Romantic heritage of viewing industrial labour as an anathema that stifles human creativity.

With regard to ADL and domestic retraining, glimmers of Romantic thinking are revealed in therapists' observations that patients strongly preferred to be at home rather than in hospital, even if their circumstances were poor. Occupational therapists noted a remarkable transformation in patients when progress in rehabilitation brought the promise of a return home. There is a general impression within the literature that patients welcomed the assistive technologies that would enable them to resume their domestic roles. As well, therapists who visited patients in their homes noted how much more confidently patients presented at home to when they were in hospital. Occupational therapists' impression of patient's identity was also transformed by seeing them surrounded by their personal possessions.

It may be true that ADL tasks and domestic labour also hold transformative potential, where these are valued occupations. Given this possibility, occupational therapists might be well served by revisiting the meaningfulness of participating in self-care, domestic and work occupations from a 'Romantic' perspective. The current discussion of transcendence or transformation within the occupational therapy literature, much of it in the context of exploring the notion of spirituality, offers peripheral support for this suggestion at least in so far as none of it excludes domestic and work occupations from having transformative potential (Christiansen, 1997; McColl, 2000; Townsend, 1997; Unruh, Versnel & Kerr, 2002; Wilcock, 1999; Wood, 1995).

One of occupational therapists' and scientists' unique contribution to the wealth of research undertaken in relation to work might be to better understand the process of returning to work or domestic life after illness or injury. A specific focus, informed by a Romantic understanding of humans' potential to transcend their objective circumstances, might be the nature of that transformation. As well, researchers might ask whether the anticipated benefits of independent or supported participation in work or domestic life are realised. What aspects of these occupations are experienced as transformative, and what strategies do people with a disability employ to sustain a perception of self as transcending disadvantage? Conversely, what experiences or circumstances might cause people to withdraw from productive occupations and give up their identity as a worker or homemaker?

Current Threats to Occupational Therapy's Romanticism

This thesis has shown, above all, that rationalism and Romanticism were the dual philosophical foundations of occupational therapy. Both made a valuable contribution to the vision and the practice of the profession. Romanticism's particular contribution was to fuel occupational therapists' belief that every person they worked with had enormous untapped potential that might be aroused by their experiences in occupational therapy. Such experiences might enable them to transcend their objective circumstances and be transformed in ways that defied rational prediction or description. While the original occupational therapists largely invested crafts with this transformative power, the current discourse reframes this understanding. Rather than crafts, it invests all meaningful occupation with the power to transform people and their lives. Wilcock (1999) has discussed such transformations in terms of doing, being and becoming. She describes engaging in occupation as the means by which people might flourish (1993), and has taken a population perspective to envisage individuals and communities becoming whatever they are best fitted to be.

The discussion in this chapter, to this point, has identified ways in which the professions' Romantic heritage, informed by research, might strengthen the profession in the future. As well as these initiatives, it is prudent to consider current threats that may further undermine occupational therapy's Romanticism. In the past,

influences from both inside and outside the profession have served to obscure and weaken the professions' Romantic vision. Similarly, the threats the profession now faces, in terms of regaining a balance of rational and Romantic perspectives, are both internal and external.

Internal Factors

As this thesis has shown, the factor within occupational therapy that has had the most far-reaching implications in relation to Romanticism has been that therapists themselves have, largely, been ignorant of the profession's philosophical roots. This finding is not unique to this study. Other scholars of the professions history have similarly identified therapists' ignorance of the dualistic nature of the profession, and strongly argued that this situation be redressed. For example, almost 20 years ago Serrett (1985) described the split that had occurred between theory and practice, between therapists' being and their doing. She proposed that therapists must become thinkers as well as doers. This, she proposed, would involve "creating a collective unity and vision about our fundamental purpose and contribution to society" (p. 27) against which all other discourses might be evaluated.

In 2002, Hooper and Wood answered Serrett's call. They identified occupational therapy as being about "helping people do what they want and need to do each day in ways that maximize quality of life" (2002, p. 48). Measuring current and proposed practice against this vision, they suggest, would help therapists and leaders of the profession to identify directions that are incompatible with its underlying beliefs. While they articulated their vision in a context of identifying the professions' philosophical foundations as pragmatism and structuralism, the likeness between those philosophies and Romanticism and rationalism are clearly evident. Hooper and Wood propose that the route by which occupational therapy might become a profession fluent in its philosophical heritage, and thus a profession enabled to act accordingly, lies in educational practices.

Similarly, Peloquin (2002) characterised occupational therapy's vision as an integration of the professions' heart with its hands. In this she envisaged a coming together of occupational therapists' caring with their practical skills for doing

things. She also identified the need for educational practices that would reach for the heart as well as the hands of students, and knowledge development that would embrace caring practices. Most recently, Yerxa (2003) has argued that occupational scientists must embrace both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies if they are to generate knowledge on which to base occupational therapy. In this context, quantitative and qualitative methods can be viewed as building, respectively, the rational and Romantic foundations of practice. Given that these calls are ongoing and current, it can be concluded that occupational therapy's disconnection from its philosophical roots continues, and that this disarticulation means that it is vulnerable to ideas arising internally, in the health care context and in society that might sway it from its original vision of restoring people's minds and souls, as well as their bodies. It is to these external threats that the discussion now turns.

External Factors

Hooper and Wood (2002) also suggest that occupational therapists need to be alert to the wider cultural discourses within which practice is situated, in order to proactively decide which to join and which to reject and resist. For instance they point to the rise of evidence-based practice (EBP) as a reality within the working lives of all health professions, posing the following question: "On what evidence, on whose evidence, do I decide that my therapy actually helps persons do what they want and need to do given the particular hopes and challenges of their lives?" (p. 48). From my own experiences of participating in discussions about evidence-based practice, it seems that the question of EBP splits the profession into two factions. Academics cite the three sources of evidence identified in the EBP literature – the client, the therapist, and research. They identify the need for evidence that might be termed rational, such as the relative effectiveness of different treatment strategies, as well as evidence of a more Romantic nature that values the patient's subjective knowing and knowing born of experience as a therapist. For example they express concerns such as how therapists might best understand what is important to clients and how clients experience occupational therapy, as well as broader concerns informed by occupational science, such as what occupations mean to people. Occupational therapy clinicians, in contrast, want evidence they can immediately

apply in practice. The fact that the available research is predominantly rationalist does not concern them, and they move immediately to strategies to make it accessible. The rapid development of OTSeeker, an evidence based practice website established in Australia in the last eighteen months is an example. The ways EBP is being implemented, without debate at a philosophical level of what it means and the directions in which it might propel the profession seems a repetition of history that has every potential to further strengthen rationalism at the expense of the visionary heart of the profession.

A further discourse that has the potential to influence the direction and ultimately the survival of the profession is the current health care ethos of fiscal restraint and accountability, which increasingly requires health services to demonstrate their efficacy and justify the development of new services. This demand to validate practice seems akin to the pressure occupational therapy experienced from medicine in earlier decades. The outcome at that time was that practice, at least in the United States, became overwhelmingly mechanistic (Kielhofner, 1997). In addition, the World Health Organisation's (2002) *International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health* (ICF) may also influence future directions. The ICF classifies the extent to which people who have an impairment as a result of a health condition participate in self-care, domestic, vocational, leisure, educational and civic occupations. This initiative, I believe, has the potential to empower occupational therapists by making our concerns about what people want and need to do in their lives, and how they might achieve that, a legitimate concern of health care systems. The extent to which these discourses impact occupational therapy practice, however, might depend on our ability to articulate our philosophical alignment, or lack of alignment, with the purpose and implementation of local responses.

A Call to Action

At a personal level, I am heartened that my findings are in accordance with the views of scholars I admire. I am also reassured that while they have reached similar understandings to mine, they have voiced those understandings in somewhat different terms, based on a different selection of historic sources. This diversity appears to me to strengthen the message that the profession must act. I am also

encouraged by the fact that there seems to be a groundswell, as far as that can be judged by the work of a handful of scholars from the United States and Australasia reaching their conclusions at much the same time. This seems to give strength to the calls to action that have been issued. There are also clear and impending external forces that will lead changes in practice, which brings urgency to the situation.

The extent to which global calls to action effect change is difficult to determine however. In part this is because change takes time, and the outcome of change processes are frequently not those envisioned at the outset. Also, generalised calls to action do not make clear who it is who should act. Every occupational therapist? If so, how might that be brought about in a timely manner?

The challenge feels overwhelming and the possibility of stimulating widespread change small. Nonetheless change is possible, at least in so far as I can control my own actions. Therefore, rather than give responsibility for strengthening occupational therapy's Romanticism to 'the profession', I give it to myself. What can I do in my day-to-day practice to strengthen occupational therapists' knowledge of the philosophical underpinnings of the profession, their importance, and how they can guide present day decisions? And what can I do to explicate the Romanticism of practice? Thus, guided by the findings of this thesis, and by the directions suggested by Wilcock (2003), Peloquin (2002), and Hooper and Wood (2002), I call myself to action. As outlined in Figure 9.3, my intentions with regard to the educational, research and political aspects of my practice are presented below. My hope is that others will recognise these as both relevant and worthy actions. Further, by detailing the specific actions open to me in my practice, I hope that others might identify actions available to them and, like me, be stimulated to act.



Figure 9:3 A Call to Educational, Research & Political Action.

Educational Practice

My role as a senior academic in a school of occupational therapy involves, mainly, teaching postgraduate students, and contributing to academic process such as curriculum design and development of the culture of the school. This thesis has implications for all of these activities.

With regards to my teaching, the process of undertaking this thesis has considerably strengthened the knowledge and literature I can draw on in the papers I teach. The *Philosophical Basis of Occupationally Focused Practice* workshop that I facilitate each year is a specific example. Within that workshop, I have designed a teaching strategy inspired by Peloquin's (2002) research, where she asked therapists to read and analyse the meaning of stories of transformative practice. In this instance, I will draw on reports from the British literature and stories from students' own practice that focus on transformational change. This exercise would require them to recognise Romantic and rationalist aspects of practice, and to relate what they learn to their own practice.

The findings of this thesis, however, demand more than enrichment of teaching content. I think that what is required is ways of teaching that will awaken or touch the Romantic spirit of occupational therapists. The goal of this awakening would be to foster an attitude of being open to wonder and mystery. It is about developing a preparedness to be surprised by people's spirit, resourcefulness, and how their lives might be transformed in ways that are not easy to predict or explain on the basis of the intervention provided. Awakening students to such Romantic possibilities would seem to require discovering that potential within themselves. As yet, I have no clear ideas about the kind of educational experience that might be, except that it would

seem to require an occupational focus that is more than critically reading the literature, and debating and defending ideas. Wilcock (2003) provides some insights, describing what she terms Occupation Based Teaching and Learning (OBL). These ideas bear more thought and investigation, which may best be achieved through continuing conversations over time.

My contribution to the broader academic activities of the school will also, inevitably and deliberately, be informed by this study. In the first instance I am thinking of our ongoing revisiting of the definition of occupational therapy we provide to prospective and new-entrant students, the school's mission statement, and the statement of educational values that prefaces our academic curriculum. Based on the findings of this study, I will bring a new awareness of the need to make visible both rational and Romantic perspectives of occupational therapy and the education of future occupational therapists. An additional area of activity that I have recently proposed is the development of an on-line professional development programme for occupational therapy practitioners. The imperative behind offering online continuing professional development for therapists in New Zealand is the recent enactment of legislation requiring all health professionals to demonstrate their ongoing competence to practice (Health Professionals Competence Assurance Act, 2003). The Act provides a unique opportunity to recruit large numbers of therapists to such a programme, and on-line technologies ensure its nationwide accessibility. Such an initiative may, in some small measure, provide avenues to expose 'the profession' to scholarly discussion of its philosophical underpinnings.

To strengthen my educational practice in this regard, finding ways to establish or strengthen collegial relationships with like-minded academics, notably Hooper, Peloquin, Wilcock and Wood, are intended. One possibility is to recommend their involvement in the curricula review due to start in earnest in 2004. Future directions may also include reflecting on the Romanticism of teaching occupational therapy.

Research Practice

I am privileged to supervise a number of postgraduate students undertaking research within a Masters of Health Science programme. Recognising the importance of

examining practice in relation to philosophy has and will continue to give rise to questions that I put to students about their implicit philosophical assumptions. Specific questions in relation to the studies I have recently or am currently supervising might include:

- Your participants are reporting that they have changed over the time they have been unemployed. What is the nature of that change?
- Your participants were institutionalised for many years and most have lived very constrained lives in the community, yet they continue to hope for a bright future. Can you envisage one of them doing something that might bring that about, even momentarily? What might that be?
- Your participants have experienced many losses over the time they have lived with motor neurone disease, yet most also describe personal triumphs. What do you think is happening?

Academic practice at a postgraduate level also requires knowledge generation, and this study is no exception. The findings of this thesis are an example, and charging myself with responsibility for strengthening occupational therapy's Romanticism means disseminating the findings. Presentations to the New Zealand Association of Occupational Therapists conference, the Occupational Therapy South Africa conference and the College of Occupational Therapists' conference in Britain, all in 2004, are planned. Written dissemination is also necessary to reach a wider audience. Adding my voice to the others that have argued that occupational therapists must to be able to articulate the foundations of practice, and to use that knowledge to direct practice will be an outcome of this study.

As well, completion of this study signals the beginning of the next. While I have not identified the specific project that I will initiate in 2004, nor potential research partners, the conclusions drawn from this thesis necessitate that my future research activities make a contribution to increasing occupational therapists knowledge of the Romantic nature of their practice. Explicating the Romantic basis of the profession, I think, would be a practical addition to the literature claiming that occupational therapy has such roots. This is more than what or how therapists think,

which has been the subject of much research. It is about therapists in action, the *being* of occupational therapists and the *doing* of occupational therapy, as experienced by therapist and client. To borrow from Wilcock (2003), it is about becoming the person (whether client or therapist) one is best suited to be, and how that might be fostered. It is a vision beyond being “an occupational therapist”, because such notions suggest some kind of uniformity across the profession. Rather, it is about individual ways of being a particular occupational therapist. Equally, the understandings arising from this thesis might find practical application in research directed towards articulating the Romantic outcomes of occupational therapy. True to the constructivist research paradigm, such understandings would necessarily be framed from the participant’s, that is, the client’s perspective.

All of these research possibilities, however, conceptualise occupational therapy within the confines of current practice in health services. Taking a population health perspective, again inspired by Wilcock (1998), might lead to an investigation of the Romantic potential of occupationally focused interventions with people who are disadvantaged in society. Thibeault’s (2002) work with populations in war torn places, or Whiteford’s (in press) study of the occupational deprivation of children in refugee camps in Australia come to mind as examples of situations where occupational therapy is currently or might in the future be tailored to meet societal needs. In New Zealand, small towns with high unemployment or limited opportunity for economic growth are a focus of concern. Community development initiatives funded through a government department, Work and Income New Zealand, are well established. One of these might prove to be a site to develop a community based project, informed by occupational science and a Romantic belief in people’s potential to transcend their circumstances and transform themselves and their community. As well as supporting the development of a sustainable project that the community feels ownership towards, a project such as this would intend to describe people’s creative talent for living and becoming the people they choose to be.

Political Practice

Over the years I have accumulated a number of professional roles that provide scope and opportunity to influence the profession at a political level. Key amongst these is my appointment to the Occupational Therapy Board in New Zealand. This body, which has responsibility for registering occupational therapists, is also empowered to set the scope of practice for occupational therapists and the competencies required for registration. Firmly believing that the profession incorporates by both rationalism and Romanticism requires me to revisit both of these documents to ensure that both elements are clearly represented. The Board has also proposed the development of a statement of values as a companion document for its Code of Ethics. While I had previously thought that I had little expertise to contribute to that project, I now recognise that I have a valuable perspective to add, and will volunteer to lead or at least participate in it.

I am also an active member of the New Zealand Association of Occupational Therapists (NZAOT). The Association has recently revised its definition of occupational therapy, but revisiting that and providing feedback informed by this study seem essential. NZAOT has also begun to develop position statements, and drafting and presenting a position statement addressing the profession's beliefs about occupation that gives due weight to its transformative potential might be a useful addition.

I will also continue in my role as NZAOT's delegate to the World Federation of Occupational Therapists (WFOT) until September 2005. All delegates are involved in the development and ongoing revision of the Federation's mission statement and objectives. My work for the Federation has been to revise the Minimum Standards for the Education of Occupational Therapists (Hocking & Ness, 2002). These standards influence practice internationally because having a school of occupational therapy that meets the standards is a requirement for membership of the Federation. Once membership is gained, National Associations are charged with responsibility for ensuring that at least one school continues to meet the standards. Associations that have developed their own standards and systems for accrediting schools recognise the WFOT Minimum Standards as a foundational document. Articulating

the philosophy of occupation that underpins an educational programme is central to the revised standards. This is a new requirement, and one that I had envisaged that most developing programmes might find challenging. Drawing from insights gained from this thesis, it is now clear that preparing an exemplar for publication in the WFOT Bulletin would be useful, and that the philosophy described would necessarily articulate both rational and Romantic elements. This is somewhat problematic however. The thrust of the Minimum Standards is that educational programmes should both hold occupation as the central defining concept and be tailored to the local context. While rationalism and Romanticism are the philosophical foundation of occupational therapy in the Western world, these intellectual traditions may not translate to cultures informed by other philosophies. This suggests the need to make the intended context of any exemplar I develop very evident, as well as encouraging delegates from other regions of the world to find partners in their contexts with whom to debate the philosophies that best inform occupational therapy practice there. I envisage that this will be a long-term project.

Conclusion

This study set out to uncover the assumptions about objects and identity embedded in occupational therapy. What it found is a relationship of much broader scope, and with wide-ranging implications for how we might understand the past and visualise the future of the profession.

The specific findings were that people informed by Western philosophy hold both rationalist and Romantic views of objects, and they interpret people's identity in relation to the objects they have and use in rational and Romantic ways. Accordingly, pioneering occupational therapists employed rationalist and Romantic concepts to organise and extend their practice knowledge, and to describe the outcomes they achieved. The profession's particular heritage, however, placed Romanticism at risk. This was largely because the individuals who initiated occupational therapy in the United States and Britain held allegiance to the Arts and Crafts Movement. This movement, which was at heart Romantic, prospered for a short time in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. It was essentially a revival of the crafts that occupational therapists incorporated into their practice:

weaving, woodwork, bookbinding, macramé, and so on. When circumstances from within and without the profession conspired to relegate these crafts to the margins of practice, occupational therapists substantially lost touch with their Romantic heritage. A key factor in this history was occupational therapists' ignorance of the philosophies on which their practice had been founded. The outcome of this disruption to the profession's dual philosophical heritage was an era of practice that has been widely characterised as mechanistic. In short, occupational therapists lost the means to express their trust in their clients' capacity to overcome their circumstances and to regain their lives and themselves.

Recently, a generalised renaissance of occupation led by Reilly, Yerxa and Kiehofner, and spurred on by occupational science, has seen the beginnings of a re-emergence of Romanticism in occupational therapy. Conversations about people's indomitable spirit and the healing properties of occupation have ignited the professions' imagination, as have concepts like occupational deprivation and occupational justice. As the final section of discussion has revealed, fanning this small flame into life and sustaining it into the future will require concerted effort in practice, educational, research and political arenas. There are some indications that might give us hope. These include a number of scholars within occupational therapy reaching similar conclusions at much the same time, the World Health Organisation's focus on people's opportunities to participate in occupation, and the strengthening of constructivist research methodologies over time. Equally, there are threats on the horizon, including ever increasing fiscal constraints and the valuing of rationalist views of the world that seem to be stimulated by calls for evidence based practice.

As an occupational therapist now convinced of and committed to occupational therapy's Romanticism, my own path is clear. Whether taking that path ultimately reveals me to be akin to Don Quixote, or simply a leader amongst leaders who contribute to the strengthening of the profession, time will tell. As a rationalist whose heart has been won by Romanticism, I'll step forward believing in the latter.

Appendix 1: Epistemological Bases of the Modern Mind

The received view that empiricism and rationalism are in fact the defining schools of modern epistemological thought bears some explanation. The currently accepted doctrine that the wide-ranging philosophical debate of the seventeenth century neatly resolves into these two schools arises largely from Kuno Fischer's 1870 text *Geschichte der neueren Philosophie*. Fischer's verdict, and in particular his framing of Descartes as "the *de facto* founder of a philosophical school – rationalism" (p. 168, emphasis original) has been challenged on a number of counts. Of significance here is the apparent discrepancy between modern and contemporary perspectives on Descartes' methods. Modern scholars have read Descartes' published works as proposing a purely rationalist stance to knowledge development. However his many accomplishments as a practical scientist attest to the "sheer implausibility of the idea that deduction from first principles could generate substantive and specific truths about the physical world" (Gaukroger, 1993, p. 169). Furthermore, a closer reading of Descartes' contemporaries has revealed that they criticised him for not being sufficiently rigorous in his reasoning. This critique suggests a very different interpretation of Descartes' contribution to the development of rationalism than is currently presumed.

For the purposes of the discussion put forth in this thesis, however, such debate may prove peripheral. Whether or not Descartes' own scientific work was based on deduction from first principles, he is widely credited with espousing the ideal of basing all knowledge on truths derived from reason. It is this ideal which stands in contrast to the empirical ideal of basing knowledge on truths evident from experience. It is with these ideals, and how they came together into rational ways of thinking about living in the day-to-day world and relating to objects, that this discussion is concerned with.

Appendix 2: Defining Epistemology

Empiricism and rationalism profoundly challenged the prevailing epistemological understandings. They represented a radical shift in perception, from believing God's word to believing what you see and think. Understanding the nature of this shift is important in the context of this thesis because it is at the heart of the empirical and rationalist worldview, and ultimately affects the ways people think about and respond to the objects they have and use.

Epistemology is a theory of knowledge that is of central concern to modern philosophy. It relates to the nature, scope, sources and limits of knowledge. In addition, epistemology is concerned with the validity of knowledge, that is, with distinguishing opinions, no matter how widely they may be held, from truth. It addresses *how* we might know things as true. Two aspects of epistemology are pertinent to this discussion. These are the predominant strategy or method of inquiry, and the relationship between the inquirer and what can be known. Each of these aspects is discussed in turn.

The various strategies Western people have used, through the ages, to determine the truth rest on three principal sources of knowledge. In essence, we have trusted our senses, trusted an authority such as the king or a divine being, or trusted our powers of reasoning. Each of these methods of uncovering the truth has implicit challenges and limitations. Trusting our senses perhaps means that knowledge is limited by human capacity to discern what is happening. For example, our inability to *feel* the earth's movement through space or around its axis supported early assumptions that the earth was stationary with the moon, sun and planets revolving around us. Trusting an authority such as God's word or the ancient Greek philosophers has at times meant denying reason or the experience of our senses. Further, this strategy for divining the truth is problematic when authorities disagree or are in error. Trusting the power of human reason is also problematic if the conclusions we draw contravene observed phenomena or accepted doctrine, or are misguided. Descartes, who will feature later in the chapter, made this mistake when he rejected Newton's

laws of gravity because Newton could not explain how gravitational forces were transmitted.

As well as addressing how to discern the truth, epistemology concerns the relationship between the people seeking knowledge and that which they seek to know. When we base truth in sensory experience we assume a direct relationship between people and the physical world, such that what we feel, see, hear, smell or taste accurately represents what is going on. Basing truth in higher authorities means receiving truths from those authorities or their intermediaries, or through revelation or inspiration. Truth derived from reason demands a questioning of received wisdom, by stepping outside personal, religious and cultural assumptions to determine the true foundation on which human knowledge can be built. Basing truth entirely on reasoning assumes that things are orderly and reasonable. It also poses the thorny question of what, if any, knowledge of the world or creation individuals hold implicitly, before they begin to experience things.

Epistemological Paradigms

To further elucidate the concept of epistemology, it may also be useful to consider rationalism and empiricism alongside two other paradigms that will be familiar to twentieth century readers, that is, constructivist (also termed interpretive) and critical approaches to knowledge development. As previously indicated, the intention of this comparison is to illustrate what is meant by rational and empirical epistemologies. Here, rationalism and empiricism are considered together, as comprising a mode of thinking that is often referred to as scientific. This terminology points to the combination of empirical observation and inductive reasoning using rational deductions that make up the positivist scientific methodology. For this exercise, Denzin and Lincoln's (1994) *Handbook of Qualitative Research* was selected as a reference on the basis that it is a well known and generally well regarded text within which the epistemological differences in contemporary research paradigms are specifically addressed (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

The positivist epistemological standpoint is that hypotheses can be tested by meticulous and repeated empirical measurements of observable phenomena. Accuracy is ensured by the rigour and objectivity of the knowledge seekers, who strive to ensure that they in no way influence the thing they are studying. It is taken as given that it is possible to discover absolute and final truths about how the physical universe and human affairs work. By comparison, critical and constructivist epistemologies are founded on the understanding that knowledge seekers have a subjective standpoint that always influences the understandings uncovered or created. Accordingly, understanding is embedded in the transaction between the knowledge seeker and the thing under study, and is never absolute and final. From a constructivist perspective, the understandings reached are contextual, subjective and in a sense crystallise what people in that situation implicitly know or experience; or at least the researcher's interpretation of that. In contrast, critical research takes feminism, Marxism or some other perspective on human values as a starting point for interpretation. Researchers are likely to generate descriptions of power relationships not previously appreciated by individuals in the situation, and that they may or may not recognise as describing their experience. Both constructivist and critical researchers acknowledge that others may have reached different understandings.

What this comparison of contemporary paradigms makes apparent is the way that empirical and rational perspectives now go hand in hand within positivism, as logically derived propositions and confirming or disconfirming observations. Furthermore, because human reasoning and observation are framed as objective processes, it is assumed that had other people observed the same things, they would have reached the same conclusions. Thus, basing one's understandings in rational and empirical thinking provides a certainty and universality that is not claimed by constructivist or critical epistemologies.

Appendix 3: People Who Feature in Chapter Four

Table Appendix 3:1

Chronological Listing of Individuals who Feature in Chapter Three

384-322 BC	Aristotle
c.429-c. 347 BC	Plato
469-399 BC	Socrates
1463-1494	Giovanni Pico della Mirandola
c1466-1536	Desiderius Erasmus
1473-1543	Nicolaus Copernicus
1483-1546	Martin Luther
1561-1626	Francis Bacon
1564-1642	Galilei Galileo
1571-1630	Johann Kepler
1588-1679	Thomas Hobbes
1596-1650	René Descartes
1608-1647	Evangelista Torricelli
1623-1662	Blaise Pascal
1632-1704	John Locke
1642-1727	Sir Isaac Newton
1711-1776	David Hume
1723-1790	Adam Smith
1724-1804	Immanuel Kant
1844-1900	Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche
1864-1920	Max Weber

NB: Key philosophers associated with empiricism & rationalism are highlighted.

Table Appendix 3:2

Brief Profiles of the Empiricists & Rationalists and Selected Predecessors & Contemporaries

Aristotle. (384-322 BC).

A Greek philosopher and scientist, and student of Plato. He established the process of inductive reasoning, and an empirical approach to science. His surviving works cover the fields of logic, physical science, psychology, metaphysics, ethics, politics and rhetoric. His work was rediscovered after being lost to Western scholars for centuries, and became the basis for Christian scholarship in medieval times.

Bacon, Francis. (1561-1626).

An English philosopher, whose ambition was to create a new system of philosophy and science to replace that of Aristotle. Bacon viewed the development of knowledge of the natural world as progress towards reestablishing man's mastery over nature, which had been lost with Adam's fall from grace. Rather than relying on the propositions and methods of Aristotle and Plato, as many of his contemporaries did, Bacon insisted that knowledge development must start from unbiased observation, skillful experimentation, and cooperative research in order to discover the laws of nature. Theology, he argued, pertained to the realm of faith and must be kept separate from natural science. He published *The Advancement of Learning* in 1605.

Copernicus, Nicolaus. (1473-1543).

A Prussian astronomer and mathematician credited with initiating the scientific revolution. In response to a request from the papacy to reform the calendar, and believing that God had created an orderly universe, he rediscovered the work of several ancient Greek philosophers. This was the germ of his proposal that the planets, including Earth, revolve around the sun. This proposal was in radical opposition to prevailing religious thought about the centrality of the Earth, as God's creation.

Descartes, René. (1596-1650).

A French mathematician, physicist and philosopher who, as a result of his quest to discover the irrefutable basis of knowledge, established rational deduction as the epistemological foundation of modern science. Descartes considered information from the senses or imagination as implicitly unreliable, and determined that the one thing he could rely on was the power of human reason. He concluded that 'Cogito, ergo sum' – I think, therefore I am. Relying exclusively on reason, he developed a quasi-mechanical conception of space, matter and motion according to mathematical laws.

Erasmus, Desiderius. (c1466-1536).

A Dutch humanist and scholar who, during his lifetime, was the most famous scholar in Europe. He published a Greek edition of the bible and held that the rise of scientific thinking focused men's minds away from their proper concern for morality. His satire of the Catholic Church paved the way for the Reformation.

Galileo, Galilei. (1564-1642).

An Italian astronomer and physicist, inventor of the telescope and author of the laws of uniform acceleration of falling objects whose work supported Copernican theories of planetary motion. Galileo was interrogated by the Inquisition, forced to recant his heretical views, and placed under house arrest.

Continued ...

Table Appendix 3:2 Continued

Brief Profiles of the Empiricists & Rationalists and Selected Predecessors & Contemporaries

Hume, David. (1711-1776).

A Scottish philosopher who emphasized the importance of experience. Hume is best known for his work on causation, induction, perception, personal identity and the nature of morality. He believed that philosophy should start from an understanding of the nature of humanity, because this knowledge would illuminate the nature and limits of human knowledge and provide a context of all investigations of the natural world. Hume also argued that people are much less governed by reason than many had supposed.

Hobbes, Thomas. (1588-1679).

An English philosopher who promoted two ideas about humankind: materialism, that is that there is no more to the mind than physical motions, and cynicism, whereby people are motivated by entirely selfish concerns, primarily the fear of death. Hobbes viewed reason as a means of securing order within society.

Kant, Immanuel. (1724-1804).

A German philosopher who adamantly opposed Hume's empiricism, asserting that the human mind cannot scientifically demonstrate the ultimate nature of reality. In his ethical treatise *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781), Kant claimed that what the mind can know is time and space, and the objects of experience, which it categorizes in terms of quantity, quality, modality and reason.

Kepler, Johann. (1571-1630).

A German astronomer whose three laws of planetary motion provided a foundation for Newton's later work.

Locke, John. (1632-1704).

An English philosopher credited as being one of the founders of empiricism. He systematically employed Bacon's directive that all knowledge stems from direct sensory experience and reflection on that experience, thereby limiting what humans are able to know. His primary contribution to empiricism was titled "*An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*", which was published in 1690.

Luther, Martin. (1483-1546).

A German theologian and primary initiator of the Protestant Reformation. He attacked the Catholic Church's sale of indulgences and later the pope's authority. He was condemned and excommunicated in 1521. His translation of the bible into High German played an important role in the development of German literature written in the language of the people.

Newton, Sir Isaac. (1642-1727).

An English philosopher, mathematician and physicist who employed a synthesis of Bacon's empiricism and Descartes' mathematical rationalism to generate his gravitational theory and the laws of motion, which he applied to explain planetary and lunar motion. In so doing he, in effect, founded the modern understanding of the universe as governed by impersonal mechanical laws rather than spiritual intervention. His work was also central to the emerging understanding that humans are noble by virtue of being able to apply reason to understand and dominate nature, rather than being the focus of God's divine plan.

Continued ...

Table Appendix 3:2 Continued

Brief Profiles of the Empiricists & Rationalists and Selected Predecessors & Contemporaries

Nietzsche, Friedrich Wilhelm. (1844-1900).

A German philosopher famous for declaring that ‘God is dead’, by which he meant that the nineteenth century belief in God as the source of all knowledge and meaning was being eroded. Nietzsche held that people must be prepared to challenge dogma, superstition and conformity, and to overcome fear. His treatise *Beyond Good and Evil* (1886) can be interpreted as a critique of Descartes’ assumptions about the power of rational deduction.

Pascal, Blaise. (1623-1662).

A French mathematician, physicist and religious philosopher. Credited with being a child prodigy, Pascal discovered that air has weight, proposed that fluid exerts pressure equally in all directions, founded the theory of probabilities and laid the groundwork for integral calculus.

Pico della Mirandola, Giovanni. (1463-1494).

A priest who dedicated himself to bringing the wisdom of the ancient Greeks to other humanists of his time. Pico was the author of *Oration on the Dignity of Man* (1486), which asserted man’s ability to determine his own position in the universe through applying his intellectual powers.

Plato. (c.429-c. 347 BC).

A Greek philosopher who had been a disciple of Socrates and was Aristotle’s teacher. His principal writings, which address ethics, metaphysics and politics, are presented as dialogues with Aristotle. In particular he contrasted abstract entities with physical objects, which he referred to as ‘particulars’ in the material world.

Smith, Adam. (1723-1790).

A Scottish economist and philosopher, widely regarded as the founder of modern economics. His theory, published under the title *Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (1776) addressed the interrelationships between labour, distribution, wages, prices, and money. An advocate of free trade, his theory incorporated the idea that amassing capital was natural and universal, and contributed to societal welfare and harmony.

Socrates. (469-399 BC).

A Greek philosopher who had been a student of Plato. His primary interest was in questions of ethics. Known primarily for his method of inquiry by careful questioning (Socratic method) and as the teacher of Plato.

Torricelli, Evangelista. (1608-1647).

An Italian mathematician and physicist who was a disciple of Galileo. He invented the mercury barometer and used it to demonstrate that the atmosphere exerts pressure sufficient to support a column of mercury.

Weber, Max. (1864-1920).

A German economist and sociologist who authored *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1904), in which he proposed that there is a direct relationship between the rise of capitalism and the Protestant work ethic.

Appendix 4: Bacon's Empiricism

Although Bacon (1561-1626) is commonly considered one of the two key figures in what is termed the philosophical revolution, his contribution to shaping the epistemology of the modern Western world is somewhat controversial. Some, ranging from John Herschel's influential *Preliminary Discourse on Natural Philosophy* (1830) to modern philosophy textbooks (see for example Solomon & Higgins, 1997), proclaim Bacon to be the unequivocal founder of modern science. Cited as pivotal amongst his achievements are Bacon's exposure of how and why key aspects of the prevailing Aristotelian philosophy were inadequate, and his critique of his contemporaries' reliance on Aristotle's metaphysics. This reliance, according to Bacon, was the reason science and philosophy had produced nothing to rival the achievements of the practical and mechanical developers of gunpowder, magnetic compasses and the printing press.

In making a philosophical break from Aristotle, Bacon is deemed to have achieved two things. Firstly, he gave scientists a new start, an imperative to examine all that had been taken as given and to base this solidly in a new found certainty that sensitivity to the external world would provide the answers they sought. From the perspective of the twenty-first millennium this sounds mundane indeed, but in its context it was highly unorthodox. To illustrate this point, when Galileo, a contemporary of Bacon's, offered to show Jupiter's moons to a group of professors in Florence they declined to even look through his telescope. Truth, as far as they were concerned, lay in the comparison of texts not in nature (Randall, 1926).

Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, Bacon provided scientists with a philosophical defence against the dogmatism of the church. Yet perhaps Bacon's most acclaimed achievement was his development and promotion of a "stronger and better" (Herschel, 1830, p. 113) scientific method. This was, according to Kneale (1949), "the first serious attempt to formulate and justify the procedure of natural scientists" (p. 48). Bacon's method was founded on careful and unbiased observations, cautious inductive reasoning based on those observations, and

controlled experimentation to reach generally applicable, empirically supported conclusions. For according to Bacon:

the inquiry of truth, ... the knowledge of truth, ... and the belief of truth, ... is the sovereign good of human nature. The first creature of God, ... was the light of the sense; the last was the light of reason; and his Sabbath work, ever since, is the illumination of his Spirit. (1625/1890, p. 7)

This is the textbook scientific method of modern times, which Bacon predicted would lay the foundation on which to build a systematic knowledge base. In the spirit of the times, Bacon phrased his methodology in biblical terms, drawing the terms “light of sense” and “light of reason” from Genesis i, 3 & 26. As well, he framed his message that observation must precede reason as a prayer:

Thou, O Father! Who gavest Visible Light as the first-born of thy creatures, and didst pour into man the Intellectual Light as the top and consummation of thy workmanship, be pleased to protect and govern this work! (1625/1890, p. 10).

However despite being acclaimed by some historians of science, others are more tempered in their evaluation of Bacon’s work. They point out that his critique of Aristotle’s scientific method was not particularly new or insightful, merely drawing on the growing conviction of the times that traditional learning had failed. As well, the scientific procedure he developed is, in hindsight, largely a continuation of Aristotle’s methods. Furthermore, Bacon’s complete rejection of a priori assumptions (or hypotheses), because they might prejudice the findings, and continued conceptualisation of the laws of nature as language based rather than mathematical seem, at best, a curious failure of vision (Losee, 2001; Macrone, 1995; Pérez-Ramos, 1993; Quinton, 1980; Randall, 1926; Reiss, 1997; Tarnas, 1996).

Regardless of its shortcomings, Bacon’s quest to reform scientific method is widely recognised as having been deeply influential. For example, his method is alleged to have influenced Galileo’s investigation of the movement of the planets (Solomon & Higgins, 1997) and inspired “most of the great scientific minds of the seventeenth

century, including Newton” (Macrone, 1995, p. 82). In part, the extent of Bacon’s influence relates to the ends to which he believed mankind must put its newfound knowledge (Losee, 2001; Tarnas, 1996). Rather than equating knowledge with virtue, as Socrates had, or regarding knowledge of the physical world as an end in itself, as Aristotle did, Bacon considered controlling and directing natural forces to be a moral imperative, a return to the domination over nature that man had lost in Adam’s fall from grace in the Garden of Eden. For Bacon, the pursuit of knowledge of the natural world was a religious obligation, and the outcome was power: power over nature, power for human good. One outcome of Bacon’s insistence that scientific knowledge benefit mankind and be practically applicable was a further separation of science from teleology and natural theology. Objects and events in nature, he insisted, act as they do because of causal laws, not because of some God given purpose. No longer could scientific discovery draw from assumptions about God’s heavenly design, or view knowledge as merely an uncovering of God’s creative handiwork. Faith and science should be kept separate, so that each could flourish in its own way.

As well as reforming scientific method, and more significant to this thesis, Bacon’s legacy is his contribution to breaking down “old patterns of thinking, traditional prejudices, subjective distortions, verbal confusions, and general intellectual blindness” (Tarnas, 1996, p. 272). One such pattern of thinking was that God had ordered nature in ways that would be directly accessible to humans, by merely speculating about things or interpreting the scriptures. Instead, Bacon forcefully advocated that true knowledge comes from empirical evidence, and accordingly he directed people’s attention to observable and measurable aspects of the physical world. In place of the old ways of thinking, where received wisdom was considered almost inviolate or, at most, in need of refinement, Bacon established a general orientation to actively seeking new and more information, and trusting one’s ability to identify and test assumptions against observations of the real world. This hunger for new information would come to typify modern thinking. Furthermore, Bacon asserted in his utopian fable *New Atlantis*, written in 1627, that his empirical methods would deliver to mankind “the knowledge of causes, and secret motions of

things; and the enlarging of the bounds of human empire, to the effecting of all things possible” (p. 265).

Appendix 5: Descartes' Rationalism

At much the same time that Bacon was developing his ideas in England, a succession of French and German philosophers was developing a very different school of thought. The best known amongst them is René Descartes (1596-1650) who was born at the end of the sixteenth century, only 35 years after Bacon. Along with Bacon, Descartes is widely recognised as a major figure in the philosophical revolution that pervaded the Renaissance, and like him, Descartes was motivated by the widely held view that traditional learning based on the precepts of Plato and Aristotle had failed. In addition, both men believed that philosophy should, by giving people control over nature, generate good health and other practical benefits for mankind (Cottingham, 1993). Descartes wrote, for example:

For they opened my eyes to the possibility of gaining knowledge which would be very useful in life, and of discovering a practical philosophy which might replace the speculative philosophy taught in the schools. Through this philosophy we could know the power and action of fire, water, air, the stars, the heavens and all the other bodies in our environment, as distinctly as we know the various crafts of our artisans; and we could use this knowledge – as artisans use theirs – for all the purposes for which it is appropriate, and thus make ourselves, as it were, the lords and masters of nature. This is desirable not only for the intervention of innumerable devices which could facilitate our enjoyment of the fruits of the earth and all the goods we find there, but also, and most importantly, for the maintenance of health, which is undoubtedly the chief good and the foundation of all the other goods in this life. (1637/1985, Part Six, pp. 142-143).

Descartes' Method and Demand for Certainty

In stark contrast to Bacon, however, Descartes dismissed outright that the evidence of our senses could be a reliable means of discerning the truth. The basis for this assertion was that our senses can on occasion deceive us, or merely be a dream or our imagination, and so cannot provide justification for believing what we believe (Ross & Franks, 1996; Sedgwick, 2001). In place of all he could see, hear, feel, smell and taste, Descartes determined that impartial reason was the sole arbiter of

truth. In proposing this, he knew he was constructing a radically new world (Gellner, 1992).

Descartes reached his radical conclusion by a process of elimination, whereby he resolved to discard everything that he could not be absolutely certain about, including everything learned from experience, example, tradition, trial and error, or suggested by an authority or human emotion. Reason, in this sense, was a kind of purification from or transcendence of all of mankind's error ridden accumulation of ideas. Having discarded all else, Descartes recorded in Part IV of his *Discourse on Method*:

But immediately I noticed that while I was trying thus to think everything false, it was necessary that I, who was thinking this, was something. And observing that this truth, '*I am thinking, therefore I exist*', [*cogito, ergo sum*] was so firm and sure that all the most extravagant suppositions of the sceptics were incapable of shaking it, I decided that I could accept it without scruple as the first principle of the philosophy I was seeking. (Descartes, 1637/1985, Part Four, p. 127, emphasis original)

What Descartes accepted in this statement was that, presuming people use their powers of reasoning responsibly, whatever they perceive with absolute clarity to be true will in fact be true. In this way, using reason and reflection, Descartes believed men could overcome all of their deceptive, common sense understandings, reveal the underlying structures that would explain how things really work, and develop a unified science of nature. Descartes was so convinced that human reason is the exclusive path to certain knowledge that he declared that "we ought never to allow ourselves to be persuaded of the truth of anything unless on the evidence of our reason" (1637/1985, p. 120). Not surprisingly, such assertions earned him a reputation in many quarters as the pinnacle of rationalism.

Descartes' fully expected that rational thinking could make the corporeal world completely intelligible. Underlying this assumption, and consistent with the prevailing metaphor of a clockwork universe set in motion by God at the time of the creation, was his belief that the natural world and all the objects in it are solidly material. That is, they are devoid of human qualities such as subjective awareness,

intention or life force. Rather than acting on its own volition, Descartes proposed that the natural world was governed by a finite set of mechanical laws that could be discovered through a process of deduction from first principles. Inspired by Galileo's work, Descartes believed that these laws of nature could be expressed in measurable mathematical terms such as size, weight, shape, direction and velocity.

His expectation of intelligibility was such that Descartes demanded that the veracity of laws generated by scientists be absolutely assured. This demand for certainty was to be the pivotal challenge he levelled against knowledge derived from Aristotle, which postulated occult forces or "incomprehensible faculties, powers, virtues and goals" (Ross & Franks, 1996, pp. 511-12). Descartes' requirement for intelligibility and certainty was also the basis of his critique of contemporary theories of natural phenomena that left key elements unexplained, such as Newton's proposal that gravitational attraction causes objects to fall. Such a theory was, in Descartes eyes, clearly inadequate in that it did not address how such a force could be transmitted or measured. Descartes' intelligible world was not, however, the world of appearances and everyday experiences that ordinary people described in common sense terms, regardless of how useful such knowledge might be on a day-to-day basis. Rather, it was an orderly set of mathematical relationships accessible only by reason.

Separation of Mind and Body

Descartes' insistence on reason had consequences beyond scientific endeavour. With his assertion that *cogito, ergo sum* Descartes set in train a line of reasoning that would ultimately, he believed, reveal the nature of the physical world. For when he concluded that thinking, in and of itself, established the fact of his own existence, Descartes set a further challenge of defining the nature of that existence. On reflection, and consistent with his rationalist vision, Descartes characterised himself and all humanity in terms of thought:

At last I have discovered it – thought; this alone is inseparable from me. I am, I exist – that is certain. ... But what then am I? A thing that thinks. What is that? A thing that doubts, understands, affirms, denies, is willing, is unwilling, and also imagines and has sensory perceptions (1641/1984, pp. 18-19).

For Descartes, above all else, people were rational beings, intelligent, reflective, and thoughtful (Sedgwick, 2001). The fact of rationality, in Descartes' eyes, was the very essence of humanity, motivating our actions, giving us the means of coming to know the world and discovering what is true, and above all, making us God-like. Furthermore, being rational was, he concluded, what sets people's minds apart from the rest of the universe. Three human capacities that held particular importance for Descartes were our ability to consider ourselves in time, beyond the realm of our immediate sensations; to objectively choose which desires to satisfy or deny; and to know things beyond the physical realm, including "the truths of mathematics, the minds of other people, and God" (Ross & Franks, 1996, p. 516).

Compared to the human mind and soul, Descartes posited that our bodies are corrupt because they are subject to false sensations. Consistent with his rationalist view, Descartes declared that our bodies become known to our minds not by being 'sensed', by being seen or felt. Rather, they are perceived and understood intellectually. This view of humanity as divided into a God-like mind and a corrupt body was to have longstanding ramifications, despite being founded on the questionable assumption that our minds somehow exist independent of the physical substance of our brains (Turski, 1994). For in claiming himself to be, in essence, a mind or soul that is fundamentally separate from and different to his physical body, and moreover a mind that takes precedence over body, Descartes set in place the body-mind Cartesian dualism that has persisted to the present day.

Implications and Critiques

As well as this duality of mind and body, a number of other assumptions were implicit in Descartes' view of rationality. For example, there is an implicit assumption of self-consciousness, a subjectivity that endows each individual with an introspective understanding of what it is to be him or her self. Clearly, from Descartes' perspective, this self was by nature a thinking self. That is, we know ourselves in terms of how we think and what we know, rather than what we feel or experience.

Descartes' assumption of self-awareness in turn suggests the notion of individualism, in the sense of individual identity, will, thoughts and intuitions. Underlying these assumptions about self-consciousness and individualism, is a presupposition that subjectivity, thought and identity can be accounted for without any reference to the individual's particular social or material circumstances, or indeed any aspect of the world beyond the mind. Here Descartes dismisses the possibility that subjectivity itself may be shaped, or indeed constituted by the cultural and social reality into which an individual is born. He took this stance because, if we allow that subjectivity is shaped by social realities, then so too is knowledge and what counts for knowledge, which Descartes could not countenance. Descartes' rationality also assumed that our thoughts are always conscious, as opposed to unconscious or hidden, and rational rather than instinctual.

A further critique in relation to Descartes' rationality is that, by framing the act of thinking as a personal and individual endeavour, the 'I' who thinks, doubts and understands, Descartes enshrined truth or certainty as something that individuals could uncover through self-reflective activity. Perhaps the most lucid account of the ways in which this assertion is metaphysically problematic was formulated by Nietzsche in 1886. Although Nietzsche did not directly identify Descartes as the subject of his critique, its relevance to Descartes' work is nonetheless evident. Because Nietzsche's argument is multifaceted, it is reproduced at some length:

There are still harmless self-observers who believe that there are "immediate certainties"; for example, "I think" ... as though knowledge here got hold of its object purely and nakedly as "the thing in itself," without any falsification on the part of either the subject or the object. ... When I analyze the process that is expressed in the sentence, "I think," I find a whole series of daring assertions that would be difficult, perhaps impossible, to prove; for example, that it is *I* who think, that there must necessarily be something that thinks, that thinking is an activity and operation on the part of a being who is thought of as a cause, that there is an "ego," and, finally, that it is already determined what is to be designated by thinking – that I *know* what thinking is. ... In place of the "immediate certainty" in which people may believe in the case at hand, the philosopher thus finds a series of metaphysical questions presented to him ... (1886/1966, pp. 23-24).

Two things are particularly noteworthy about Nietzsche's critique. The first is that these comments were written some 250 years after Descartes' pronouncement that "I think, therefore I am". That Descartes' views were still being challenged so many years after he stated them attests to the extent to which his assumptions about the power of human thought had diffused throughout Western society. The second is that the assumptions Descartes set in train remain relevant and pertinent today, in that people still have a propensity to give authority to their thoughts by prefacing them with the phrase "I think". To understand how this state of affairs came about, it is necessary to go back to sketch in more of the background to Descartes theory.

Appendix 6: The British Empiricists: Locke and Hume

The first, John Locke (1632-1704), was an English philosopher. Locke maintained that humans are a '*tabula rasa*' (blank slate) at birth, which becomes filled with ideas originating from the senses and refined through subsequent reflection and reason (Macrone, 1995). For Locke, people were essentially sentient beings, with an innate potential to see, hear, smell, taste and feel and thus to understand the qualities of things, their size, hardness, temperature and so on (Sedgwick, 2001). It was through experiencing the external world, and repeating and comparing experiences and combining ideas, Locke proposed, that people learned to perceive, remember, doubt and believe, think abstractly, reason and to will. An important point here is that Locke identified that people change over time, both in terms of their knowledge, experience and rational powers and in the sense of physical bodily changes.

In an epistemological sense, Locke was an empiricist. His main contention was that the veracity of the senses could not be doubted. He did, however, concede that:

... beside the assurance we have from our senses themselves, that they do not err in the information they give us of the existence of things without us, when they are affected by them, we are further confirmed in this assurance by concurrent reasons. (1690/1823/1963, Book IV, Chapter XI, section 3, p. 76)

Locke supported the development of hypotheses "to explain any phaenomena of nature", acknowledging that "hypotheses, if they are well made, are at least great helps to memory, and often direct us to new discoveries" (1690/1963, Book IV, Chapter 12, section 13, p. 89). He warned, however:

that we should not take up any one too hastily (which the mind, that would always penetrate into the causes of things, and have principles to rest on, is very apt to do) till we have very well examined particulars, and made several experiments in that thing which we would explain by our hypothesis, and see whether it will agree to them all; whether our principles will carry us quite through, and not

be as inconsistent with one phenomena of nature, as they seem to accommodate, and explain another. And that at least that we take care, that the name of principles deceive us not, nor impose on us, by making us receive that for an unquestionable truth which is really at best but a very doubtful conjecture. (1690/1963, Book IV, Chapter 12, section 13, p. 89)

In being so explicit about the need to impartially weigh opinions, and to carefully judge them on their own merits, Locke demonstrated his commitment to rational thinking (Woolhouse, 1996). Similarly, Locke's rationality is revealed in his insistence that empirical facts could not produce certainty, and agreement with Descartes over the truthfulness of an idea being revealed by its clarity (Saiedi, 1993). In this regard, Locke perceived that individuals had a duty and responsibility to carefully examine propositions and to work things out for themselves, irrespective of what others, and particularly those in authority might believe. The one exception Locke allowed was Christian morality, which he conceded that people might learn from the Gospels. In addition, Locke recognised certain limits to human knowledge and accepted that some things could only be discovered by revelation. Even revelations, however, must be subjected to reason in order to reveal whether they were genuine.

The second of the British empiricists important to this discussion is David Hume (1711-1776), a Scottish philosopher born seven years after Locke's death (Sedgwick, 2001). Hume has been identified as "without doubt, one of the greatest philosophers to write in English" (Jones, 1996, p. 571), yet he believed that he was merely recording the style of thinking that he and other more enlightened people were already using (Gellner, 1992).

Like the other empiricists, Hume affirmed the centrality of our senses to knowledge acquisition but added a new dimension by noting that we are never indifferent to our sensations or experiences (Jones, 1996). Rather, the ideas we form are a combination of experience and attitudes, whether of pain or pleasure, towards that experience. Furthermore, Hume explicitly recognised the inescapably social nature of much of human experience, and by extension, that people's social reality influences their experience and what they come to know. This is problematic,

however. If we allow that we each have our own perspective, because of our different experiences, attitudes and social realities, then it is not clear how we can ever agree. Hume solved this dilemma by suggesting that, rather than examining differences and contradictions we take some generally agreed perception as the starting point for discussion (Motooka, 1998).

One of the general perceptions that Hume recognised was that people naturally link ideas together. He noted in particular that we recognise when things are similar to each other in some way (such as resembling one another or sharing some aspect of identity), occur at the same time or in the same place, or have a cause and effect relationship. With regard to resemblances, contiguities, and cause and effect, Hume asserted that cause and effect relationships were the most important aspect of human understanding. He believed this to be so despite the fact that it is impossible to provide a convincing explanation of *how* people infer cause and effect, apart from noting that we remember previous instances of one thing leading to another. The significance of cause and effect relationships, for Hume, was that it is only when we take note of a sequence of events and make a judgement about what caused things to happen that we go beyond the evidence of our senses. However, Hume held that such judgements were a matter of habit, custom or familiarity built up through experience, rather than evidence of the application of reason. Furthermore, such judgements could at best be probabilities rather than certainties, because their apparent veracity was based entirely on repeated observations. Reason, then, might be useful to ensure our judgements are sensible, but could not spawn absolute truths.

Hume's emphatic belief that knowledge is built up through experience led to the inevitable conclusion that humans were not, primarily, rational beings. From his resolute empirical perspective, people were creatures that acted, for the most part, in accordance with custom. Nonetheless, Hume argued that individuals have the capacity and responsibility for making choices and decisions about their actions, and that these choices and decisions might be viewed as the immediate cause of human action. In addition, he noted that our choices and decisions themselves are often caused by external influences, even though we are normally not aware of and

not responsible for those influences. Human behaviour, he therefore concluded, could be explained in terms of what caused it, and consequently, could to some extent be predicted.

It is important to note, however, that while recognising that people make choices and decisions, Hume denied that this was evidence of rationality. Rather, he argued, individual's awareness of self, their consciousness, was based on interpretation of experience, where those interpretations were made in the context of the social world and the fleeting feelings and sensations of bodily existence. As Hume reflected in his *Treatise of Human Nature*:

... when I enter most intimately into what I call *myself*, I always stumble on some particular perception or other, of heat or cold, light or shade, love or hatred, pleasure or pain. I never can catch *myself* at any time without a perception, and never can observe anything but the perception. (Hume, 1739-40/1990, p. 252)

That is, Hume denied the possibility of objective reasoning, free of the influence of one's feelings. Even if being entirely objective were possible, Hume argued, it would not be desirable because of the extreme implications this would have. To illustrate this point, Hume declared in a much quoted passage that it was conceivable that he might rationally prefer "the destruction of the whole world to the scratching of my finger" or might choose "my total ruin to prevent the least uneasiness of ... a person wholly unknown to me" (1739-40/1990, p. 416). Rather than support rationality at all costs, Hume concluded that reason "is, and ought only to be, the slave of the passions" (1739-40/1978, p. iii), because although reason might help with identifying worthy goals and working out how to achieve them, it could not provide the motivation to achieve them nor guarantee sympathy for others, ethical conduct or justice (Turski, 1994).

Despite the pre-eminence of passion that he argued for, Hume conceded that rationally held beliefs could both arouse and dampen feelings (Nathanson, 1994). As well, it appears that by 1751, Hume had tempered his assertion that reason ought to be passion's slave, stating that reason and sentiment most often coincide when it comes to moral issues. While Hume's acknowledgement of the influence of passion

was in accord with other Scottish thinkers of the time, French and German philosophers steadfastly asserted the supremacy of reason.

Appendix 7: People Who Feature in Chapter Five

Table Appendix 7:1

Chronological Listing of the Romantics and their Contemporaries

1724-1804	Immanuel Kant
1730-1795	Josiah Wedgwood
1744-1803	Johann Gottfried Herder
1757-1827	William Blake
1767-1845	August Wilhelm von Schlegel
1769-1821	Bonaparte Napoleon
1770-1831	Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel
1770-1850	William Wordsworth
1771-1829	Friedrich von Schlegel
1771-1832	Sir Walter Scott
1772-1801	Novalis (Friedrich Hardenberg)
1772-1834	Samuel Taylor Coleridge
1775-1817	Jane Austen
1788-1824	George Gordon Byron
1792-1822	Percy Bysshe Shelley
1795-1821	John Keats
1798-1881	Prosper Duvergier de Hauranne
1804-1881	Benjamin Disraeli
1809-1892	Lord Alfred Tennyson
1812-1852	Augustus Welby Pugin
1812-1870	Charles Dickens
1818-1883	Karl Marx
1829-1900	John Ruskin
1834-1896	William Morris

Table Appendix 7:2

Brief Profiles of the Romantics and Their Contemporaries

Austen, Jane. (1775-1817).

An English novelist whose work includes *Sense and Sensibilities* (1811), *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), and *Northanger Abbey* (1818).

Blake, William. (1757-1827).

An English poet and writer renowned for his mystical cast of mind and recurring themes of divine love and sympathy, Blake was considered by some to be 'an unfortunate lunatic'. Blake is now recognized as one of the most original of the Romantic poets. An engraver by profession, Blake combined his prose with illustrations that decorated and explained his meanings. A primary example is his most important prose works, such as *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (1790-3).

Byron, George Gordon. (1788-1824).

An English Baron, poet and author of *Don Juan* who took up his seat in the House of Lords in 1811 but left England in 1816, disillusioned by the hypocrisy and strictures he perceived in British society.

Coleridge, Samuel Taylor. (1772-1834).

Both a poet and an aesthete, Coleridge's initial enthusiasm for the French Revolution provided the inspiration for the Utopian community planned, but never actioned, with Southey. Coleridge met Wordsworth in 1795, and later joined him in the Lake District. Together they wrote *Lyrical Ballads* (1798), to raise money for a walking tour in Germany. The *Ballads* include Coleridge's *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, in which he attempts to make the supernatural seem natural. Similar themes are evident in his poems *Kubla Khan* and *Christabel*, perhaps stimulated by becoming addicted to opium after about 1801.

Dickens, Charles. (1812-1870).

An English novelist who drew on his experiences of childhood hardship for much of his subject material. Many of his novels were first published in installments in magazines, and addressed social issues of the day including the plight of the urban poor and the corruption of the legal system. His novels include *Oliver Twist* (1837-8), *Nicolas Nickleby* (1838-9), and *Great Expectations* (1860-1).

Disraeli, Benjamin. (1804-1881).

An English novelist, biographer, parliamentarian and political critic, Disraeli was Prime Minister in 1868 and again from 1874-1880.

Duvergier de Hauranne, Prosper. (1798-1881).

A French politician and historian, Duvergier de Hauranne was closely associated with the Romantics and campaigned for electoral, parliamentary and literary reform.

Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich. (1770-1831).

A German professor of philosophy.

Herder, Johann Gottfried. (1744-1803).

A German philosopher and critic whose recognition of historical evolution helped bridge the gap between the Enlightenment and Romanticism.

Continued ...

Table Appendix 7:2 Continued

Brief Profiles of the Romantics and Their Contemporaries

Kant, Immanuel. (1724-1804).

A Prussian philosopher, perhaps best known for his works *Critique of Pure Reason* (1787), *Critique of Practical Reason* (1788), and *Critique of Judgment* (1790) who argued that sensation is the starting point of understanding and knowledge.

Keats, John. (1795-1821).

A poet and playwright, who has been referred to as the most poignant of the English Romantics. Trained as an apothecary, Keats watched his brother's illness and death from tuberculosis and perhaps foresaw that he would also contract the disease. His work blends pleasure in the beauties of life with melancholy. Keats is most famous for his odes *To a Grecian Urn*, *To a Nightingale*, and *To Autumn*, which are replete with sensuous imagery.

Marx, Karl. (1818-1883).

Born in Prussia, he was a political philosopher infamous for his revolutionary and communistic views, and author of *Das Kapital* which was completed after his death by Friedrich Engels.

Morris, William. (1834-1896).

An English poet, writer, artist, decorator, craftsman, manufacturer, printer and socialist writer who became a leading figure in the Arts and Crafts movement.

Napoleon, Bonaparte. (1769-1821).

French artillery officer who rose to become general-in-chief of the French army in 1796-7, lead France to a series of European conquests, and proclaimed himself emperor of France in 1804. He abdicated in 1814 following a series of disastrous defeats, and was defeated at Waterloo in 1815.

Novalis (pseudonym of Hardenberg, Friedrich). (1772-1801).

Acclaimed as an outstanding German poet, Friedrich was drawn to mysticism despite his training as an engineer. His best known poems were written to his beloved at the time of her death, while his unfinished narratives focused on his search for the inner meaning of life through his poetry and nature. He also wrote a numerous pieces addressing his view of art, artists and various other topics.

Pugin, Augustus Welby. (1812-1852).

An English architect and designer who argued the virtues of Gothic architecture over Classical styles, thus becoming a key figure in the Gothic Revival.

Ruskin, John. (1829-1900).

An English art historian, writer, poet, social critic and philanthropist. Ruskin revived the hand-made linen industry in Langdale, was a professor of art at Slade, and was a key proponent of the Arts and Crafts movement.

Scott, Sir Walter. (1771-1832).

A Scottish poet, novelist, writer and publisher who developed his home, Abbotsford as a bastion of Romanticism.

Continued ...

Table Appendix 7:2 Continued

Brief Profiles of the Romantics and Their Contemporaries

Shelley, Percy Bysshe. (1792-1822).

Shelley's work as a novelist, poet, dramatist, satirist and writer has earned him the accolade of being the most versatile of the English Romantics. Known as rebellious and impulsive, Shelley's life was punctuated by emotional involvements, travel and personal misfortune. Perhaps his best-known works are *Prometheus Unbound* (1820) and his 1819 lyrics, *Ode to the West Wind*, *To a Skylark* and *The Cloud*, which capture the fleeting mood of the moment. His *Defence of Poetry* is an idealistic description of poetry and the social function of poets.

Schlegel, August Wilhelm von. (1767-1845).

One of the leading theorists of German Romanticism, August was actively involved in promoting Romantic aesthetics throughout Europe. He visited France, Italy, Sweden and England from 1804 onwards, in his role as tutor to Madame de Stael's children. His key contributions include his clear differentiation of Classical and Romantic aesthetics, and his insights into poets' use of signs, symbols and pictures to communicate beauty.

Schlegel, Friedrich von. (1771-1829).

Friedrich and with his elder brother August Schlegel, were two of the most influential German Romantics. Friedrich was the founder of the journal *Athenæum*. His only novel *Lucinde*, considered outrageous at the time because it was purported to promote free love, is now recognized as a predecessor of the experimental novel. It is however Friedrich's aesthetic theories that are accepted as his major contribution to Romanticism.

Tennyson, Lord Alfred. (1809-1892).

An English poet, whose first poems were published in the early 1830s and included *The Lady of Shalott*. Tennyson was made Poet Laureate in 1850 and subsequently enjoyed enormous popularity. He published *The Charge of the Light Brigade* in 1854.

Wedgwood, Josiah. (1730-1795).

The English founder of the Wedgwood pottery at Etruria who was unusual in his time for maintaining a high standard of craftsmanship in his mass produced ceramics and employing artists to create his designs.

Wordsworth, William. (1770-1850).

An English poet and writer, who lived for many years in the Lake District of England and celebrated nature and simple rural lifestyles in his poetry. He experienced the French Revolution first hand, at first viewing it optimistically as a turning point for mankind. His most famous works include *The Prelude* and *The Recluse* and *Lyrical Ballads* (1798), which was co-authored with fellow poet S. T. Coleridge. Wordsworth was appointed poet laureate in 1843.

Appendix 8: The Social Activism of Shelley and Byron

As well as being the subject of critique for seeking self-knowledge through novel experiences and fully living their emotions, the Romantics were criticised for their lack of social activism. This is not to say that they were unaware of events and issues of the day, nor that they did not respond to them. Shelley, for example, penned *A Tale of Society as it is: From Facts, 1811*. It tells the story of an old cripple and her son who was left severely disabled after being forced into battle. Without the capacity to work, they were reduced to relying on the meagre provisions of The English Poor Law.

And now cold charity's unwelcome dole
Was insufficient to support the pair,
And they would perish rather than would bear
The law's stern slavery and the insolent stare
With which law loves to rend the poor man's soul
(1812/1987, p. 196, lines 72-76)

Shelley's reference to 'cold charity' was likely an accurate reflection of the harsh attitudes of local administrators of relief for the poor, while also capturing some people's reluctance to receive handouts. As Shelley's 1812 letter to Elizabeth Hitchener reveals, the returned soldier who inspired the poem indeed experienced the dole as unwelcome, having apparently stated that "None of my family ever come to parish, and I would starve first. Am a poor man but I could never hold my head up after that" (Matthews & Everest, 1989, p. 196). It must be acknowledged, however, Shelley's claim that such payments were insufficient to support people is factually inaccurate. At least outside of London and the larger towns, the dole usually prevented destitution, and meagre as they were, England's Poor Laws were unique in Europe at that time and much admired by foreign visitors.

Around the same time as Shelley presented his 'facts', Byron was railing against the Frame Bill, which was rushed through parliament in an attempt to quell the Luddite riots. The Bill would make it a capital offence to smash the improved machinery the Luddites were targeting, because it had put many of Britain's industrial labourers

out of work while producing such inferior goods that they were not saleable on the domestic market. Byron denounced the government's attitude in a poem sent anonymously to the *Morning Chronicle*:

The rascals [unemployed weavers], perhaps, may betake them to robbing,
The dogs to be sure have got nothing to eat –
So if we can hang them for breaking a bobbin,
'T will save all the government's money and meat:
Men are more easily made than machinery –
Stockings fetch better prices than lives –
Gibbets on Sherwood will *heighten* the scenery,
Showing how Commerce, *how* Liberty thrives!
(Ode to the Framers of the Frame Bill, 1812/1981, p. 9, lines 9-16)

Although Byron's rhetoric was strong, it was markedly unsuccessful in swaying his fellow parliamentarians. Shelley's activism in relation to the same issues was equally ineffective. Appalled by the government's actions, Shelley sided with the 'famine-wasted' citizens of Nottingham against the aristocracy who drafted and passed the legislation. His attitude reportedly became more aloof, however, after exposure to an Irish mob in Dublin who, he was disappointed to discover, were rioting more out of hunger than to uphold their rights (Gilmour, 2002). Despite their flurries into activism, the Romantics' outrage over injustice was largely expressed by redoubling their creative efforts, in the belief that art alone had the power to reawaken people to the human potential that was blunted by industrialisation.

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