

SKID ROW

A "LIFEWORLD" STUDY

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CONTENTS

	Page
Acknowledgements	v
Abstract	viii
Chapter One	
Introduction	
1. Skid Row	1
2. The People	7
3. The Biography of John MacIvor	10
4. Conclusion	17
Chapter Two	
Literature Review	
1. Introduction	19
2. The Welfare View	19
3. The Etiological Problem	21
4. Toward an "Appreciative" Perspective	25
5. Methodological Radicalism	28
6. Conclusion	30
Chapter Three	
The Lifeworld	
1. Introduction	31
2. The Everyday Lifeworld	31
3. The Ecological Foundations to Everyday Life	34
4. The Temporal	36
5. The Social Structure and Personal Identity	38
6. Conclusion	41

Chapter Four	
	Page
The Setting	
1. Introduction	45
2. Skid Row Territories	45
3. "The Pub" - The Bar as Territory	47
(a) Drinking and Identity in the Home Bar	50
4. The River Bank and The Square	
(a) The River Bank	52
(b) The Square	53
5. The Night Shelter	55
6. Accommodation	60
7. Conclusion	63
 Chapter Five	
The Daily Round	
1. Introduction	66
2. A Day in the Life of	66
3. Types of Cycles	
(a) Daily	68
(b) The Benefit Cycle	73
(i) Cashing the Benefit	75
(ii) Going for the Bottle	76
(iii) Passing the Bottle	78
(c) The Institutional Cycle	83
4. Conclusion	86
 Chapter Six	
Vagrant Alcoholics And Their Guardians	
1. Introduction	89
2. Moral entrepreneurs	89
3. The City Mission	92
4. The Police	96
5. The Courts and Prison	99

	Page
6. The 1966 Alcohol and Drug Addiction	102
7. Conclusion	105
 Chapter Seven	
Respectability and Identity on Skid Row	
1. Introduction	108
2. Identity and Social Distance	109
3. Respectability and the Rhetoric of Health	112
(a) Health as a Factor for Skid Row Membership	112
(b) The Rhetoric of Health	113
(i) Rhetoric as Defence	114
(ii) Rhetoric as a Disidentifier	115
(c) Alcohol And the Routinization of Health	116
4. Conclusion	119
 Chapter Eight	
Conclusion - The Reification of the Skid Row World-View	121
Fruitful Areas for Further Research	127
References	131
 Appendix A - Methodology	
1. Introduction	140
2. The Christchurch City Mission	140
3. Participant Observation	142
(a) The Soup Kitchen	144
(b) Beyond the City Mission - Excursus - Ethics	148
(c) Interviews	152
(i) Life histories	152
(ii) Institutional Contact	153

	Page
4. Field Notes	155
5. Conclusion	157
Appendix B - Vagrancy Law	159

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ABSTRACT

Peter Berger has said that an understanding of the "social lifeworld" is very important for the sociological analysis of concrete situations. This is a 'Participant Observation' study of the "skid row lifeworld" in Christchurch; an elucidation of the Dickensian world of night shelters and common lodging houses.

Much of the Social Work literature, although concerned with the amelioration of the skid row phenomenon, has nevertheless made an important sociological contribution by emphasizing the fact that the men are not so much 'on' skid row as skid row is 'in' the men. Other researchers have emphasized the "naturalistic" perspective and thus have set a methodological precedent for studying skid row.

Skid row is used in a generic sense to embody not only a particular area but also the psychological and sociological ties skid rowers have to agencies of social control and to drinking on skid row. Skid row is seen as being 'constituted' by its inhabitants. The common phenomenological world that skid rowers inhabit justifies the use of the term 'skid row.'

The substantive portion of this thesis deals with the 'spatial', 'temporal' and 'social' as underlying structures of subjective orientation to the lifeworld.

Lyman and Scott's (1970) concept of "territoriality" is utilized to discover how skid rowers use different

sites around the city. The "time track" concept, also developed by the above authors, is used.

The third substantive section examines the skid rowers' relationships with agencies of social control. Against this background the skid rower attempts to place himself in a "routine" framework in order to present a "conventional" identity.

The skid rower seeks to manage a tension between a reified and fatalistic world-view while seeking to "conventionalize" his identity.



"I've walked this world alone."

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This is a study of a group of elderly men and women (1) who live within the inner city of Christchurch. These are not the benign elderly, they are simply ex-convicts, alcoholics, the mentally ill or the physically disabled who have grown old. Age it appears, is not chronological. Some of the men appear to be seventy when they are actually in their forties or younger. Most are clients of the Christchurch City Mission and frequent a soup kitchen/day-care centre run in two local halls by the City Mission and another Church.

Little is ever heard of this group of people. They exist as the sublimated people of society's social and moral conscience. They have been seen in the past as potential or actual criminals, as gossipers, disease spreaders, breeders of deformity and moral degradation, and as "work-shy loafers" (Stewart, 1975:142). In essence as de Hoog notes, they tend to "negate society's basic assumptions - competition, personal advancement, stability, cleanliness, moderation and security - they are alternatively punished, manipulated and supported" (1972:32). Thus they can become at any time the subject

1. Throughout this study we shall refer to 'men' as women did not make up a significant proportion of the population. However, one must still note the existence of some women, for two women I came to know played an important and significant role as friends of the men and one in particular was a key informant for this study as she was a long-standing inhabitant of inner-city Christchurch.

of public scrutiny in response to a media whim or a service agency that is either feeling the "financial pinch" or wishing to wipe out a deficit (2). They may also become so visible that they cause a minor public inconvenience as was reported in the Christchurch Press, "Vagrants and Drunks Shut Station" (3). The report stated, "vagrants and drunks seeking a warm place to sleep or sober up are making things difficult for passengers at the Christchurch Railway Station... A Westport reader of The Press wrote to the editor of his complaint... On July 2nd, a Sunday, Mr.. and other ticket-carrying passengers (waiting for a connecting train) were put out of the waiting room at 11p.m. and told "they could come back at 1a.m." The wintry weather outside did nothing to improve the passengers reaction to their eviction... The area traffic manager said, "because we often encounter problems with alcoholics and undesirables, the station is sometimes closed between 11p.m. and 1a.m."

As the identity of these men become public property, they can thus evoke what Cohen calls "moral

2. see the Christchurch Star, front page, August, 1978: "Help for City's destitute may get boost." the article reports the plea of two central missions for financial assistance from the Department of Social Welfare to help house "often jobless and destitute" people. The article notes how a previous article had stimulated public giving and had therefore managed to wipe a deficit one of the missions had. And the Christchurch Press, 15th December, 1978: "Mission fully extended." This article notes that for the first time this year a mission's Night Shelter was fully extended with "destitute unemployed men seeking a bed for the night." Later the article points out that this mission is about to launch an appeal.

3. The Christchurch Press, July 29th, 1978.

panic," where they are seen to be challenging societal values and interests. In reaction to a press front page headline - "Stark Poverty a Reality Here, Now," (4) - one person wrote: "people should get off their fat lazy behinds, forget what is going to win the doubles etc etc, and get on with the job of living." (5). Cohen notes, "the moral barricades are manned by editors, bishops, politicians and other right-thinking people; socially accredited experts pronounce their diagnosis and solutions" (1973:9). The inner-city alcoholic, therefore, comes to be seen as being both sick and unable to cope with his dependency on alcohol and is therefore seen as being in need of treatment and rehabilitation. If Doctors still feel at liberty to regard alcoholism as a moral as much as a medical problem (6) how much more, then, will the "homeless" and "vagrant" alcoholic be reacted to in terms of a "moral panic."

Companionship for these men is found in the inner-city bars. Social relationships are lubricated by glasses of beer or perhaps cheap sherry. The skid rower feels "at home" in these environments, for here there is acceptance and not estrangement, warmth and fortification against the cold.

The exclusiveness of this inner-city community is further exaggerated by its concentration in certain

4. The Christchurch Press, July 29th, 1978.
5. The Christchurch Press, August 1st, 1978.
6. cf D. Watson, M.A. Thesis Victoria University of Wellington, "alcoholism and Sociology," 1969, P.30. See also the Christchurch Star, February 12th, 1979, where a Doctor states, "alcoholics are devious, aggressive, they lack motivation and they are the cause of endless frustration and dismay."

localities, mainly in the inner-city, by its dependence from time to time on community social service agencies, and by an otherwise "extraordinary disaffiliation from the institutions of conventional society" (7) - e.g. the family and work etc.

These people are what Matza identified as the "disreputable Poor," a term inclusive of a number of concepts that historically have served to pinpoint the same moral and social dimension of the phenomenon.

Matza goes on to say:

terms such as vagrants and tramps, the residuum, down-and-out and single homeless person, all have been or still are seen to identify a specific type of poverty. (1953:491)

They are both the "lumpenproletariate" and a "spurious leisure class," for they do not belong to the industrial working class and although they live in industrial society, temperamentally and functionally they are not of it.

Thus the men and women of the Christchurch inner-city skid row are distinguished by repeated public drunkenness, arrest and imprisonment. Public denunciation together with such labels as, "public inebriate," "habitual drunkard" and "homeless alcoholic," serve as a successful process of degradation, reinforcing public outcry and "moral panic." (8)

7. see A.K. Jordan, "Homeless Men in Australian Cities," La Trobe University, unpublished paper, October 1970 P.3

8. cf Garfinkel, "Conditions of Successful Degradation Ceremonies," in Rubington and Weinberg, 1973. Garfinkel notes that these ceremonies fall within the scope of the sociology of moral indignation, a moral indignation which "serves to effect the ritual destruction of the prison denounced." (1973:90) He argues that this is in essence the substitution of another "socially validated motivational scheme for that previously used to name and order the performances of the denounced." (1973:91)

1. Skid Row

The question may now be asked, what is "skid row?" There are three important characteristics to the phenomenon.

Firstly, the distinctiveness of this group of people, as has already been noted, is enhanced by their concentration in certain localities of the city.

The skid rower seldom ventures beyond the four avenues that bound the Christchurch inner-city. Within this area are special localities and "territories" (Lyman and Scott, 1970) of the men - the banks of the Avon River, Hagley Park, Latimer Square, Cathedral Square, various Hotels and "back bars." (see Map page 6) (9).

Although this is an important characteristic, it does not completely justify the use of the term "skid row".

Secondly, with the tendency for certain institutions serving the skid row community to concentrate within the inner-city, the area is identified by the social and economic characteristics of the men and women who use the institutions (cf. Archard, 1979:2). Most of the community were in receipt of a Social Welfare Benefit of one kind or another such as Unemployment Benefits, Invalid and Sickness Benefits, Superannuation, War Pensions, and various additional benefits. Many of these benefits were handled by community services who helped the men by acting as budgetary agents for them. This involved daily or weekly payments, hence the frequent contact that the men had with many of the agencies (10).

9. These various territories are discussed in Chapter Four.
 10. This cyclical phenomenon is dealt with in Chapter Five.

CHRISTCHURCH

- 'four avenues' -

- 1. City Mission
- 2. and 3. Soup Kitchens
- 4. Salvation Army hostel
- 5. Tim's Corner
- 6 - 10 flats, bed-sitting-rooms and boarding houses
- 11 - 19 Hotels and back-bars
- 20 Magistrate's Court



Finally, this familiarity with Welfare institutions, the prison cell, rehabilitation and detoxification units, hostels, boarding houses, night shelters and pubs, reflects the psychological and sociological ties that the men and women have to skid row. It is this sub-cultural life of skid row that justifies the use of the term, since all these various "territories" and locales are an integral part of the skid row world. Archard notes that, "it is the common 'phenomenological' world they inhabit which justifies use of the term" (1979:3). Archard's comment relates to Britain, but, as this thesis will try to show, it also has relevance to New Zealand.

These three characteristics of skid row can be re-interpreted in conceptual terms by highlighting: (1) the spatial, where skid row can be viewed as a locale or series of "territories;" (2) the temporal, which involves the problem of establishing routine, and the ordering of everyday life; (3) the social is the common concerns and activities that comprise the daily round of events. These three aspects of the skid row lifeworld provide a guiding framework for the rest of the thesis.

2. The People

It should be realised, however that it is too simplistic to speak of "skid row" as a term that embodies a homogeneous population. It comprises a potpourri of person types from the mentally ill, to the casual worker and the "hard-core" alcoholic. It

is possible, in fact, to delineate three groups (11) within skid row.

Firstly, there is the "hard-core" group. Its members are the "chronically unemployed.". These men are labelled "alcoholics," they are often convicted of offences against public order and they usually suffer from a variety of illnesses and disabilities from sclerosis of the liver, to cancer and brain damage. They are also heavily dependent on social security benefits and seldom move beyond the institutional and geographical boundaries of skid row (cf. Jordan, 1973: 152). The age of this group would range somewhere between fifty and seventy years, but most die early.

Secondly, on the periphery of this group an "intermediate" group of younger men in their thirties or forties who are alcoholics but are not as disabled as the older men. They would usually be on the Unemployment Benefit since they have long been recognised as unemployable and "unreliable alcoholics." They would sometimes drift around the country holding jobs for a few weeks only and always ending up back in the same skid row environment. This group is further distinguished from the "hard-core" group by what they drink. Most of this intermediate group get drunk on beer, while the "hard-core" would be drinking the harder and more debilitating drinks such as sherry, cheap wine and sometimes meths.

11. This follows Jordan's divisions, 1973, P. 152ff

Finally, there is a peripheral group of the mentally ill and ex-psychiatric patients (12), the unemployed, itinerant, or casual labourer, and those who come to skid row in times of crisis in their lives. These people are not seen as alcoholics and are aged from their teens to thirty years of age (13).

These distinctions of course are somewhat arbitrary, since the men will often associate with each other across these boundaries. All three groups have a lot in common for they are all living in the inner city and all experience varying degrees of dependency upon welfare benefits. Although most of the men drink alcohol, some do not and instead wander the streets and the parks that all know so well. However, it is clear that the men implicitly recognise this threefold categorization. The social boundaries separating the "hard-core" from the "intermediate" and "peripheral" groups are very strong for the debilitating effect of sherry and meths is widely recognised among the men. Although the "hard-core" group may be despised and/or feared by the "intermediate" group, this does not preclude the possibility of any

12. The City Mission has a continual link with Sunnyside Psychiatric Hospital, and in fact operates a half-way house for alcoholics and ex-psychiatric patients.
13. The concern of this thesis is with the first two groups, with limited contact made with the third or peripheral group. In the course of my research I came to know 14 men who could be labeled "hard-core", 7 intermediate and 3 of the peripheral group along with occasional contact with a number of young Maori gang members. One can add to this two elderly women who tended to associate with the "hard-core" and intermediate groups.

of the "intermediate" men "slipping" to the river bank with a cheap bottle of sherry. Often the men mix freely at Public Bars. At other times the "intermediate" men in the public bars despised and looked down upon the sherry and wine drinkers who usually congregated on the river bank and in parks, and who were thought to have no sense of self esteem or respect. To live on skid row entails fighting a continual battle to maintain enough self esteem to live. This concern with self esteem and respectability will be taken up later (see chapter 7).

Jordan notes:

we could imagine a man entering the skid row population as a young employable transient and soon leaving, but returning more and more often as he grew older and staying longer and longer each time, meanwhile learning how to live on skid row and establishing a network of personal relationships. (1973:153)

Some careers no doubt conform to this.

However, many of the men in this present study entered skid row later in life after losing a job or after an accident at work. The following would be a typical biography of many of the skid row men. (14)

3. The Biography of John MacIvor

John is a tall man with a good crop of snow-white hair. He is an impressive man, with the appearance of

14. This life history is a composite life history of four of the men I interviewed. The names that appear are fictitious. If any of the names, or if the sequence of events in this life history, bear any similarity to those of real persons, this is unintentional.

having been "somebody" at one stage of his life. He would be a good six feet tall, but now walks with a slight stoop and is none too steady on his feet. His face is heavily lined with a very drawn appearance, a large red nose and very blue eyes that are quite blood-shot. He often shows a friendly smile, which reveals his false teeth. John usually wears an old seaman's jersey underneath a sports jacket, and his trousers are usually two inches too short for him. He is also a heavy smoker. He always has a packet of roll-your-own and can be found frequently, unsteadily, rolling one out.

John's father was a butcher and had a partnership with another man in Invercargill. Business was apparently going well, but despite this, his father decided to pull out of the partnership, so they moved to a place about fifty miles out of Invercargill and set up another shop. They used to kill their own meat and do all the processing themselves. By the time John was in his early teens he was experienced with all aspects of a butchers shop.

Booze, however, began to get the better of his father and he started to drink heavily, often on the premises and in the company of friends. John did not like this at all and he used to try and chase them away from the place. He did not mind his father's friends drinking with him so much, but they were drinking at his father's expense.

His father would buy a couple of gallons of whisky and about five gallons of rum and store this out

in the back room. They had a delivery run that went for quite a few miles out in the country and people would also ask for whisky to be delivered. His father began to bottle his own stuff, and buying it in bulk.

The drinking became very bad and his father had an ulcer. When John was in his late teens his mother died and his father re-married, shortly afterwards. "That was the worst thing my father had ever done." John's stepmother had been a widow in Dunedin, and they were married there. John never really managed to get on with his stepmother or her children, and they used to fight a lot. After about a year of this he decided to leave.

He had an Uncle who had a large sheep station in Central Otago, so he wrote to him and asked for a job. His Uncle replied that he could come any time and work, so John left immediately for the farm. The work was hard and it was lonely on the farm. John was only twenty years old. According to John his Uncle was "hell" to work for.

After only a year or so on the farm, his Uncle's wife died, which led to his giving up the farm since she was the legal owner.

As John had met a young women in a nearby township, he decided to stay in the district when he left the farm. Luckily he found a job in a sawmill just outside the town. He had not been working long at this job - earning "good money," in the region of £15 per week - when he asked this young lady to marry him. The answer was positive, so they found a house to rent in the same town and John continued to work at the sawmill.

Only two years after their marriage a man who owned a butcher's shop back in John's old home town outside Invercargill, approached him with the offer of a job working in his shop. He tried to persuade John to give up his job at the sawmill and be a butcher for him. The man had his two sons working with him, but they had only served in the shop and not one of them knew how to slaughter an animal, so this would be John's job as he already had some experience from working with his father.

The township was built near swamp and was surrounded by bush, so they had a real problem with blow-flies. This forced John to work at night starting killing at 6p.m. and sometimes working through to daylight.

When the Second World War came along John was in his late twenties. He was in New Zealand all the time over the war as his eye sight was not good enough for active service. He spent most of the time in various army camps in the South Island starting out at a camp in the Addington Racecourse in Christchurch. They slept under the grandstand until they were moved out to prefabs at Rangiora. John said these things were very hot during the summer and usually they slept with all the doors and windows open. Of course the "wet canteen" was visited often and John was no exception. This proved to be a further significant introduction to alcohol in John's life.

Once the war was over, married life became increasingly difficult. His wife started making greater demands and wanting things just beyond the reach

of his pay at the time. She decided to get a job as well, working in a local store. His wife often came home tired after a days work and John found her no comfort at all. The familiarity with the bottle that was developed during the war, was now carried over into his marriage. After only a few years of this, they separated and were divorced. The marriage had lasted a little over ten years and had, in that time, produced four children - two girls and two boys - who were placed in the custody of the mother. John was only in his late thirties when he started paying maintenance, the source of most of his subsequent troubles. He has been into prison four or five times now, mostly for not paying the maintenance.

He came to Christchurch and managed to find a job in one of the inner-city Hotels, - he did a variety of jobs, from being Page Boy, Porter and Doorman, to being the Boiler Attendant. The job was good. He had to get up at six in the morning to make sure everyone had hot water.

Naturally there was an all-night bar, John always had the choice of whether or not he would have a gin in the morning, and the answer would be, "yes, just in case."

It was not long before he ended up at Hammer Hospital where the Doctor told him that his only problem was a bit much booze. He was there for just a couple of weeks before he was given a job working as a handyman around the hospital.

The pub was just over the fence; this was too much for him, so he thought one day he would really like a drink of beer. Others in the

hospital had secretly visited the pub, so he thought one evening he would go over the wall and join them. It was not long before he was bringing bottles back. He would have bottles planted all over the orchard, for having worked there he knew all the best places. Inevitably he was found out and had to leave.

He started floating around, working at odd jobs, places such as Lion Breweries in Auckland, and the Gin distillery in the Khyber Pass. When he worked in this latter place he used to take small flasks of pure alcohol, water it down and drink it.

When he was in Auckland he had an accident. He was rushing down some steps when he fell and fractured his wrist. It was put in plaster but did not mend properly. "They" said that he failed to get full use of his wrist because he did not go through the full course of physiotherapy. But, John claimed that, "a man knows when a thing is not going to heal again," and he thought there was not much point in going through the whole course for he knew his wrist was going to be no good. He was put on a permanent Invalids Benefit as a result of this and had no further problems with maintenance payments as the state took over this responsibility.

Back in Christchurch he found himself sent once more out to Hamner as a result of drinking. He did not stay there, however, for they sent him back to Christchurch and the Salvation Army's Hostel. He was only there a couple of weeks before they found him a more permanent

place to live - a boarding house in the central city. He has been there some two years now.

At the boarding house he seldom gets enough to eat, "it was a pity to dirty the plate sometimes" - John pays about \$28 a week and others pay about the same. But still, as his visits to the hospital become more frequent - cancer is beginning to catch up on him now - his landlady still keeps his room for him and she looks after him when he's a bit "crook," so he can't complain.

When John is in hospital he does not want his family to know - for he never has contact with them now.

This biography (or Life History) is not an attempt to say 'men (and these men in particular) are what they are conditioned to be,' nor is it the prolegomena to a causal theory of skid row membership, although the usual things are there: Estranged relations with father, marital breakup intermingled with booze, loss of contact with one's family, a long period of moving around, some incarceration for minor offences and then a total loss of family. These represent nothing startling in themselves, but the sequence is perhaps important.

The familiarity that develops out of this with unusual time patterns, early morning rises, together with little companionship and an itinerant lifestyle, fits easily to the skid row way of life. de Hoog notes that "movement can be an escape, like grog. Both become a way of life" (1972:61). Separation and divorce, the movement from job to job injury and hospitalization become a series of events and non-events which happen on a "fatalistic time track." (Lyman and Scott, 1970:191)

The fatalistic interpretation of these biographical events are consistent with their present world view. The biography can only come to be articulated as a series of inescapable events for consistency can only be found in such a "philosophic fatalism." On the prosaic level consistency can be found in the routinization of everyday life that aids in giving at least a modicum of respectability. Many of the concerns of everyday life are centred around controlling various implications for the skid rowers biography for he must at least "appear to be normal." Thus the biography as seen by the man himself must aid in the penetration of the present world, and the critical-objective experiences relevant to that world (cf. Denzin, 1970:416). These are the issues that are taken up in the rest of the thesis.

4. Conclusion

Skid rowers are part of a wider single homeless population which includes the casual labourer, the mentally ill, the physically disabled, and the old-age pensioner with no family ties. This study focuses on the skid row alcoholic and the world of his everyday life which is within his scope and which is centred in space and time around himself (see Luckmann, 1978:275). This Berger and Luckmann (1971) might call the "reality par excellence." The reality that the skid row alcoholic confronts is distinct from the reality confronted by the benign

pensioner or casual labourer. The skid rower's world may be shared geographically, but not phenomenologically. The everyday reality of skid row imposes itself upon consciousness in the most massive, urgent and intense manner. (cf. Berger and Luckmann, 1971:35)

A review of the literature about skid row may not only point to the distinctiveness of the skid row lifestyle, but also provide some tentative guidelines for entering and studying skid row and its "inhabitants."

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Introduction

Over past years a vast amount of literature has accumulated on the skid row phenomenon. In the following review we do not attempt to cover all that has been written but hope to cover what is considered a representative sample of the major works on skid row. Three simple divisions are made in reviewing this literature. Firstly we look at research completed by Social Workers or those associated with social agencies. Secondly we examine studies that have been completed by sociologists primarily concerned with the etiology of skid row. Finally we examine some studies that have attempted an "Appreciative" perspective through the Participant Observation method. We conclude by trying to develop some of the concerns as they arise in the present thesis and as they relate to some of the important points made by previous authors.

2. The Welfare View

A large amount of skid row literature has had a policy orientation and is concerned more with the operation of welfare agencies than with developing an inside view of skid row life. Tim Cook (1975) traced the development and work of the Rathcoole Alcoholic Recovery Project. Cook made use of research data in order to refine definitions of skid row alcoholism since the project grew out of a recognised need for a hostel for a particular

group of skid rowers known as "surgical spirit drinkers." However, it was soon realised just how varied drinking on skid row was. Cook recognised, along with others, that skid row maintains a "loose" sub-culture or "rudimentary" community life (1975:115), and thus points out the need to focus on a "total way-of-life, on the total socioeconomic and psychological complex in which skid row men live rather than on the problem of alcoholism alone" (1975:99). Cook therefore pointed to the need for co-ordination among agencies working with alcoholics.

Stewart (1975) researched skid row and the provision of social welfare services. He examined those aspects of male vagrancy which involved the personal social services of income maintenance, welfare, health, residential accommodation and the probation services. Stewart emphasised the need to refine the concept of vagrancy, pointing out that it is a Poor Law relic designed to identify certain people only in an attempt to control them (1975:8).

Both of these studies were completed in Britain, but they share a similarity with other work that is concerned with extending social services on skid row in order to bring about the amelioration of the skid row life style and to encourage system recognition on the part of external agencies serving the needs of skid row men (see Wallich-Clifford, 1974; Ward, 1971:261; Stewart, 1975:1). In other studies, glimpses into the "dim 'other world' of down-and-outs" (Johnson, 1978) are often restricted to a "residential Social Workers" experiences in running a night shelter.

Such investigations however have pointed to the sub-cultural lifestyle of skid row and to the fact that it offers a "defence against the hostile conventional world" (Cook, 1975:115). Some have noted its social organizations in the form of the "bottle-gang" affording "in-group" identity, and the general social structure of skid row and what it offers the alcoholic (Cook, 1975: 118). Others tend to emphasize the rootlessness of daily living. Some, in fact, have used Merton's theory of Anomie (1) which involves "a disjunction of society's goals and the norms for reaching them..." This rootlessness is characterised by drifting between psychiatric hospital, prison, lodging houses, reception centres, commercial and non-commercial hotels (2). These institutions become associated with a way of life, they make up the facilities that skid row men rarely leave. The problem for the Social Worker on Skid Row becomes a problem of not so much getting the man off skid row, but getting skid row out of the man (cf. Cook, 1975:32). The identification of this as a central problem has been one of the important contributions of this literature.

3. The Etiological Problem

The view of skid row in America took on, at least initially, a different emphasis. The seminal work on skid row, by Nels Anderson (1923), stresses the importance of the ecological segregation of "hobohemia" in various American cities. This was a phenomenon

1. Brandon, The Treadmill. Page 2

2. Crisis at Christmas, 1972, Page 2.

peculiar to America. So much so, in fact, that it led Wallace to state:

Skid Row is a phenomenon peculiar to the United States. It is that run-down area in almost every American city where the homeless men can and do live. It is the collection of saloons, pawn shops, cheap restaurants, second-hand shops, barber colleges, all-night movies, missions, flop houses and dilapidated hotels which cater specifically to the needs of the down-and-out, the bum, the alcoholic, the drifter. (1965)

Anderson focuses on the "the Stem," an inner-city area, that is to the hobo Chicago. Anderson explores the various "sub-territories" and how they are used, from "the jungle" - "the melting pot of trampdom" - to "Bughouse Square." He examines the role and use made of the various lodging houses and hotels found in hobohemia. "Getting by" in hobohemia involves either working at odd jobs, borrowing or begging, stealing or "Jack Rolling." (see Shaw, 1930)

With regard to the etiological puzzle of skid row, Anderson asks the question, why do men leave home? He uses this as an approach to question why men become migratory workers and hobos, as well as why they live in skid row neighbourhoods. Anderson suggests one or any combination of the following could be responsible:

1. Industrial inadequacy - those unable to keep the pace demanded by modern large-scale industry because of "feeble mindedness," physical handicaps, alcoholism, or old age.
2. Dependence on seasonal occupations with resultant unemployment forcing the men to hunt for work in various parts of the country.
3. Defects of personality - from low intelligence to

psychosis.

4. Crisis in the life a person or embarrassing situations often make it easier to leave home than to remain and face the criticisms or sympathy of the public.

5. Wanderlust - the desire for adventure, new scenes and new faces. (Anderson, 1923:61-86)

Anderson concludes by describing the relative healthiness of skid row men and their relationship with politics, the police and law, as well as the hobo's intellectual life.

Others concerned with the etiology of skid row in the United States include Bahr and Caplow (1973). These authors focus on the concept of affiliative bonds (3) and state that:

the individuals commitment to society seems to involve six major types of affiliative bonds: family, school, work, religion, politics, and recreation. Taken together, these affiliations define who the settled person is, how he schedules his days and his years, the benefits he may claim from the social order and the duties he owes to it... The fully homeless man is unaffiliated in all six sectors (Bahr and Caplow, 1973:8)

This study involves primarily life history material and focuses on such things as institutional dependency and parental affiliation in order to construct some form of etiology. Furthermore, in examining "socialization into skid row," Bahr and Caplow construct indices of identification with and interaction on skid row in order to find out just what skid row

3. see also Bahr, 1973

now offers its inhabitants. (4)

In a similar vein, but in a different country, Jordan, (1973) explores the structures of the skid row milieu by surveying 1100 homeless men in inner Melbourne. He examines the social and economic status of the families of origin, and constructs a demographic model of skid row of three groups consisting of an inner 'hard-core', an intermediate group and a peripheral group (see Chapter one, above). Jordan makes use of Bahr and Caplow's "life history" model and goes on to explore the skid rower's relationship with other people from impersonal relationships with the Police and Social Workers, to the company and acceptance found with others on skid row.

From a review of the literature it is quite evident that social workers and sociologists, notwithstanding psychologists and medical personnel, regard the problem as a prime manifestation of individual and social pathology. The movement to re-define or refine the definitions of skid row alcoholism represent attempts, in addition to modifying the moral concept, to decriminalize the skid rower's status (see Archard, 1979:16) and Stewart, 1975:3-5). Salvation, punishment, treatment and rehabilitation are the four strategies by which professionals attempt to bring about the alcoholic's re-entry into the community. Now, even Christian-based skid row projects are caught up in

4. cf. Bogue, Skid Row in American Cities (University of Chicago Press, 1963), who points out that skid row is an area that can "provide continued survival for familyless victims of society's unsolved social problems while these persons are in the terminal phase of their affliction and after society at large has abandoned all hope for them and has ceased to rehabilitate them." (1963:405-406)

expanding and reshaping the definitions of the world or skid row alcoholism. Medicine and Social Work perspectives are called in to supplement the missions and penal establishments by providing room in mental hospitals for skid row alcoholics and in constructing detoxification centres and community-based rehabilitation hostels. Archard states:

In essence the rhetoric of modern psychiatry and professional social work assumes the dominant rationale by which society attempts to control both the institutions of skid row and skid row alcoholism.
(1979:17) (5)

However, an alternative approach to the study of skid row stresses the importance of letting the subjects "tell it as it is." Three studies will now be briefly examined.

4. Toward an "Appreciative" Perspective

John de Hoog (1972), an Australian anthropologist, spent several months living in the "Haymarket" area of Sydney among the "stiffs," accepting their way of life and scale of values - even to the point of going to gaol when arrested on a trumped-up charge. Skid Row Dossier is the diary of de Hoog as he lives among the men and reflects upon his condition, their place in the world and their relationships with missions and the police. We shall quote de Hoog at length, he says:

Like any deviants they evoke both hate and guilt: psychopaths writ large, parasites, men without restraint preying on hard-earned possessions. Or they may become objects for the absorption of surplus guilt, of charity, cast-offs and

5. As we shall note in chapter 7 (Health) this also allows the skid row alcoholic to employ his own type of rhetoric in order to explain his position.

uneaten pies, a source of life to bored suburban women's fetes. Even the police and magistrates may arrest and punish from bureaucratic pity and some magistrates judge stiff's according to the time they need in prison to regain their health. Caught in a system of societary vengeance and mental compartmentalization they seem unable to redirect men to more humane sources of physical rehabilitation. In the final analysis stiff's are routed out of their retreats like rats, in the interest of public hygiene. (1972:33)

de Hoog's experiences led him to review the accepted rehabilitative postulations and he concludes that "unless the society changes to the extent of no longer producing the kind of misfits for which skid row caters, it has a responsibility to them" (1972:148). For as de Hoog previously notes, "skid row is in many ways a microcosm of the failures of Western Industrial society. (1972:142)

Whereas the above Australian and American studies note the tendency for skid row to be located in certain geographical areas - Jordan in Melbourne; de Hoog in the "haymarket," Sydney; Nels Anderson in "the Stem," Chicago; Bahr and Caplow in "the Bowery," New York - others have noted the relatively dispersed nature of the various institutions and areas traditionally associated with skid row. Wiseman notes that,

The World of skid row alcoholics is not bound by geography. (1970:XV)

And Archard notes:

... although the institutions of skid row in Britain are relatively dispersed geographically speaking, they are nevertheless connected for their inhabitants by a continuous psychological and socio logical territory. (1979:3)

Both Wiseman and Archard go on to note the importance of public rehabilitation agencies in the

lives of skid rowers. Wiseman as with Archard, attempts to give the skid rowers a voice in her analysis of social control agencies. In both cases treatment ideologies as well as inmate reaction to it are presented. Wiseman notes the skid rower's reaction to the differing definitions of his problem in various rehabilitation institutions, similarly Archard states:

In official terms the police, magistrates and prison officers define the alcoholic dossier as an offender, psychiatrists as someone suffering from a disease, the mission staff as a person morally and spiritually weak, and social workers as someone socially inadequate. (1979:29)

However, Archard takes up the "strategies of survival" by which the alcoholic meets, interprets and adapts to problems of poverty and addiction. Implicit throughout Archard's study has been the use of concepts such as "self," "interaction," "definition of the situation," "meaning," "significant others" and "socialization." These concepts Archard states (1979:174), have been used to analyze the data and thereby render possible the development of a systematic image of the skid row world.

In addition to the guiding concepts above, Archard uses three descriptive concepts. They are "subculture," "deviant identity," and "social control."

"Subculture" has been referred to when reviewing previous literature. It is simply a degree of organization of persons who find themselves suffering a common fate and who therefore come to hold similar interests. The result of participating in this subculture is for the alcoholic to assume an identity in accord with

his personal condition and status as an outsider.

Archard goes on to say:

crucial to the recognition of a deviant identity, whether acquired through the processes of sub-cultural association or not, is a prior awareness by the individual that he may be subject to a variety of social control forces that may serve to change his status from that of normal to deviant. (1979:178)

It is at this point that we can enter along with Archard the world of the deviant as it is phenomenally experienced by him in his natural environment. It was Anderson (1923) who first gave prominence to the hobo's own perspective. The task of the present thesis is to reveal further the subcultural foundations to skid row that is for the alcoholic the social "lifeworld." But first it is necessary to clear some "methodological ground."

5. Methodological Radicalism

Entering the world of the phenomenon is a radical and drastic method of appreciation. (Matza, 1969:24)

There is on skid row a foundation to everyday life that gives a sense of order and meaning to living. To come to terms with this, it is necessary to rid the rendering of this world as pathological, for, as Matza notes, "nothing but confusion is added by rendering that misery a pathology" (1969:43).

Similarly, on social meliorism Lyman and Scott note:

A consciously naive but intellectual inquiry into how social order is possible supersedes questions of policy and priority in such a manner as to make the latter not only irrelevant but also a hindrance. (1979:9)

We have attempted to enter the world at the "level" where members are engaged in creating and maintaining the social world.

In order to grasp the meanings of a person's behaviour, the phenomenologist attempts to see things from that person's point of view. (Bogdan and Taylor, 1975:14)

The view of the phenomenon is from the interior whereby the world may be interpreted as it appears to the subject. It is important to emphasize in this context how skid rower's go about the task of seeing, describing and explaining order in the world in which they live (cf. Zimmerman and Wieder, 1971:289). This is the reality that is the "object" of our analysis (see Berger and Luckmann, 1971:33).

Psathas notes that it is the taken-for-granted, everyday world of social reality which is the ground in which all other realities are constructed.

If so, it is important to know what it is that is basic, since one is concerned with the reality of everyday-life-as-seen-by-men-in-society, and one wants to learn how men perceive, experience, and construct the moral reality in which they live. (1968:513)

Given that there is a sub-cultural way of life on skid row, the task of the social scientist, in seeking to understand social reality, is to understand the meaning that the actor's act has for him. Or in terms used in phenomenology, the task is to discover how men "constitute" the phenomenon which exist for them in their lives (cf. Psathas, 1968:503). An important attitude found in this phenomenology, is that man's cognitive world is "shot through with meaning" (Spiegelberg,

in Psatha, 1968:506). Thus meanings are constructed and social reality is created out of the interlocked activity of human actors. These are issues that are taken up in the following chapter.

6. Conclusion

Most conventional portrayals of skid row life are made from the standpoint of experts and professionals who have a vested interest in eradicating problems of crime, poverty and deviancy (see Archard, (1979:36). Problems of etiology, Archard notes, are dominated by concepts of individual and social pathology.

Deviants, by definition, are said to be leading pathological, irrational and meaningless lives. (Archard, 1979:36; see also Matza, 1968:50)

Archard goes on to note that whether the typifications used to identify skid row alcoholics emanate from experts or laymen, their view of the phenomenon is constricted and partial as a result of the social distance separating the world of the deviant from that of the social control agent. However, when the investigation is open to the skid rower's definition of the situation, the world of skid row takes on a complexity and sophistication transcending the usual description of derelict alcoholics as isolated and inadequate individuals. Berger et al note:

Whatever people experience as real in a given situation is a result of such definitions. (1974:18)

Such "reality definitions" comprise the structure of the skid row "lifeworld."

CHAPTER THREE

THE LIFEWORLD

1. Introduction

We have chosen to look at the "everyday life" of the homeless alcoholic, the world of daily social encounters where subjective reality is not questioned but rather is constituted, confirmed and reconfirmed. This is the "paramount reality" (Schutz, 1973) in which the men and women conduct their daily lives. Its situationally rooted aspects plus its historical and social continuity make up the particular lifeworld of the derelict, and often homeless, inner city alcoholic. Our concern, then, is with the establishment and maintenance of everyday life within such a lifeworld.

2. The Everyday Lifeworld

In essence the lifeworld is experienced as the world with which a man must become sufficiently familiar in order to carry out the business of living (Schutz, 1970b:136). Benita Luckman points out:

Husserl speaks of 'our everyday life-world' as the world which man experiences at every point of his existence as immediately and simply given, it is an intersubjective, i.e. social, world in which man experiences the whole round of his life. It is a world of practical interest to man, a familiar world, a world taken for granted. (1978:275)

The reality of everyday life is apprehended as an ordered reality and provides a "web of human relationships." Berger and Luckmann point out:

The reality of everyday life is organized around the 'here' of my body and the 'now' of my present. This 'here and now' is the

focus of my attention to the reality of everyday life. (1971:36)

The lifeworld is "constituted" by what is experienced as "outside reality" -"specifically the world of institutions that confronts the individual" (Berger et al, 1974:18) - and what is experienced as being within the consciousness of the individual. Berger et al conclude:

The consciousness of everyday life is the web of meanings that allow the individual to navigate his way through the ordinary events and encounters of his life with others. The totality of these meanings, which he shares with others, makes up a particular social lifeworld. (1974:18)

The task of this present study is to elucidate the particular "constellation of consciousness" that the derelict alcoholic shares with others in his lifeworld. To unravel the socially significant elements, we turn to the ordering and meaning of everyday life, for, as Berger et al note, the lifeworld is "constructed by the meanings of those who 'inhabit' it." (1974:18)

The world man confronts is on the one hand full of possibilities for him to act and create, but on the other, it is a world that is imposed upon him and is experienced or confronted as an "objective reality" (Berger and Luckmann, 1971). Man acts to modify the world so that the world is meaningful to him and constitutes a meaningful totality allowing him to have a liveable life within it. This process is never an individual project but is a social process.

By the mere fact of man's sociality, this serves to produce a world that becomes the background fabric to

all other social interaction. In such circumstances, then, "world openness" is pre-empted by social order. It is transformed into a relative "world closedness" (1971:69), where the "produced world" orders and provides a background of routine which stabilizes and imposes sense upon individual actions and inter-actions (1971:75). Thus, for example, the skid row lifeworld is "enclosed" by the structures of "conventional" society. These are the structures of Welfare, the Law and Health that together appear to make up the boundaries to the skid row lifeworld.

This is the foundation to the consciousness of everyday life that is, on the one hand, experienced as an imposed reality and on the other, as being "within my control and capable of being brought within my control" (Schutz, 1971:288). Together the world is experienced as an order of integrative and sustaining meanings. It is established collectively and is kept going by collective consent.

In order to understand fully the everyday reality of any human group, it is not enough to understand the particular symbols of interaction patterns of individuals or interaction patterns of individual situations. One must also understand the overall structure of meaning within which these particular patterns and symbols are located and from which they derive their collectively shared significance. (Berger et al, 1974:62. Emphasis mine)

The lifeworld is characterised by a specific subjective orientation to the spatial and temporal ordering of everyday life. With regard to skid row we hope to explore the various spatial claims the men and women have made in the inner city. Similarly, with regard to the temporal structure of everyday life,

we intend to explore the various contingencies and routines of the daily round, thus uncovering the distinctive character of social interaction and relations founded upon the spatial and temporal structure of everyday life.

In all these instances...

...it is possible to show the necessary relation of the sociocultural, linguistically articulated and often institutionalized categories of space, time and social interaction to the underlying structures of subjective orientation to the lifeworld. (Luckmann, 1970:75).

We now turn our attention to an explication of these concepts.

3. The Ecological Foundations to Everyday Life

The daily round on skid row is characterised by a multiplicity of geographical spaces significant for the particular behaviour that occurs within them. These particular locales we have called "territories" (Lyman and Scott, 1970) insofar as they represent spatial claims in the inner city. Stable and recurring taken-for-granted and often idiosyncratic activities occur as a matter of course within each territory. The ability to hide "normatively discrepant" behaviour and identity is dependent upon the ability to create and maintain boundaries and rules of access and egress (Lyman and Scott, 1970:90). Therefore, both territory, activity and identity are commensurate with different settings allowing different latitudes of behaviour (This is taken up in Chapter Four). A central concern in this regard includes the skid rower's attempt to manage identity in the daily round of events. Clearly, the question of "fit" between the behaviour possible

and the physical environment must be confronted.

For the skid row alcoholic there appears to be little "free" territory that will allow for the expression of idiosyncrasy and the development of identity. The skid rower is left to "carve out" territory from what might be otherwise designated as "public territory." Toleration of various idiosyncratic behaviour in such places is more often than not dependent upon the degree of seclusion from the "public eye." There remains a real tension with the establishment of certain "free" territories as there is the continual threat of Police or Social Work surveillance (Also to be taken up in Chapters Four and Six). For the spatially deprived, the streets become the only place in which to pursue interests and maintain identities. Thus a skid row "home" territory (1) is more often than not found in what is officially known as public territory. Thus Cavan notes:

the areas of public places and the areas of home territories are not always clearly differentiated in the social world and what may be defined and used as a public place by some may be defined and used as a home territory by others (Cavan, 1963:18).

However, it is these particular territories that make up the social contours of the skid row lifeworld. The skid rower manipulates geographical space to suit his own designs. Thus the territorial boundaries to the social world of skid row reflect the social structure of everyday life, for the various

1. "Where the regular participants have a relative freedom of behaviour and a sense of intimacy and control over the area" (Lyman and Scott, 1970:92).

territorial claims characterize the daily round. Each territory is used in a specific way as the alcoholic confronts and seeks to live within its boundaries.

But the spatial domains are ordered by an inner temporal consistency. The lifeworld is common to skid row men when they experience together the various spatial domains measured by a common subjective experience of the temporal ordering of everyday life.

4. The Temporal

Like the skid rower's territorial tension between a sense of control over a "home" area and that area being officially designated as public, so the skid-rower experiences a similar tension in the temporal structure of everyday life. The skid rower is adrift between situations in which he feels he has control over his destiny, and those in which control is in the hands of forces outside individual direction and influence (2). Lyman and Scott note that in such a situation one response, "is to seek to maximize the area of freedom, ... the times one can be cause rather than effect" (1970:106). The social lifeworld of the skid row alcoholic provides the conventions whereby time segments may be carved out of the "raw existential world" (Lyman and Scott, 1970:189) to provide direction-giving tracks of meaning upon which the skid rower may travel through life.

Lyman and Scott utilize the concept of "time

2. cf. David Matza, Delinquency and Drift. New York: John Wiley, 1964.

track," to describe temporal periods employed by individuals, groups or whole cultures.

the time track concept presupposes that social actors conceive of periods as characterised by a dominant event or type of event, activity or type of activity, thought or category of thought. (1970:190)

For the members of "conventional society" the temporal structure of everyday life is confronted as a facticity that must be reckoned with. The temporal world is relatively "closed". Taylor et al note (3), "the real locus of social control is in the work situation." The skid rower, however, does not confront this "soft machine" of the work place. For him, the temporal structure is a relatively "open" horizon. What becomes problematical, in fact, is the establishment of routine. This contrasts with the "conventional" world, where routine is endemic. The establishment of routine on skid row is precarious, but always a possibility (See Chapter Five). Routine in the skid row lifeworld exists as a cultural convention whereby identity, vis-a-vis being a derelict alcoholic, is obscured. It provides an over-arching reality "disidentifying" (Goffman, 1968) the alcoholic from the "disreputable" world of "the bottle." The routine world becomes reality, "there is nothing beyond routine because routine is all there is" (Brittan, 1977:21), one does not question its supposed ubiquity.

3. Taylor, Walton and Young, Critical Criminology. Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975. P.83.

standing against the skid rower's attempt to establish a sense of routine in the daily round, is a cyclical nature to everyday life that betrays a "fatalistic time track."

We refer to the subjective experience that these activities are matters of obligation or compulsion, are outside the active domination of the social actor, and are vehicles of coercive or conformist rather than individual expression. (Lyman and Scott, 1970:191)

The skid row lifeworld is characterised by cycles of time that lie beyond the active control of the skid rower. Life on skid row consists of recurring patterns of behaviour both on a daily, weekly, monthly and even a yearly basis (These are explored further in Chapter Five). These cycles identify the alcoholic with skid row.

However, a major source of anxiety in everyday life is to be found in the peculiar nature of the tension which exists in the skid rower's consciousness between his sense of paramount reality and his notion of what constitutes identity (cf. Cohen and Taylor, 1976:21). (This is taken up in Chapter Seven).

5. The Social Structure and Personal Identity

The concern here is with the skid rowers self identification vis-a-vis the institutional definitions of him derived from a battery of terms employed by practitioners in their attempt to highlight personality and social deprivation problems. "Identity" is borrowed from Goffman's "interaction model" where the actor lives externally, engaging in a daily round of impression management as he has contact with and confronts the institutions that bound his life.

With regard to the skid row lifeworld, the actor is struggling to preserve an identity in the face of confrontation with the courts, police, missions, psychiatric institutions and other skid rowers.

Brittan notes,

It must be remembered that the interaction model is not only about self-other relationships, but also about the way in which participants organize their identities in order to negotiate the 'nastiness' of everyday life. (1977:111)

The vagrant alcoholic, as part of the "disreputable poor" (Matza, 1967), must somehow manage a respectable appearance from out of his spoiled identity.

"Respectability," in this sense, becomes a central concern in skid row everyday life.

"Respectability" as a lifeworld concern can be viewed as a limited commodity. It is informed by a common cognitive orientation which is an unverballed, implicit expression of an "image of limited good" (Foster, 1967). That is, in this particular instance, the social lifeworld is patterned in such a fashion as to suggest that skid row men view their world as one in which respectability, compared to the "conventional" world, is limited and exists in finite quantities (the implications of the "image of limited good" and respectability are explored further in Chapter Seven). Foster notes, that as far as the peasant is concerned, "there is no way directly within peasant power to increase the available quantities" (1967:304). A consequence of this is that the peasant can only advance at the expense of the other, this in

logically points to an extreme individualism which:

... is a position that calls for extreme caution and reserve, and a reluctance to reveal true strength or position. (Foster, 1967:311)

Similarly, for the skid row lifeworld, in the context of the Limited Good model, individualistic behaviour is seen as proper and not egotistic, for the skid rower is always in an unrelenting struggle with others for control over what he considers to be his share of scarce values.

In this context, respectability becomes a central concern of actors in the problematic dramas of mundane life (Ball, 1970:329). Just as respectability denotes a certain moral or social worthiness so moral worthiness as a social reality equals being viewed as a "conventional" member of society.

To be perceived-to-be-normal means appearing to be conventionally situated or placed... to be socially located in the of-course environment of non-reflective everyday life. (Ball, 1970:332)

By "normalizing" identities, actors put themselves in a routinized frame of reference which, Ball notes, also helps to sustain favourable definitions of self (Ball, 1970:336).

Identity is always held in precarious tension where self identity is a mask vis-a-vis identity with the world of skid row. Thus identity comes to be viewed as a symbolic interpretation of the individual as he believes himself to be (Brittan, 1977:102). It may at stages, then, lose all contact with reality as the actor attempts to "disidentify" with the skid row lifeworld. The struggle to manage an identity is often against a reality that does not confirm the view that the individual

has of himself. Thus "disidentification" involves breaking up an otherwise coherent picture by "not so much establishing new claims as throwing severe doubts on the validity of the virtual one." (Goffman, 1968a:60)

An important feature of social interaction with regard to the maintenance and establishment of a plausible sense of respectability, is the notion of "rhetoric." Ball defines rhetoric as:

... a vocabulary of specific purpose; that is to say... a limited set of symbols functioning to communicate a particular set of meanings, directed and organized toward the representation of a specific image or impression. Such vocabularies are not only verbal but also include visual symbols such as objects, gestures, emblems, and the like." (in Roebuck and Frese, 1976:55).

Rhetoric is more often than not, a form of "information control" (Goffman, 1968a). For norms regarding personal identity pertain to the kind of information control an individual could appropriately exert over his identity. The skid row alcoholic is constantly seeking to define himself as being no different from others in the face of the realities of being one who is always being "set apart."

6. Conclusion

The lifeworld of skid row is relatively unified and lacks the fragmentation that may be found in "conventional" society. Everyday life on skid row is not governed by the institutions of work, family and recreation, to name just a few, but it is characterised, in fact, by homogeneity. Unlike "conventional" society, everyday life on skid row is not split into a multiplicity of small lifeworld (Benita Luckmann, 1970), but rather

provides an overarching universe of meaning.

The spatial, temporal and social structures are integral features of this intersubjective lifeworld.

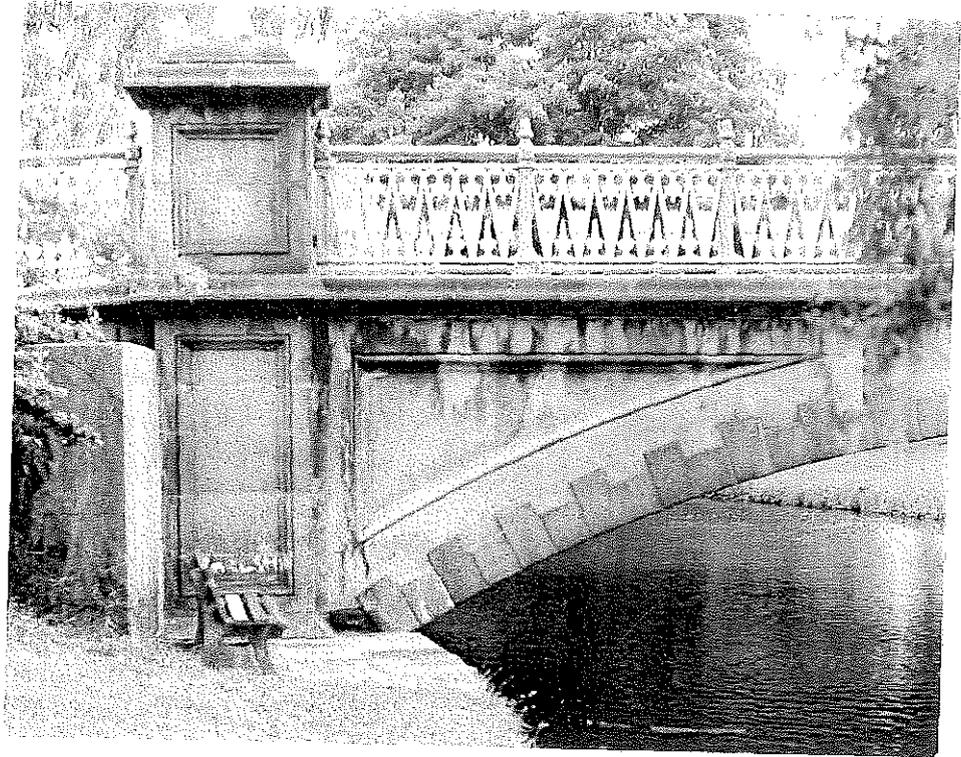
The lifeworld is not only affirmed by living in a "world" with others, but also by participating in each others "being." Or as Berger and Luckmann say,

we not only understand each others definitions of shared situations, we define them reciprocally. A nexus of motivation is established between us... (1971:150)

A particular orientation to place as well as to time manifests the central concerns of the skid row lifeworld. Both territory and temporality are used in such ways as to manage a respectable identity that is informed by a common cognitive orientation which we may call the "Image of Limited Good." Just as territoriality is intimately linked to its congruent idiosyncratic activity, so too is the routinization of the temporal structure linked to the presentation of a managed identity. These are two central aspects of the lifeworld of skid rowers.

The following chapters attempt to explore these three aspects of the skid row lifeworld. Chapter Four examines the spatial, by indicating and exploring the various "territorial stakes" the skid rower has throughout the inner city. Chapter Five explores the temporal structure of skid row, while Chapters Six and Seven attempt to uncover the social structure of skid row, firstly, in terms of the skid rower's contact with welfare institutions and the Police (Chapter Six, "Vagrant Alcoholics and their Guardians") and, secondly, in terms of the social concerns the skid rower has

vis-a-vis his "social identity" (Goffman, 1968a)
(Chapter Seven, "Respectability and Identity on Skid
Row").



"A real alcoholic is a person who goes to sleep in the gutter and pulls the water over him for a sheet."

CHAPTER FOUR

THE SETTING

1. Introduction

To refer to skid row as a single geographic locale would be incorrect. Certainly the activities of skid row daily life tend to occur within the specified boundaries of what is usually called the inner-city, that area bounded by the 'four avenues' of Christchurch (see map), but within this area there are more important sub-areas, localities, buildings and institutions that are specifically important for the skid row men. The world of skid row also extends, however, beyond the immediate geographical confines of the inner-city to include prisons, mental hospitals and rehabilitation hostels which are relatively dispersed geographically but which nevertheless are connected for their clientele within "a continuous psychological and sociological territory" (Archard, 1979:3). These, together with the streets, river banks, park benches, Welfare agencies, soup kitchens, railway station and 'pubs,' make up the institutions and facilities that skid row men rarely venture beyond. The purpose of this chapter, is to delineate the various territories the men have carved out of the inner-city and to differentiate how they are used and for what purpose.

2. Skid row Territories

Lyman and Scott describe three types of territories, namely, "public territories," "home territories," and "interactional territories" (1970:

80-96).

Public territories are officially open to all; "the individual has freedom of access, but not necessarily of action, by virtue of his claim to citizenship. (Lyman and Scott, 1970:91)

The skid rower as a member of the "spatially deprived," lives his life out in the gaze of the public eye. Main thoroughfares, the city Square, Parks, the Botanical Gardens, public bars and various streets, are all familiar as he goes about his daily round. For him, however, public territories are ambiguous with respect to accorded freedom. The skid row drinker finds he can partake in his favourite activity, freely in some areas while in others such behaviour is not tolerated.

"home territories," Lyman and Scott point out, are "areas where the regular participants have a relative control over the area" (1970:92). Thus skid rowers establish "home bars" (Cavan, 1966) and make various territorial stakes around the city that are familiar gathering places to share a bottle - e.g. the river bank, or in a park. However, a crucial concern of the skid rower is the tension between public territory and home territory. It is often the case that territory designated as home by the men, is also designated as public by the institutions of social control. It is therefore something of a misnomer to talk of home territories, for such places were always subject to Police surveillance or invasion by "outside forces."

Finally, Lyman and Scott use the concept of "interactional territories" to refer to "any area where a social gathering may occur. Surrounding any inter-

action is an invisible boundary, a kind of social membrane" (1970:95). Interactional territories tend to be characteristically mobile and fragile, they could remain in one place or could surround a group of men strolling down the street. The streets and river-bank provided the foundation to such territories. Men sometimes wandered three or four abreast down empty footpaths and sometimes through the busy shopping areas or by the river Avon, either talking or sharing a bottle. Interactional territories often involved drinking groups of men or partnerships which dissolved once the binge was over.

Different territories could afford possibilities for different behaviour. Only when the skid rower was relatively free from the public eye and the possibility of Police surveillance would he partake in his most cherished activity - drinking. Home territories tended to provide these environments where drinking and identity with other skid rower characters was obscured by maintaining seclusion. Public territories could not accommodate these latitudes of behaviour, therefore they tended to be more heavily Policed.

For these skid row men this tension was always present in every territory as we shall note in the following discussion of some of the most familiar territories of the men.

3. "The Pub" - The Bar as Territory (1)

Skid rowers used many of the inner city pubs.

1. For a discussion of the "home bar" see Sherri Cavan, Liquor License - an ethrography of bar behaviour, 1966, specially Part Three, "The Home Bar," Also see Herbert Gans, The Urban Villagers 1962, esp.P.341.

Some, however, were used more regularly than others (These are located on the map P. 6) and these tended to be the early opening pubs that were open from as early as 7a.m. The hotel bars were some of the few locations in the city that may be designated as home territory for the men. Only in the pub could men openly and freely drink together.

Most of the skid row bars were smaller "back bars" and they tended to lack any kind of aesthetic appeal to the point of being squalid. Here the men socialized with criminals, gang members and homosexuals. What may appear on the surface of things to be public territory, was in fact home territory for the skid row men and women of the inner city. Many are in and out of the same bar many times of the day, others might spend all day drinking in the same bar. As a barman noted, they cause little trouble, most being content to just sit and drink. Thus, the home territory bars can be identified and defined by their regular use by the men and women of skid row (cf. Lyman and Scott, 1970:93). They are further identified by the depositing of certain parcels, letters and other "bits and pieces" placed behind the bar serving in the last analysis as a "territorial stake" for the men and women (Lyman and Scott;1970:93). At these same hotels the manager was likely to cash a benefit cheque and keep it in the safe for skid row patronage was ensured as long as the benefit remained "tethered" to this setting. Such "sponsorship" also ensured home bar maintenance. The Regulars to these bars knew their belongings would

be safe with the hotel manager.

The skid row bar could serve as home territory for other groups, and in this regard the "homosexual bar" was particularly common. Both groups would utilize the same bar, although they would usually be seated apart. Similarly, in one inner city hotel there was a high degree of overlap between the criminal and the skid rower's world, with one hotel becoming known as the "Magistrates Court remand yard." At least one bar in the city served as territory for all three groups and was indeed the melting pot of vagrancy. However, these unofficial home areas for the skid rower, were always held in tension; there was always the possibility of encroachment and even colonization by other groups. Confrontation with "bikies" was not uncommon as we can see in the following:

Bill informed us that he had a "bit of a scrap with the Black Power boys in the Grand last night"... he said he had lost his social welfare card plus some other pieces of paper, but, he said, he rang up John at the Grand and was told someone had apparently put them behind the bar for him during the fight. (2)

With some hotels, men were able to book rooms to ensconce themselves for weekends or longer, some living for months at a time in a hotel. This enabled drinking to be undertaken with relative immunity from public interference. Two hotels were known as good sponsors for homeless men, sometimes offering the opportunity to

2. This and other such extracts found throughout this thesis are taken from my "field notes" (see Appendix A.).

complete some nominal chores in return for free booze (3).

(a) Drinking and Identity in the Home Bar

Drinking and having friends in the pub can be easily expressed in a statement made by one of the men: "he had the time if Harvey had the money."

Sociability is an important aspect to skid row drinking (cf. de Hoog, 1972:122). Many were desparately lonely as was pointed out to me on several occasions. Drink, therefore, becomes the medium of friendship and disguises the rather bald statement above.

Harvey pointed out that the "drink is the only friend you have and it's drink that makes friends for you." At another stage he pointed out that "you can make a friend in a few days in a pub." He said "you might not know their last name but you might just know their first name."

The warm atmosphere of the pub, with many people crowded about, provided the setting and a sense of being "at home" where the harsh realities that may exist outside were softened by the smoke-filled pub atmosphere. Often a number of men would sit together in the pub, thus reserving this particular area for themselves. It was in such a situation that I discovered Bill's other Identity - "Skippy". He revealed it to me as we all sat around and laughed, the table full of a confusion of glasses and jugs both empty and full. One could, then, take on a whole new

3. This was pointed out by a barman working in one of the 'main' hotels (for skid rowers) but denied by the hotel manager I interviewed. The barman said they had a floor which he called a geriatric floor comprised mostly of older men. He mentioned some would get the odd job around the place. Furthermore, this was also pointed out in the interview with NSAD and with the Salvation Army. Both people said they knew of men booking into city hotels for periods of time and getting some free booze for doing the occasional job.

identity in the pub. (4) New biographies could be constructed in this environment, where one is viewed as being socially satisfactory and even deserving of deference by others. (5)

The pub for the men was a free area where the tension of everyday life could be avoided. Possible outcomes of being banned, losing one's flat or boarding establishment as a result of some drunken debauch, are temporarily lost in the pub milieu. Such things are lost in the enjoyment of the moment. The good times would be recounted of past drinking escapades and perhaps famous, small-time, criminal activities. Past encounters can be dramatised perhaps through the Wild Western, T.V. medium:

Harvey lent over to me and said quietly in my ear, that this particular guy knew he could beat him, for he had occasion to do this one time... Harvey came around to telling this guy what it was like in the pub when someone knows he should not get in a fight, for this person knows he will be beaten by the other guy... Harvey said it was something like the old gun-fighters in the West, they had a reputation to defend so that is why they managed to get into so many fights.

4. "the localization of bar encounters in time and space may permit patrons to sever themselves from their biographies..." (Cavan, 1966:79)
5. On one occasion I encountered one of the men in a local "home" bar. He took care in pointing out to me how well he is known and liked in this bar. Everybody knew him by his nickname - "Skippy." The situation exuded warmth. In this context one can understand the rhetorical questions asked - I recorded in my field notes the following:

... he pointed out everybody knows him as "Skippy."... Bill asked me, why did everybody know him so well? After a guy came and gave him a glass of beer, he turned to me and asked, why should this guy do this?

Great importance was attached to the pub's warm social atmosphere. It was often a place to meet people and friends. Drinking was the natural corollary to the warmth and the sense of belonging that was generated in one's "soul." The fact of one's drinking friends often provided an "alcoholic excuse:"

Mac started telling me that I knew how it was, that he had actually been at the RSA the other day, he said a few of his friends came along, and he mentioned Trev and some others, and "then you start drinking." Mac explained that your friends influence you a lot.

This arena of friends was important for the men as many could move from place to place quite frequently.

Mac said he had been in the Square this morning, after he had finished his chores at the Mission. Mac went on to say he just had a few beers with his mates, not many. He said there is no telling who you might meet, mates from Auckland, Wellington or any place, they may be just travelling through and they might stop off for a short time.

Darts and pool added to the warm atmosphere. One met people through such activities which aided in viewing pub activity as part of the "normal" round of everyday/anyday events.

As Lyman and Scott point out, however, "home and public territories may be easily confused" (1970:92). The bar is essentially a public place despite the various "territorial stakes" and "identity pegs." Thus, although latitudes of behaviour may be extended to the point of accepting some routine "normal trouble" from the patrons (Cavan, 1966:67ff.), some behaviour is not tolerated by hotel proprietors. Once the benefit is spent, sponsorship is withdrawn and "bludging" - asking for money from friends and patrons - is developed, then the harsher realities of the public

bar are enforced and the men are forced from the bars. Men who become well known for being "bludgers" are banned from pubs and have to buy bottles from the bottle stores to drink on the river bank. Furthermore, for the binge drinkers the prospect of police arrest would always be considered:

Harry said they were on the piss alright. He went on to say he got himself arrested last Saturday just outside the Grand Hotel, and he said a short time later Harvey was arrested. He said he was let out the following day and he was sure Harvey was as well, but he had not seen him since then and was not sure where he was; He thought he must be out on the street somewhere.

It is to the river bank, parks and the streets that we shall now turn.

4. The River Bank and The Square

(a) The River Bank

The Avon flows through central Christchurch entering the inner-city through Hagley Park and making its exit in the North-Eastern corner (see map).

The Botanical Gardens, the Edmonds Band Rotunda, Flinders Tavern are situated along the banks of the Avon and all are well known to the men.

The river bank by its very nature, provides secluded spots sheltered from the public gaze and more importantly, the eyes of the Police. Early morning or evening drinking was often undertaken under bridges and on benches behind buildings, for these were ideal places for groups of men to share a bottle of sweet sherry or cheap wine or prepare for the day's pub rounds.

Alternatively, the banks of the Avon could offer brief respite from "the bottle." Taking advantage of the seclusion of a bench seat by the

"old man" image - walks in the gardens and Museum, and feeding ducks on the banks of the Avon.

More often than not, the river bank and Hagley Park provided ideal sites for interactional territories for they were used almost exclusively by groups of drinking men. The group itself provided the territorial stake and the bottle provided the focus for interaction and a boundary to the territory, for all those not drinking were excluded. Sites for territorial claims were unnumerable but characteristically fragile and mobile. Those that had bought a bottle sought friends along the river bank. Such drinking partnerships could be extended for a whole night in Hagley Park where a bottle of sherry would provide the only warmth, winter or summer.

(b) The Square

The Square, like the river bank, is public territory in the sense that both are open to all. By its very nature the river bank allowed men to gather unseen, whereas the Square was the confluence of city streets, shops and businesses. Infractions of the law, therefore, find less tolerance when they are so clearly in the eye of the public.

Even here, however, individual men were able to establish temporary territory on a day-to-day basis, through the occupancy of many of the wooden seats and benches. Some become more familiar to the local inhabitants and passing office workers than did others. Tim was no exception, and if he was not known by name

he was at least known by site (sic). (6)

For the most part, though, the Square was used by those men as a place to spend time before returning to the City Mission Night Shelter, or to sober up before they did so.

If drinking was undertaken in the Square, it was undertaken with extreme care. Drinking in such places brought into focus the fragility of the "interactional group" (7). With one man already established on a bench with a bottle, others would meet there, gather around just long enough for the bottle to be handed around once and they would then be on their separate ways again. (8)

Those that were less discreet, however, could not understand how others were able to establish themselves on a bench in some sunny corner of the Square. Larry, a member of the hard-core drinking group had been banned from most pubs in Christchurch and recently he had been banned from the Square as he had been picked up too many times by Police for being drunk in the Square.

6. Tim was always an easy man to find if I ever wanted to talk with him. I spent many hours talking and sometimes just sitting with him. Tim was well known to the local inhabitants (of nearby benches) and his particular site was named "Tim's corner." There were always men passing who would stop for a brief conversation and then continue on to some "more important" destination.
7. The boundaries in this context were very precise, with the men facing each other in a tight group enabling the bottle to be held inconspicuously.
8. cf. Goffman, 1971:56 and 57. "The stall" or park bench could provide "external, easily visible, defendable boundaries for a spatial claim."

The Square was declared "out of bounds" by the Police for Larry. When Larry found others of his ilk in the Square he would declare:

"How come you can sit here and not get the humpdy-dump ?"

The skid row alcoholic witnesses the gradual withering away of territories established in public areas, he experiences an extreme tension between the type of activity he wishes to partake in and public law enforcement agencies. Some are able to maintain this precarious balance more adequately than others. Tim offered a reason why he had not been "kicked out" of the Square, he said he has given abuse to no one. More often than not, men headed for the river bank or parks to find seclusion. Nowhere else can a group of men gather without being easily observed. Where a site was more secluded than others, these were used regularly by the men, for in no other territory could the men partake in idiosyncratic behaviour with such freedom. The rules of access and egress were controlled by the men defining the situation.

Once the binge was over, however, the skid rowers inevitably came to the City Mission Night Shelter for temporary accomodation to keep them going until the next benefit cheque arrived.

5. The Night Shelter

The Night Shelter began with three beds approximately thirteen years ago. Demands for accomodation grew and sixteen more beds were provided with the purchase of a house adjacent to the Mission around 1969. A few years later a new building was

located above the City Mission offices and interviewing rooms, adjacent to the two flats used by night shelter staff.

The Night Shelter is staffed by two full-time, and one part-time, assistants, and a full-time Social Worker. They are all under the authority of the City Missioner and the Night Shelter Committee.

In terms of services, the Night Shelter offers free accommodation, usually short-term, although some stay for a month or longer. Free breakfast and an evening meal are also provided. The evening meal is usually cooked by volunteers who come to the Mission for that purpose only.

Whether or not one is entitled to these services is decided by the Night Shelter assistant on duty, on the basis of an interview conducted at the time of admission.

There are three distinct areas to the shelter, a dormitory area with 22 beds, a common room and a shower-and-toilet area off the dormitory.

In the middle of the common room is an old 'black-and-white' T.V. Old chairs and sofas lined the surrounding three walls. The floor is covered throughout in white lino with grey flecks. Although it is cleaned daily by Mac - a Night Shelter regular - the design of the lino had an overall grey effect, not conducive to an impression of cleanliness. Around the chairs and sofas are scattered various tins, used for ash trays, and one large commercial ash trough. Despite these, many cigarettes end up on the floor, making it difficult to distinguish grey flecks from burns.

Consequently the acrid smell of cigarette smoke never leaves any of the rooms.

The men are admitted to the shelter at 4:30p.m. From this moment onward the T.V. is going and cigarettes are being smoked constantly. There is a brief break at around 5:30p.m. for the evening meal which is eaten with much alacrity. Again at about 9p.m. there is another break for supper. Lights are out soon after 10p.m. (9)

The Night Shelter is for some a home and a sanctuary for brief spells. The Night Shelter offers a break from drinking friends, as drink in the C.M. premises is for-bidden, it is also a permanent and "fixed" place (Goffman, 1972:52) that could be returned to. As one Night Shelter regular pointed out:

"this place is a real sanctuary for us," Mac said, "it is the only sanctuary we have. You go down to the pub and somebody buys you a drink, and then they offer you a wine and you get on to the wine then." Mac said, "they only have to twist your arm a little. The Night Shelter is the only place we can come to."

In many respects the Mission Night Shelter has a "time out" quality (Lyman and Scott, 1970:204) where a man is freed from "bludgers" and pressures from drinking friends to spend a recently acquired benefit payment. The Night Shelter is a home territory that enjoys a "Proactive status," the men knew they could return upon leaving the shelter at 8a.m. most mornings. This afforded some sense of security for everyday life.

9. The application of the "lights out" rule varied with the staff member.

At the Night Shelter the men can experience some sense of intimacy and control over the environment. In the evening there is always a lot going on in the Night Shelter with people coming and going and with packets of tobacco being passed around at various stages for friends to roll themselves a cigarette. The day's events are talked about and the next day planned even if it is only deciding to walk the streets together for the day:

Chris started telling Dave that he hadn't had a very good day with the horses, and he pointed out that he should have been backing winners when he was backing for places and vice-versa. Dave said that he should come with him tomorrow, and to this the other guy just mumbled something and there was silence again - apart from the odd snore.

The fact that the Night Shelter has a home status, is in tension with the fact that it is a "sponsored territory" (Lyman and Scott, 1970:93). When there is the violation of rules, home status is lost. Furthermore, the Night Shelter is no sanctuary from the intrusion of the keepers of public order. Police are sometimes called in to remove men that may have arrived drunk, or those who have managed

to smuggle in a bottle of alcohol (10). Those that arrived drunk are usually relegated to a verandah at the back of the mission. Similarly, those arriving after 10p.m. are also relegated to the "the verandah." As most of the men in the Night Shelter were heavy drinkers, there is some sense of a common bond between them. The sense of belonging was further enhanced with the smuggling of a bottle. One would never "top" his friends. Mac pointed out:

They are not supposed to drink up here but some of them do manage to smuggle a bottle sometimes, so they hide the bottle under their blankets.

10."...It was at about this time that Vick came stumbling up the stairs and he went immediately to this guy's bed and in the common room next to him. Vick was followed by the Night Shelter Assistant who came over to him and tried to persuade Vick to come with him, saying, "come on Vick you are not supposed to be here," at which Vick said, "well where the hell am I supposed to be?" The Assistant said there was only one place for him now and that was the verandah, and he tried once more to persuade Vick to come with him. However, Vick just said "fuck ya," and would not go. The Assistant soon gave up and before he left he said he would call the cops if he did not come, but still Vick did not move...Some time passed and we were visited by the Assistant leading two cops up the stairs. Nobody moved and nothing was said. They went through to the dormitory, for by this time Vick had gone through there also. They talked in there for a few minutes trying to persuade Vick to come with them and Vick walked out swearing at the cops. He said, "I suppose you're going to put me in the cell." The reply was, "yes this could happen Vick." Before they could get him down the stairs he walked over to those of us seated around the T.V. and pointed at us and said, "what about these bludgers, look at these bludgers," and "they're all the same," the two cops came over to him and said "come on Vick," and gently manouvered him toward the stair. Before the cops left one said "good night boys," and the others replied in a very nice voice."

However, the men could not escape the tension between their designation of this territory as a home territory and the Mission's definition of the situation as one in which men should be abstaining from alcohol and actively engaged in finding a permanent place to live. Thus, the Night Shelter was always the site for the covering up of rule breaking. When the rules were flagrantly transgressed on a number of occasions by the same drunken men, the scene was set for being banned from the Night Shelter for a period of weeks, and sometimes months. These men would either spend the night sleeping out in the parks or perhaps derelict houses, or they could try their luck with other social service agencies. Some of the men had friends with a bed-sitting-room or a flat so often they would persuade the friend to give them shelter for a short time, however, this was not without its dangers as we shall see in the following section.

6. Accommodation

The fundamental question of shelter forces itself upon the skid row community's everyday life. To have or not to have accommodation for the night is in a precarious tension. Shifting to alternative flats and other types of accommodation was an integral feature of daily living. Most of this activity took place in the eastern side of the city (see map), the heart of the boarding house and bed-sitting-room area.

Bed-sitting-rooms and boarding houses were the commonest form of accommodation among the skid rowers - a Dickensian world of rambling wooden lodging houses run by aging women. The men could come and go as they liked, being

breakfast on a Sunday and no lunch on a Saturday.

It was commonly accepted that these were the only places willing to accommodate the men - at around \$28 per week for a room and meals in a boarding house. Nobody knows for certain how many boarding houses exist in this inner-city area (11).

The various flats and rooms were, literally, "home" for the men. Virtually every man had lost all contact with family and wife, so they had moved to the single-room accommodation of the inner-city. Like the City Mission Night Shelter, this home territory was only maintained through sponsorship by others, in this case the landlady or landlord (12). With the violation of "house-rules," sponsorship was withdrawn and home territory was lost. This home territory, as with all other territories, was held in Tension with "booze" and the possible infraction of rules. There was always the likelihood of drinking friends coming around and causing havoc.

Harvey once had a flat in the inner-city of Christchurch and the winos (the "hard-core alcies") around the place had discovered where he lived. One evening he came home to find about nine guys lying on his verandah all drunk on wine. Harvey said you could see wine bottles for miles. He explained they came around to bludge.

For most of the men, "booze" is easily equated with "trouble" which, in turn, invariably has negative implications for accommodation arrangements. Bill pointed

11. The only other alternatives were the various rehabilitation and detoxification institutions in the city.

12. Most were women it appears.

out one time how he was keeping out of trouble and went on to say that:

...Once he had \$200 and spent it in one week by moving into a hotel and drinking the rest of it... He said he had taken alcohol into the YMCA once when he was staying there and it ended with him being thrown out.

Drink was a great problem when it came to maintaining some kind of plausible living condition; on another occasion I noted:

I asked Bill if he was still at the same place just next door to the City Mission. He told me he wasn't as he had been drinking lately.

As this was one of the few territories where men could drink in seclusion, some were in the habit of taking bottles of alcohol back to their rooms. In some cases this was "against the rules," but if it was carried out in an inconspicuous manner no questions would be asked. Thus, most men kept to themselves and did not bother with others in the boarding house or adjacent bed-sitting-rooms. Those that had rooms guarded them jealously, for they all knew the demands that can be made of them by the "hard-core" men on the wine and cheap sherry who had no place to shelter. One of the men was renowned for undermining living arrangements:

Fred said Larry came around one night when it was wet and cold. Larry said he wasn't going to sleep out in this stuff, so Fred said he couldn't turn him out so offered him the two chairs he had. But he said it was not long before Larry was sleeping in his bed and he was sleeping in the chairs.

As Larry was a renowned wino for "bludging" off people and turning up drunk at a skid rower's flat or bed-sitting-room to ask for more money, it was not long

before Fred, too, was sleeping "out under the stars."

Having a place to live, then, provided seclusion and a sense of control over the environment allowing the skid rower to partake in his idiosyncratic activity. At the same time a bed-sitting-room or boarding house provided a physical "front" that gave the outward appearance of stability where the "hard-cores" who were "living out" were looked upon as being unstable, homeless and thus a "real" skid row alcoholic. Similarly, those living in the Night Shelter were often associated with "trouble," booze and being "on the binge" and hence homeless. Bill tended to distance himself from this, thus "disidentifying" (Goffman, 1968a) with those he was living with in the Night Shelter:

Bill told me that they had had a bit of trouble that night at the Night Shelter and had to throw a couple of guys out, and Mac had come in drunk so was sent out to the verandah. Bill said that I could, therefore, see why he was glad to get out of the Night Shelter to live somewhere good. (Emphasis mine).

Accommodation, therefore, was an identity "front" (cf. Goffman, 1971) identifying the skid rower with "conventional" society, when, in actual fact, it often served as the "setting" for idiosyncratic behaviour.

7. Conclusion

The winos and those who drank sweet sherry are inevitably banned from welfare agencies, boarding houses and usually most pubs. Their only remaining course of action is to spend nights and days in the parks, on the banks of the river Avon and under the bridges. The fact that such men spend all their money on wine means they can no longer pay rent. When they arrive drunk at a boarding

establishment, they are inevitably "banned !" The pub allows a much greater latitude of behaviour than most public territories. The beer drinkers of the intermediate group find warmth and companionship there. However, the desperate demands of the winos and sherry drinkers for money together with their more eccentric behaviour, makes them unwelcome with hotel proprietors.

Whereas a flat or room bestowed a sense of independence on an individual, the Night Shelter and Mission usually entailed recognition of a man's dependence and the fact that once more he had hit "rock bottom" after a "binge." The Night Shelter not only provided shelter from the elements, but also from drinking friends. It was a place to come and regain strength, rest and perhaps obtain a new set of clothes from the second-hand store at the back of the mission. When another boarding house or bed-sitting-room was found then the cycle would begin once more, the skid rower would again make his way through his various territories.

This, then, is the territory of the skid row community. In each territory the men weave a web of meanings which, taken together, make up the particular lifeworld of skid row. These meanings are "reality definitions" (Berger et al, 1974: 18) for they allow skid rowers to construct a set of meanings consistent with the setting. In each setting reality is confronted as objectively given, but at the same time the skid rower is able to use the setting to suit his own definition of the situation. Thus the idiosyncrasy that is peculiar to the skid rower - that of drinking alcohol - is able to be discreetly undertaken in public places like the Square and other territories such as boarding houses and

even occasionally the City Mission Night Shelter. Other inner-city areas allow a much greater range of behaviour. At the same time, however, the skid rower attempts to maintain an outwardly respectable appearance by using territory as a "front" to obscure his drinking activities. This acts as a mask for the skid rower's identity, behind which he finds some temporary stability and satisfaction (cf. Brittan in Archard, 1979:177). When the skid rower has no other territories left but the parks, streets and river banks, then this is the bottom of the barrel, - it is associated with "real alcoholism" - there is little to hide skid row identity. As one skid row character said:

A real alcoholic is a person who goes to sleep in the gutter and pulls the water over him for a sheet.

But the skid rower still uses territory to obscure his real identity when partaking in alcoholic "binges". Similarly the reality of the pub is best defined for the skid rower by the following statement:

"But mark my words when you grow up, you'll probably find that all the decency in life you can find is in a bar, drinking with friends, real friends." (Cross, 1972:17) (13)

The shared meaning within each of these territories develops among the skid row fraternity a common awareness that allows them to navigate their way through the ordinary events and encounters of their daily life (cf. Berger et al, 1974:18). It is within these various territories that the daily round is anchored.

13. The God Boy by Ian Cross. Whitcomb & Tombs, 1972, First printed 1957.



"I can't see anybody I know so they
all must have money."

CHAPTER FIVE

THE DAILY ROUND

1. Introduction

Goffman notes that it is "the daily round that links the individual to his several social situations." (1968a:113). The concern in this chapter is to bring to light a temporal order of things related to the mundane or routine round of events in the life of the skid rower. We utilize the concept of "Time Track" (1) as time tracks are one of the ubiquitous dimensions of everyday life, "routine parts of everyday occasions" (Lyman and Scott, 1970:190). In the following sections we hope to explore types of time tracks that reveal the skid rower's orientation to time. We start at the prosaic level where the skid rower manipulates temporality in such a way as to affect perceptions of his identity.

2. A Day in the Life of...

Clearly the skid rower's lifeworld does not consist of the normal routine governed by the workplace and home. Instead it has a peculiar character of its own where the "normal" institutional categories of time seem out of place. The day does not necessarily begin at 9a.m. with work and end at 5p.m. with the family. It has a different character from this and is clearly governed by different "time keepers" at different points in the cycle. This will become clear with the three cycles examined below.

The day begins, typically, in the early hours of the morning around sunrise. From this moment on the skid rower is on the move. This pattern has been established over the years of drinking and early morning "jitters."

He will head into town through the Square to collect a paper and then perhaps to the Railway Station for a cup of coffee. Here there will be others embarking upon a similar day. There will be some, of course, who will have already found an "early opener" and have had a few drinks and bought a bottle. Others will have spent the night in the station.

If the walk through the Square to the Railway Station is not taken, then there is always something else to do, from doing some routine cleaning in the flat or boarding house room, and having breakfast, to visiting the City Mission at around 9a.m. to collect the Benefit payment and/or waiting for the soup kitchen to open at 10a.m.

With the opening of the soup kitchen the rest of the morning would be taken up either watching or playing pool and having lunch. The group would disperse around 1p.m., most walking toward town and the familiar haunts of a bench in the Square or the Botanical Gardens. Perhaps some would feed their "feathered friends" down by the Avon with some stale bread obtained from the lunch group (2).

When it was raining, however, a popular place would be the library where magazines or Journals could be read, or perhaps a comic disguised in front of a Journal (3).

2. One of the men in particular, Mac, would collect all the stale bread from the City Mission Night Shelter or the soup kitchen and take it down to the banks of the Avon to feed what he called his "feathered friends."
3. The library was a familiar haunt for many of the men who spent many hours there on wet and fine days. Most would go to the second floor where there were desks and chairs to sit and read the various technical journals that were there. One one occasion I went to the library with some of the men. While others read the daily papers in a room at the entrance of the library, I went with another upstairs and noticed that this skid rower obtained some very technical looking journal but also pulled out a comic from his pocket. He placed the comic between the leaves of the journal and held it up as if reading the actual

This could take up the rest of the afternoon through until after 4p.m., when they would once more be on the streets. Inevitably friends would be met at various places of the city, brief conversations would ensue and then on to the City Mission for the evening meal. A brief interview with one of the Night Shelter staff just to make sure no alcohol had been consumed prior to coming to the Mission, followed by T.V. watching in the Night Shelter for the rest of the evening, broken only by a brief time for a meal at 5.30p.m. Bed would be early as the day's start would always be dawn.

3. Types of Cycles

(a) Daily

For this inner city community of men and women there was a definite and regular round of events every day. The day was not empty but, on the contrary, full of these regular rounds. Walking the streets, meeting friends, feeding ducks and reading books in the library were all part of the "busy" daily round. However, city wanderings seldom extended beyond the four surrounding avenues of the inner city. The inner city streets, therefore, and all its unknown people provided the background fabric to the scene of events.

Most of the men would be active in the early hours of the morning, particularly the hard-core, who might be found looking for a bit of food, outside a Burger Bar, in rubbish tins. Others might simply be walking and might enter an "early opener" despite the fact that they would be more than likely "banned" from such a place. But they would enter just to talk to a friend. The place is another pub, and

this is just part of the day spent off the street. The streets provided an important "background" to everyday life. They saw this part of their routine of being "on the street" as being just as important as other aspects. Others, like Madge, took a sense of pride from being known by many people as she walked about the streets. She saw her round as being as regular as clockwork to the point that others could "set their clocks" by her. Madge found great pride in being known by a lot of people, from taxi drivers to Policemen.

The streets provided the opportunity to make contacts with various people and renew contacts with others once met on some drunken debauch. Thus on occasions walking around the inner city, Madge would express surprise that she is known by a particular policeman or taxi driver she could not remember having met in the past.

Inevitably the daily round was perceived in terms of "business." Various aspects of it would be recounted in great detail from the very mundane aspect of starting the day off washing two pillow cases to the excitement on the street (4). Each was recounted as part and parcel of the daily round, as there were always incidents occurring in the inner city that involved people familiar to skid row, the most obvious group being the police. Occurrences in the city involving trouble and Police confrontation could easily be encountered and/or commented on. Walking through the gardens could take on a new meaning with the discovery of some

4. As the skid rowers wandered the streets at all hours of the day and night they often came across interesting incidents. On one occasion one of the skid row women exclaimed that "it was like the morning after the night before," and went on to explain that she had been watching some police have a fight with a gang of young Maori people. On another occasion this same woman, Madge, said she found a man lying in the gutter early one morning so she had had to get

mysterious package. A package that Sam discovered on one occasion contained bus tickets and a camera. He therefore had to ring the bus depot and wait for a reply. This took time. Concern was not with time or normal hours, but with the daily round and all its possible contingencies.

An important part of the daily round was, for many, contact with voluntary agencies, from helping in a day-care centre, to undertaking chores around the City Mission Night Shelter or Salvation Army hostel. Doing voluntary work was important to some although it seldom went beyond the inchoate stage. However, the fact that it was done, still offered the opportunity for it to be designated another routine "busy" part of the day.

Thus, life is typically full of surprises and events that take up a large proportion of the day and help to relieve its mundaneness. Such events give new meaning to the daily round. They in fact provide "adventures" (Lyman and Scott, 1970:192) that relocate individuals in time and provide the opportunity for the reduction of alienation that may ordinarily be felt. In this manner a unique concern is developed for the daily round itself and all its possible contingencies. "Adventure" offers the opportunity for respite from fatalism where time becomes "humanized" and the skid rower is placed beyond the importunities of time to become its master if only for a short time - the skid rower can offer his services by returning lost packages or even taking a drunken friend to the Night Shelter. As Lyman and Scott note, "adventures thus make potential heroes of "little men," offering opportunities for enterprise and skill that fate had otherwise proscribed." (1970:193)

It was Mac who noted that the time spent doing his jobs around the City Mission would nearly take him up to lunch time at the soup kitchen, thus successfully "filling" his morning. Clearly doing this kind of voluntary work is part and parcel of the daily routine for some, just as walking the streets and Botanical Gardens is for others.

Both Bill and Madge saw themselves as an extension of the City Mission's caring ministry, although often themselves recipients after drunken escapades. Both took it upon themselves to freely give advice to various other mission clients - for example Bill took Sam to Social Welfare and made sure he got a-Sickness Benefit.

Not only was doing some kind of routine voluntary work an important aspect of the daily round within itself, but it also afforded the opportunity of slipping into an alternative image vis-a-vis the skid row image. In the face of any adverse "definition of the situation" by a skid row member, it was easy to take on the role of a voluntary worker rather than being an ally of his own kind. Thus when some members of the City Mission lunch group started accusing others in the group of being selfish, Madge's reaction to this was to state that all she knew was that she came to peel the potatoes on a Friday (5). Establishing routine, then, is an important part of the daily round, for not only does it provide an image of being "busy" but also provides an alternative image, identifying the

5. The City Mission often asked some of its clients to help out with meals and various preparations for the programs it ran, from the soup kitchen to the Night Shelter meals. On this particular occasion Madge was once asked to help out with peeling a few potatoes for the soup kitchen on a Friday. Although this was usually very ad hoc, as one was never sure whether the helper would be in a fit state to help or not, the client usually gained a great sense of self importance from helping out in these ways, as though everybody was absolutely relying upon the task.

skid rower with "conventional" society where one is always "busy."

Another important aspect of the daily round was taken up in waiting. Waiting was, in fact, a dimension of "being busy," for it was an important integral feature of the daily round. The day would often begin waiting for the benefit payment from the mission, if it acted as a budgetary agent. This would sometimes take up to two hours as collecting the payment often involved queuing as well as a short interview. As it was a necessary aspect of everyday life with some purpose, this became established as routine. Even waiting embraced the notion that "one still had little time to oneself." Much time was spent waiting to acquire a new flat, bed-sitting-room or boarding house. The negotiations were often carried out by the Social Worker attached to the Night Shelter. Thus time could be spent waiting for an interview with a Social Worker to arrange accommodation. Waiting filled a large proportion of the day so this time also could successfully be incorporated into the rhetoric of "being busy:"

Mac said he was keeping busy which he considered a good thing. He then proceeded to launch into telling me about the City Mission worker taking him down to Social Welfare to get his benefit worked out, and he reminded me that he had been to the Doctor the week before.

Such activities allowed the skid rower to use a rhetoric of "being busy" that in the last analysis, identified him with the conventional world.

However, waiting was important in one other aspect. Waiting could become a form of "time out" or "side tracking" from "time in" (Lyman and Scott, 1970) on the skid row alcoholic "binge." Like the City Mission Night Shelter,

the City Mission waiting room provided the opportunity to spend part of the day "out" from friends on the row. Men would come hours early to wait for the Night Shelter to open at 4:30p.m. Others, upon receiving their benefit payment for the day, would simply stay in the waiting room, realizing the influence of friends on drinking habits:

The C.M. Social Worker gave Mac his envelope and asked him if he was going now. Mac replied that he wouldn't for it could be a trap.

The men knew that if they drink during the day, the Night Shelter would be closed to them. Some were waiting for nothing, but came for a break, a talk, or on the off-chance of obtaining a cup of tea (6). Both "being busy" and waiting was a cyclical form of "side tracking" from skid row life. They were repetitive intermissions between skid rows main activity - drinking. If the ubiquity of the "side track" was established, the rhetoric of "being busy" was successful as it becomes a taken-for-granted aspect of the natural-order-of-things. The greater cycles of benefit payments and institutional contacts are lost to the existential aspects of daily routine. The management of a respectable image, therefore, became less problematic.

(b) The Benefit Cycle

The weekly, fortnightly or monthly benefit payment would be the most important cycle operating on skid row. It had immediate ramifications for the daily round and living arrangements. Furthermore, it was regular, for most of the men and women and could thus be relied upon,

6. The Christchurch NSAD (National Society for Alcohol and Drug Dependence) experienced similar behaviour.

thereby not only being an integral feature of the daily round, but in fact sustaining it.

Some of the men were on Unemployment Benefits receiving somewhere between \$46 and \$54 weekly. These men had to report fortnightly to the Labour Department without fail if they were to continue to obtain an unemployment benefit. They did this knowing full well that they had no prospect of ever obtaining a job, for alcoholics were always seen as being unreliable people and therefore unemployable (7).

A few of the men were on the Sickness Benefit and had to fill out monthly declarations. The older men were on National Superannuation which was a fortnightly payment of around \$110 with additional benefits. Some of the older men received the War Pension of about \$120 monthly, which would also include a disability pension (8).

Much activity is dependent on receiving the benefit cheque. It is at once the precursor to going on alcoholic binges to acquiring some kind of accommodation or in fact being able to pay rent.

Furthermore, and perhaps most importantly, money on skid row is real power; the purchasing power for alcohol and therefore friendship. Isolation and loneliness for the men would end with the purchase of a bottle. de Hoog has noted that the dollar can go much further on skid row:

7. I went with one of the men to check in for his unemployment benefit, on the way he pointed out that he was told that alcoholics are seen as worthless and unemployable because of their unreliability. Harvey had been treated for alcoholism and knew full well that he would never work again, but still had to go through the motions of reporting in for his unemployment benefit if he was to receive any money at all.
8. Information from a Department of Social Welfare publication, 1978, on benefits, and a recorded interview with a City Mission office worker in charge of handling benefits for the men. Figures are approximate only.

A rich kid can get more adulation by sharing his lollies in the local slum than with the even richer kid next door. He has only to be careful that he isn't thrashed by them and his bag of lollies commandeered. (de Hoog, 1972:22)

Moving into this kind of activity was a weekly cycle for those on the Unemployment Benefit. With the advent of pay-day most would be found in the pub or, in the case of the hard-core, on the river bank with friends. Few would be found in the Square once the benefit was out. This was echoed by Harry who said, upon entering the Square:

I can't see anybody I know, so they all must have money.

When there's money you won't find the men in obvious places, most will be in the pub.

(i) Cashing the Benefit

The receiving of the benefit predicates all subsequent action: The trip to the pub, drinking with friends, etc. Once the benefit was received the rest followed. For most this was a weekly cycle.

The benefit was usually received in the mail on a Wednesday or Tuesday (i.e. for those that did not designate the City Mission as their agent). The cheque from Social Welfare was post-dated for Thursday and was usually between \$54 and \$48 (the rate at August 1978 for the Unemployment Benefit for a single person). If a man or woman was lucky, they would receive the benefit on a Wednesday or possibly even a Tuesday. Although the cheque would be dated for Thursday, most would be able to cash the cheque on the day of receiving it. There were pubs known to accept and cash cheques for skid row men and women.

Harvey said he could now go to Baileys and cash it, have a couple there and then go on to the

Grand or the National (Hotels). He explained that you were expected to have a drink there as they were the ones that cashed the cheque.

Often the manager of a Hotel will cash the benefit for the men and as we have already noted, keep most of it in the safe for them. The manager may give them \$10 at a time to spend, and as a barman told me:

They know this is the best way, for they know if they get drunk then they are likely to either get rolled and have the money stolen or just lose it through forgetfulness.

The hotel manager usually doesn't mind this practice as they are most likely to spend the money at the same place rather than another, since many hotels are providing this service. Thus some of the Hotel managers will cash a cheque for a man as soon as he gets it.

The more elderly men, who tended to drink spirits or sherry, often left their benefit in the hotel safe. For others it was a case of getting the benefit cashed and doing the rounds of a number of inner city pubs and finally taking a crate of "jars" home (i.e. six half gallon bottles).

With the advent of "pay-day" very few people would be at the City Mission soup kitchen on a Friday. If any of the men did manage to turn up, they were inevitably drunk, the day before being "pay-day". The Wednesday group, however, was usually well attended.

(ii) Going for the Bottle

In this section we are primarily concerned with drinking outside the "pub", and drinking that entailed going for the bottle of cheap sherry or wine. The peculiar "innerlife" of skid row begins to unfold once the benefit cheque is received and cashed. It is to the several aspects

of drinking on skid row that we shall now turn, with particular reference to the cheap wine and sweet sherry drinkers.

Drinking, or "going for the bottle," provided the opportunity to humanize fatalism on skid row. Escapades with a bottle were numerous, for it provided possible adventure and a dulling of the senses to the extent that the skid rower no longer recognised the harsher realities of loneliness and single-room existence. This was "time in" on skid row that was a constant struggle against fatalism. Fred stated:

"I've been a piss-head all my life, so I'm not about to give up now."

They admitted with fatalistic certainty the fact that they were alcoholics. Therefore, everyday life consisted of attempts to dull the senses, to pass time and to humanize fatalism. "Time in" on skid row is dominated by drinking and is governed by its own peculiar sense of inner time or "duree" (Schutz, 1971 and 1973). The skid rower places himself in a particular relation to time - a relation in which he can subjectively experience both personal freedom and active control over events (cf. Lyman and Scott, 1970:192). When a bottle is bought the skid rower moves away from an environment where he may have been having some period of sobriety to a group where his friends are drinking. At this point the temporal world is characterised by unconventional time patterns. A bottle would be bought in the familiar brown paper bag in the early morning from bottle stores or hotels that were open - at least for a skid rower - by 8a.m. or 9a.m.

Men could be found in the Railway Station or on a secluded part of the river bank trying to "pool" enough money to buy another bottle of cheap sherry or wine.

The formation of small groups was often a result of the men having their benefit handled for them by some social service agency trying to help them budget - with a group they could pool resources. However, they quickly ran short of money as they drank heavily for long periods of time. This "hard-core" group was identified by hotel managers as being potential trouble makers in the bar, not so much for their drunkenness, but more for the fact of going around bars trying to borrow money. A man may be sober for some weeks, perhaps months, and they then "get the call," or as one informant put it, "the monkey gets on the shoulder." They "go for the bottle." This cannot be explained rationally and only in retrospect can any kind of an explanation be given:

Mac said to me, "I slipped last night, like a fool I went for the bottle".

Certainly, this was a cycle dependent upon receiving the benefit.

(iii) Passing the Bottle

Although a bottle will often be bought alone, a man will seek his drinking friends either in the "pub" or along the river bank.

Harvey said the other day he had met Larry on the river bank and they had drunk a bottle of piss together, they had had a few more in the pub. Harvey said the day after he went and bought a bottle of plonk and went down the river bank to drink it with one of the boys, but he said he couldn't find anyone at all, so he had to drink it himself - he said he walked all along the river bank.

Like the "pub" environment and the crowds of pool playing and dart playing people, the wino's drinking friends provided a similar sense of warmth and comradeship in the park or by the Avon. In many respects a greater

sense of temporary "mateship" would be felt as they would not just be staying in one place to drink, but would move about and stay together all night if they could share a bottle. Skid rowers could often be found in the centrally heated railway station during the night or in the early hours of the morning - the discomfort of the night's coldness may drive them there. Furthermore, moving around, involves a greater sense of adventure as the tension of moving in public places is great, the threat of arrest is always present:

Mac said Bill was drunk at the railway station a 9 o'clock this morning. He said he could not understand how he could not get arrested, for he pointed out that somebody at the railway station rang the police but he was not picked up. Mac said that he and another guy got on either side of Bill and helped him away from the railway station. Mac mentioned they arrived at the C.M. and "Captain Peter" thought they were three muskateers."

As soon as they were off the binge, however, these partnerships would dissolve, and reform when the bottle was passed once more. In these circumstances a friend is defined as the one sitting beside you and the one to whom you pass the bottle:

Tim passed the bottle to Bill and he "naturally" took it from Tim thanking him at the same time. Once he had taken a drink from the bottle he passed it to Fred who again kind of "naturally" took it from Bill thanking him also - it was all done very politely. Once Fred had finished his drink he casually passed it to me, but I - stunned - looked blank for a moment and kind of hesitantly shook my head saying I didn't think I would have any today. Bill and Fred said, more or less at the same time, of course I wouldn't have any. Fred explained that he was used to passing the bottle around, he said whenever you have a bottle you always pass it to your friend....

Partnerships exist to share a bottle and to make the dollar go a little further. The bottle becomes the medium of friendship and is the only thing that gains friendship

for the wino men. "Round drinking" provided a similar sense of "mateship" among the beer drinkers in the hotels (9).

These men would be the ones most likely to experience the "jitters." This is usually the incapability of a person to hold his hands steady and in fact his whole body begins to tremble. This poses particular problems when one is approaching the first drink of the day, the drink that calms the nerves. As one barman noted:

they just sit quietly and drink their beer and don't usually cause any trouble. He remembered one old fella down there, who used to get the jitters, and the barmaid would have to help him with his first two glasses, doubles of sherry, and, after that he would be as solid as a rock.

9. Real round drinking was where everyone in a group of men - and sometimes a woman or two - would partake in buying drinks for the group. Each in turn bought a round of drinks. I recorded one of my first experiences of this:

Harry bought another round of beer then came over to me and said, "how are you standing" at first I was not sure what he meant by this and he proceeded to explain a little further by asking how much money did I have... Harry gave me a \$2 note and said I could pay him back on Friday, and he explained that it did not look good for one guy to do all the buying. Rounds could go on for quite some time as I recorded on another occasion:

Once inside we started to shout rounds with 5oz glasses of beer, Harvey started first followed by Harry followed by Jock and then I thought I should also shout a round, and we went through this process again, with myself making a conscious effort not to drink too fast and having about one drink to their two or three. Harvey and Harry were very drunk by my standards, whereas Jock was not so drunk. However later on I had an occasion to comment on this and Harvey said that they were hardly drunk at all and Harry said he didn't even have a sparkle in his eye yet.

Round drinking provided the sense of identity with a group in this comfortable common activity. The focus of conversation seldom extends beyond the bar situation itself and past escapades, even focusing on the drinking itself.

Most of the winos would have experienced this problem, especially when they were on "the binge." Some, it appears, developed sophisticated methods of getting around this problem (10).

For Harry and Harvey, cashing the cheque on a Thursday meant not bothering much with a meal that night or Friday night, nor, for that matter, Saturday night. Monday and Tuesday, therefore, tended to be the days when most were in the most sober conditions as the benefit would have run low by this time, if it had not already been spent in its entirety.

This cycle was far more crushing for those on the War Pension since their benefit cycle was much longer, thus greater budgeting skills were necessary (11). Monthly payments would be necessary on rent, and food would have to be carefully budgeted for. However, often the benefit was "lost" as one City Mission client put it. This would lead, inevitably, to the City Mission Night Shelter, where such men would stay once they could no longer pay rent, buy food or a bottle. A few nights in the Night Shelter was a regular occurrence for many of the men, both for those on a monthly pension, and those on a fortnightly or weekly benefit.

10. Harvey said that he had the jitters so bad once that he had to get his daughter to feed him, once when he was in the pub, he could not get the first glass up to his mouth, so again his daughter had to help him out. He said some old alcoholics have a few tricks to get around this. He explained that sometimes they tie their neck-tie around their wrist and bring it around the back of their neck and pull the glass up to their mouth this way. Others, he said, buy a small bottle of sherry and go out to the 'loo' and drink it, then come back into the bar to have some drinks without getting the jitters.

11. All benefits are now payed on a weekly basis.

Those who stayed beyond three days were encouraged by the Mission to designate the Mission as agent for their benefit. Through this the Mission was able to budget for the men, giving them small payments everyday rather than the whole payment weekly, fortnightly or monthly, thereby breaking down the benefit-drinking syndrome. This, though, was never entirely successful. The Salvation Army acted similarly, making payments twice weekly on a Wednesday and a Friday. They noted that they consequently had more people drunk on those nights. For the "terminal" alcoholic, whose health was usually fragile, smaller payments were made so that less could be spent on alcohol.

This could only be viewed in the last analysis as saving their bodies, or as the City Missioner said, "allowing them to live a bit longer."

No other category of time is more important than that category governed by the benefit, for from it flows the alcoholic and vagrant lifeworld experience. This rhythm entraps the whole of life, from the contingencies of the daily round to the greater rhythms of rehabilitation and institutional cycles. Its corollaries and ramifications pervade every aspect of the inner city lifeworld, from accommodation, institutionalization and intoxicification, to respectability in everyday life.

The benefit allows at one time a sense of security insofar as one can pay rent for a room or flat hence become part of the "mainstream" everyday society. At the same time it must be seen against the commitment to drinking on skid row. The cycle of benefit payments easily becomes an integral feature, thus an underlying structure to skid row experiences. It becomes in essence an

institutionally determined category of time.

(c) The Institutional Cycle

The temporal structure of the skid row lifeworld is characterised by many types of time tracks, from daily time tracks that can become "side tracks" (Lyman and Scott, 1970) from "time in" on skid row, to a cosmic order of time found with the greater cycles of contact with "rehab" and "detox" institutions. A period in prison or a detoxification institution is, in effect, a "side track" from the normal time track, or temporal ordering of skid row. It represents "time out" from everyday life.

In many respects rehabilitation and detoxification institutions are no different from the prospects of jail and Police detainment, but a discussion of the latter is reserved for a later chapter. It is enough to note at this stage their similarity insofar as they both represent temporary breaks from the inner city and the skid row geographical environment. Despite this, most of the men had experienced at least one period in a "rehab" or "detox" unit (12). Entry into the rehabilitation and detoxification network might be through the street level kind of contact with

12. The most familiar to the Christchurch area are Sunnyside Psychiatric Hospital and its Mahu clinic for alcoholic treatment, Ferguson Clinic at Princess Margaret Hospital (a treatment and assessment unit), Hamner Hospital for treatment, and the Salvation Army rehabilitation "Bridge Program" attached to its hostel; finally only a few of the men had experienced a stay on the Salvation Army's Rotoroa Island near Auckland, which was another rehabilitation program run along similar lines to Alcoholics Anonymous. Length of stay in these various institutions was dependent upon the institution, from a determined six months on Rotoroa Island, to an indetermined time with regard to the Bridge Program, where, once the course was finished, the client/patient could return at any time for it included an "in-patient" and an "out-patient" unit. All of these programs were not constructed specifically for the skid row/homeless men character, but tended to, on occasions, have a small proportion of these men, with Rotoroa Island catering for a larger proportion of the skid row characters.

day-care/soup kitchen centres and Night Shelters or through probation or court referrals.

With regard to the latter, the Court has the most compulsion, as a local magistrate pointed out;

the choice occurs at a time when the men think they might "get-off better" by taking some treatment...

However, this certainly raises questions regarding motivation, and lends itself clearly to the view that this is just another cycle of time included in the skid row life-world. For as a Solicitor who dealt with many of the men in court said:

They just use it as an escape. If you're an alcoholic it's a very hard thing to cut yourself off from something you love passionately.

Most of the "rehab" and "detox" units and associated institutions admitted a high degree of recidivism of skid row members (13). Many of the men who frequented the NSAD office in Cashel Street were found to have been out at Hamner, and probably every treatment centre in New Zealand - often to Rotoroa Island as well.

Just as the City Mission waiting room and Night Shelter may represent "time out," or a sanctuary, from one's drinking friends, so the regular round of "rehab" and "detox" clinics must be "time out" from skid row itself on a larger time scale. Rotoroa Island tended to be the last institution to which a man was admitted after a long history of recurring institutional contact. Rotoroa Island, therefore, was for the "hard-core" who made little or no response to other treatment, or for whom the alternative

13. Both the NSAD, the Salvation Army Bridge Program and the Christchurch City Mission reported this.

was another prison sentence. One informant considered Rotoroa Island as "the end" for the alcoholics who were sent there - he had a friend who died soon after coming out of Rotoroa Island.

As we have already noted, most men looked upon their condition with fatalistic certainty. Mac explained how he had been given "hot toddies" since he was a "little fella" and that's why he is an alcoholic now. Time in a "rehab" or "detox" unit merely comes to be seen as providing some "time out" from skid row, where health and strength could be regained.

"Time out" must be viewed against the skid row commitment to drinking. The sense of comradeship that may have been experienced in some rehab. institution (where time out becomes time in) is extended to the row itself once "time out" is over. Those that once met at AA meetings would inevitably meet again back on skid row and in the pub (14). Colin, having been caught drinking at Hamner Hospital, was sent to the Salvation Army Hostel and from there was found more permanent accommodation in a boarding house in the heart of the inner city. Colin was representative of many of the men on skid row. The fact that most men and women returned to the inner city after treatment merely helped to re-inforce the fatalism of

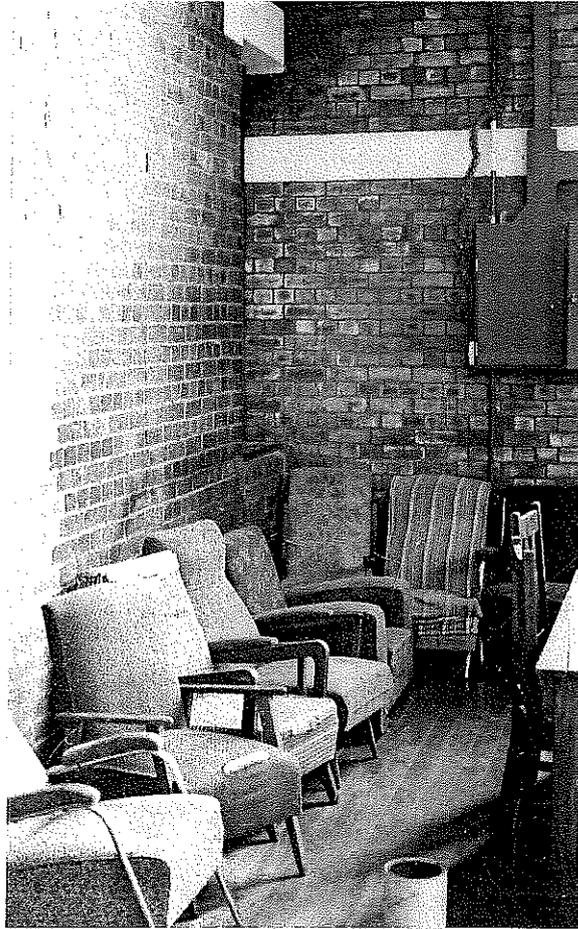
14. Harvey said he was in Mahu with Peggy when he was there for the first time about six years ago. He was with another guy as well. He said it was quite funny really when they came out for, they would frequently meet on the street and ask if any had had a drink at all and the answer would inevitably be no. But Harvey said they would then sneak off in opposite directions to different pubs and "have a few." Harvey went on to explain that it came to the point when they all met in the Station Hotel one day, so none of them could deny it then.

being a skid row alcoholic and the atrophying tendency of "time out".

4. Conclusion

From the routine of the daily round the alcoholic periodically seeks escape to an alternative time track where the passage of time is of little concern. The contingencies of the daily round offer possible adventures that break what is supposedly established as a routine, and which can provide a new sense of urgency and meaning. This is a very existential existence - for it is merely living for the moment or a possible occurrence. But the boredom of daily routine is broken and made a fully "human" lifeworld for the skid rower by joining his friends drinking in the pub and on the river bank. At this point the skid rower alters the seemingly inevitable fate of a life that is continually in tension with accepted norms of respectability and notions of self esteem, he enters the inner life and time of drink, friends and comradeship. His own commitment is to the skid row way of life. Against this background temporal fabric, the skid rower manages an identity that lies in tension with the world's definition of vagrants and homeless men as standing on the very lowest rung of the status ladder. The skid rower manipulates the temporal structure of his lifeworld to manage an identity that maintains certain notions of respectability and self esteem, if not for the conventional world, then at least for himself. The concerns with "respectability" and "identity" are explored further in the following two chapters as they relate to two further

important aspects of the skid row lifeworld.



The Soup Kitchen

"...for mankind in general judge more by what they see than by what they feel, every one being capable of the former and but few of the latter. Everybody sees what you seem to be but few really feel what you are."

Machiavelli quoted in Lyman and Scott (1970:19)

CHAPTER SIX

VAGRANT ALCOHOLICS AND THEIR GUARDIANS (1)

1. Introduction

This chapter explores the relationship skid row men have with the City Mission, the Police, the Courts, and the Alcohol and Drug Addiction Act (1966). Archard notes (1979:180) that the definition which distinguishes skid row from other deviant social systems, both among its residents and the rest of society, is skid rows reputation for being known as "the last resting place for social misfits, the 'rule of forgotten men,' and 'the bottom of the barrel.'" (Becker, 1963:9)

As a total system it (skid row) effectively segregates its members from conventional society. (Archard, 1979:180)

The various social labels "pinned" to the skid rower effectively deny the authenticity of the alcoholic's interpretation of the world he inhabits. (cf. Archard, 1979: 181). However, the skid rower is able to cushion the problems he faces when confronting various social world agencies on skid row.

2. Moral Entrepreneurs

The advantage of adopting an "appreciative" perspective in which deviants are allowed to speak for themselves is that it takes on a dimension which counterbalances the dominant views held by rule-enforcers (cf. Archard, 1979:37).

The relationship between skid rowers and their guardians is never one-sided, "each learn through interaction with

1. This title is taken from Archard (1979) Chapter Seven.

others how to define, interpret and act towards the situation they find themselves in" (Archard, 1979:174). It is clear that skid rowers acquire a particular status and identity through their socialization into skid row institutions. As the men never manage to leave the skid row lifeworld, there develops a symbiotic and mutually beneficial relationship between social control agents on skid row and their charges, Goffman notes:

"Without something to belong to, we have no stable self, and yet total commitment and attachment to any social unit implies a kind of selflessness. Our sense of being a person can come from being drawn into a wider social unit; our sense of selfhood can arise through the little ways we resist the pull. Our status is backed by the solid buildings of the world, while our sense of personal identity often resides in the cracks."
(1968b:280)

Goffman previously noted that an individual is to himself what his place in an organization defines him to be. Participation in the skid row lifeworld, together with repeated interaction with a variety of control agents entrusted with altering the skid rower's attitudes and behaviour, results in his assuming an identity in accord with his personal condition and status as an outsider (cf. Archard, 1979:176). The skid rower is seen as sick and in need of treatment, morally, unworthy and in need of salvation, socially inadequate and in need of therapy and rehabilitation, and criminal and is imprisoned. Skid row men are able to respond to these conceptions of drunkenness in such a way as to maintain an identity that

affords them a sense of stability and satisfaction. This is necessary for such institutions are integral features of skid row, they make up the institutional circuit the skid rower seldom goes beyond as they comprise, in fact, the boundaries to the skid row lifeworld. This network comprises a variety of institutionalized forms of moral indignation serving to promote and legitimize methods of social control designed to eradicate or contain the problem. These methods, Archard notes, are often promoted in the language of humanitarianism, whether they be articulated by law-enforcement agents or therapists and social rehabilitators (2).

The moral entrepreneurs determine the institutional matrix and define what is considered deviant drinking. One thing became clear in examining the relationship between the skid rowers and their guardians: the institutions of control on skid row attract alcoholics in such a way as to make their escape from this contact

2. Young notes that humanitarianism is an exceedingly suspect motive for "helping" those with social problems. It is often a rationalization behind which is concealed either a conflict of interests or moral indignation. Young goes on to say:

Moreover, unlike in the Middle Ages, we are loath, because of an ubiquitous liberalism, to condemn another man merely because he acts differently from us, providing that he does not harm others... Moral indignation, then, the intervention into the affairs of others because we think them wicked, must necessarily be replaced by humanitarianism which, utilizing the language of therapy and healing, intervenes in what it perceives as the best interests and well-being of the individuals involved. (Young in Archard, 1979:179).

increasingly difficult. In some instances various skid rowers developed a very dependent relationship with social welfare organizations. Whatever the case, these moral and social boundaries are not fixed, but become part of the negotiated reality in the skid row lifeworld.

3. The City Mission

The C.M. operated under a general ideology of "caring for" its clients and those with whom it came in contact. If a skid rower was to remain a client of the C.M. he had to accept this relationship. Thus, the client was soon socialized into being cared for and usually readily accepted the position as it involved many benefits, such as food, clothing (3) and sometimes shelter in the form of the Night Shelter. Statements like the following were not uncommon among the men:

Mac was asked if he had a new pair of shoes and a new coat, he nodded and said, "the City Mission looks after me. I can't look after myself, but the City Mission looks after me."

Many of the men and women saw themselves as being in a subordinate role to the mission, where the mission was actually "in charge" of their lives. When one of the men was sent to hospital following an attempted suicide, visitors were restricted. However, one of the skid rowers noted that the City Missioner could go and see

3. The C.M. gave packets of groceries to men who had spent all their benefit or who just couldn't get to the shop because of ill-health. The mission also operated a clothing store and could therefore re-clothe men who had spent a few nights out and had consequently soiled and ripped their clothes as a result of some drunken debauchery.

this man in hospital, "him being the City Missioner and Pete being under him and all."

Most clients accepted the assumption that the mission knew better than they did. This assumption reinforced the client's sense of plight and helplessness which in turn affirmed the mission's "rescuing ministry." Many of the skid row clients were aware of how the C.M. had helped them over the years, how, in fact, they had "been down in the gutter" and the C.M. had helped them out. When it came to arranging accommodation in some boarding house or bed-sitting-room, it was the mission that undertook any negotiating as is apparent in an incident that was reported by one of the men. Bill mentioned that his landlord had asked his social worker why his money was managed by the mission. The social worker had pointed out that Bill sometimes gave it all away. This loss of authority over their lives was not always welcomed by some men despite the fact that the C.M. saw it as being for the good of the men. Decisions over the budget (e.g. the amount to be given daily) were meant to be made co-jointly between a worker and client. What often happened was that the worker would decide and the client complied.

Whereas this whole process of dealing with the "socially inadequate" and "hopeless alcoholics" further entrenched the skid rowers "stigmatized" (Goffman, 1968a) identify, their involvement in welfare institutions also served as the background to a routine definition of their place in the world. A close relationship with the mission allowed some skid rowers to maintain a

favourable definition of self. Skid rowers acquire a particular status and identity through their socialization into skid row institutions. A sense of identity with and dependence on the C.M. Was further reinforced by a long history of contact that went back many years for some. The importance of "belonging" to some organization is demonstrated in the following example from my field notes:

Madge said she used to belong to the Salvation Army... But now she stays with the Anglicans because they have always seen her right, the City Mission has always helped her when she has needed help... Madge also talked of when the C.M. first began and of the first City Missioner. She said she used to have contact with the C.M. that far back, she used to go to a "drop-in centre" and help there sometimes, she used to pinch soup from the pot when they were cooking it up. She emphasised the fact that she had been around the C.M. for some time .

Those who became so familiar with the mission that they in fact became "integral features", were able to define themselves as part of the "routine" institutional setting. One of the women saw herself as "just an ordinary kiwi" while she helped out at the C.M. soup kitchen. Similarly clients used their association with the C.M. to give a sense of "normality" to their lifeworld. On one occasion Madge pointed out that she thought she should give the C.M. something because they helped her to look after and care for Ben - Ben being the man she lived with, who, along with Madge, was frequently engaging in drunken escapades.

However, it is clear that the creation of such a dependent relationship between a client and a welfare agency, further reinforces the sense of social estrangement and stigmatization already established through living the unconventional skid row lifestyle. Provision of

aid becomes dependent upon the skid rower's demonstration of some outward appearance of resistance to the pull of skid row. A skid rower would despairingly tell of how he was misunderstood and accused when he had only been in the Botanical Gardens for the afternoon. Mac thought the welfare agencies could not understand just having a few beers with "the boys" and "being a little late."

Demenaour was usually displayed by doing some nominal "chores", from dish-washing after lunch at the soup-kitchen, to cleaning or peeling potatoes at the Night Shelter. This tended to be an ad hoc form of payment on the part of the skid rower for the "charity" he received. It was a concrete form of by-passing the sense of alienation experienced by men who received "charity" from soup kitchens and who therefore came to be viewed as an inferior or profane person. As a worker at the soup-kitchen pointed out:

Most of these people are alcoholics you know, they have no hope... You can't rely on them.

"System recognition" (Ward, 1977, 261) posed many problems for skid rowers for identities are assumed against this backcloth. Despite the humanitarian concerns of the welfare and rehabilitation agencies on skid row, they reflect forces that typify and differentiate individuals in terms of their deviance (cf. Archard, 1979:179). de Hoog noted that the individual may even come to believe in his own inferiority, and this may militate against his own "rehabilitation." (1972:44). This, in turn, is only ratified by the penal circuit.

4. The Police

Confrontation with the Police begins with being a public nuisance. The cycle of arrest, detainment, trial and release begins. Each step serves to further reinforce and confirm the skid rowers sense of powerlessness and low social status.

Psychiatry and Social Work are involved in broadening the definitions of skid row and are now recognised as providing the only workable solution for bringing about the skid rower's return to society. Punishment as a means of achieving reform of skid row alcoholics is declared as being obsolete, and is to be replaced by treatment and rehabilitation (4). It is clear however, that because of the mere fact that so many of the men are daily before the courts, the penal circuit of arrest, trial and imprisonment remains as the central and most significant complex seeking to control skid rowers (cf. Archard, 1979:84). Archard notes,

"of all the different types of social control agents operating on skid row, it is the police that hold most relevance in the skid row man's life style. This is reflected in the fact that not only do specific illegal acts (being drunk in a public place, ...thieving) open him to legal sanctions, but his very social status and demeanour are taken by the police as sufficient grounds for interference" (1979:87).

4. 1974 Select Committee Report on the Police Offences Act, 1927, Page 22. "Drunkenness should not itself be a criminal offence and communities should establish detoxification units as part of comprehensive treatment programs for alcoholics... When the person charged is an alcoholic, there is clearly no question of the present law having a deterrent effect."

It is important to note that although arrest by the police is essential to entering the "penal revolving door," it does not mean that the alcoholic is inevitably processed through each of the main stages of the circuit. Furthermore, a formal arrest did not often take place, although skid row men would occasionally spend the night in a police cell. Probably the most frequent kind of contact skid rowers had with the police took place without a formal arrest. There were provisions in Police instructions whereby the officer could merely take the drunken skid rower home (5). A skid row woman pointed out that upon coming out from the pub and sometimes falling over on the footpath, she would be picked up by either a Police car or a taxi.

Many other occurrences were recounted of when skid rowers had been walking along the street with a bottle in the hand and another in the pocket, and were picked up by the Police. Dan recounted, with amusement, the occasion when the Police took him back to his flat - he thought he was bound for the Police cell.

However, the course that occasionally followed was a night in the police cells to sober up. The "prisoner" was usually released the following morning on Police bail, to appear before the Magistrate's Court

5.1974 Select Committee Report on the Police Offences Act, 1927. Page 21. "Some witnesses criticised the futility and even cruelty of dragging the alcoholic vagrant through the courts... Police instructions already permit the Police to take drunk person home, or to arrange for them to be taken home, without the need for arrest and charge."

at a later date. If he pleaded guilty, this was the end of the matter, and he would be fined a nominal \$4, which is usually the bail, and then released. The reasoning behind this recognised the fact that they had little money and there would be little point in ordering a fine they could not pay. One magistrate pointed out that generally the desire is to "get them off the streets being a public nuisance." (6) The modus operandi does not appear to extend beyond this.

Just as the publicans could "ban" men from the public bars and the City Mission could ban men from the Night Shelter, so, too, could the Police ban men from various "public territories." The ongoing Police contact points to the precarious existence of "home" territories and the ever present threat of violation and contamination of these territories by the Police.

As conflict with the Police was frequent, the relationship between the Police and the skid rower was one of ambivalence. Men could speak of friendly relations with various policemen as they came to know the Police on the beat. But it was not long before a friendly relationship was broken with confrontation. The Police could "stick their noses into situations" where an "alcy" became argumentative with a fellow drinker in a local hotel.

When it came to sleeping out, Police surveillance was always something to be aware of. An old skid rower told a story in the C.M. Night Shelter of how he managed to sleep three consecutive nights in the Units at the

6. Recorded interview with magistrate, see Appendix A.

Wellington Railway Station, surprisingly, without disturbance from the Police. He was aware that the Police must have known about it, but he accepted the tolerance demonstrated. This particular alcy was also very much aware of the crucial time not to be seen in the station. Others who slept out in various parts of the city were also aware of when it was necessary to move on.

When an alcy was on the move around the streets or to and from the Railway Station, the possibility of Police confrontation was always present. Walking the streets while drunk was a danger that most of the men were conscious of. Skid rowers are keenly aware that they are judged within the court system not so much for what they do, as for what they are. (see also Archard, 1979:74).

5. The Courts and Prison

Wiseman (1971) uses the term "assembly line justice" to refer to the rapidity by which cases were dealt with in the court system. Little was found to suggest otherwise in the Christchurch Magistrate's Court. Large numbers of people were processed daily by the solicitors and magistrates. Inner city alcoholics were usually assigned solicitors to aid in their defence. However, despite the provisions of legal aid and the fact that the daily solicitor assigned cases to other solicitors, there was still a sense of expediency when it came to dealing with the large number of cases before the courts. One solicitor who was familiar with dealing with many of the skid row defendants pointed out:

"There is such an urgency about this sort of job, that every day, you know, you go back to your office, and you've got the list of people who are in trouble and you've got to do the best you can for them on the occasion as quickly as you can. Once that is over it's sort of forgotten, and the urgency of the next job, you've got people coming along all the time, it's a continuing cycle."

On most mornings those charged with being drunk in a public place appear before the number one magistrate's court, and are dealt with rapidly as large numbers of people, "problem people" (7), are being dealt with. The skid row character appears repeatedly before the court.

Wiseman (1973) asks the question of the magistrates, "why is there not a conflict with his self image of judicial compassion for the individual and scrupulous attention to legal niceties?" As Wiseman notes, this conflict is often resolved by falling back to the "alcoholism-as-a-illness" view of drunkenness, where defendants are redefined as patients. One magistrate heavily relied upon concise probation reports, and upon other extraneous social characteristics. Alternatively, sentences can be couched in humanitarian relationalizations where jail sentences are always "for the good of the 'patients':"

...you put them in jail for a month and that sort of thing, get them off the streets and away from liquor for a while. It's probably very hard on them, but there are regular medical advisers there and they see what's happening to them (cf. de Hoog, 1972:142).

Although prison sentences are widely recognised as being obsolete for achieving the reform of the skid row alcoholic, court and prison still remain integral features

1. Recorded interview with magistrate.

in the absence of extensive treatment services. Prison sentences serve only as brief interruptions to the homeless man's drinking career, they serve merely to further separate the skid row men from the rest of the community.

Many of the men had spent short times in prison and returned once more to the inner city. Such temporary absences were an accepted part of life. A friend would be "in the country" for a few weeks or months. In fact it was expected that a least some would be in prison at any one time (8).

Inability to keep up maintenance payments to wives divorced years before, also resulted in being sentenced to prison. For these men, maintenance payments were a constant source of trouble. Two of the C.M. clients had spent three or more prison terms for not paying maintenance. For one of them, it was not until he was on the permanent benefit, that he could be free from maintenance demands.

The fact that men sought secluded spots to consume alcohol, was not only a result of being banned from public bars, but also in response to Police surveillance and arrest under the "habitual drunkards" clause of the 1927 Police Offences Act (9). Under Section 41 of this act, the skid rower could eventually face the prospect of jail if he had been arrested for drunkenness several times within the last six months. The skid row man is, then, very much aware of Police presence. There is little surprise when a man finds himself in the Police cells for the night

8. I recorded in my field notes the following statement by one of the men: "Dan said that he thought that all the usual crowd must be in prison today."

9. See Appendix B - "Vagrancy Law."

and/or the magistrate's court the next morning. Of crucial significance within the penal circuit is the enforcement of the 1966 Alcohol and Drug Addiction Act for its ramifications extend beyond a mere prison sentence.

6. The 1966 Alcohol and Drug Addiction Act -(10)

The 1966 Alcohol and Drug Addiction Act (hereafter A and D Act), is an integral and bounding feature of daily life. The A and D Act points to the ambivalent relationship the vagrant alcoholic has with the law. He has to cope with being seen as "sick" and unable to cope with his dependence on alcohol (and therefore in need of rehabilitation), and as criminally liable. At the same time the inner city skid row man does not accept passively the imposition of the A and D Act.

There are three important points that have to be made concerning the Act. Firstly, a person who is brought to the attention of the court, can be committed to a psychiatric hospital unit (11) if two medical practitioners certify that he or she is an alcoholic and in need of treatment. Secondly, once a person is committed under the Act, it can be "held over" them for a maximum of two years. However, they can be granted leave after six months, but can also be recalled within

10. For its place in the history of vagrancy law, see Appendix B.

11. Again, we are specifically referring to Sunnyside Hospital and its Mahu Clinic and Princess Margaret Hospital we also include Hamner Hospital for alcoholics. Sunnyside would be the usual place where the "A and D Act" person would go. Also see Section 10 (1) of the 1966 A and D Act.

the two year period. The final important point to make that is directly pertinent to the homeless alcoholic, is that if a person is not co-operative at all, then a warrant of arrest can be issued (12). In such a case the Police arrest the man and take him to the Police Station to be examined there by two Doctors.

The A and D Act is a serious imposition on the homeless man's lifeworld situation. Most other common charges against him in the courts end with six months imprisonment at the most. But the possibility of being detained in a mental institution and repeatedly being recalled for up to two years, is a much greater imposition and interruption to his way of life.

Such legislation must be seen against the skid rowers commitment to skid row. Compulsory detainment was recognised by all concerned as of limited value. A magistrate pointed out:

It's of limited effect because of the fact that there is no medication as I understand it. It's an internal application thing, but unless they are reasonably co-operative we can do nothing much more than hope and hope.

And as a Court Chaplain said:

A magistrate can put them in a mental hospital for up to two years, OK, well where's the motivation...If he's put there by some magisterial order then the motivational aspect is suspect.

Most of the men and women were familiar with the Act as it was often talked about in the soup kitchen or in the Square. Most could speak with some confidence, letting "A and D" slip quickly and easily from their lips. The A and D Act was part of the small but integrated communication network.

12. "Orders for Detention and Treatment," S.9(4).

Little was ever communicated within the skid row community with the exception of certain common activities - travels, past jobs, drinking, the Police etc. (cf. Anderson, 1923:20).

On one particular morning, Harvey had been in court and was remanded for the second time on a drunken driving charge. Later in the afternoon he stumbled on Tim in the Square. He expressed concern, in his drunken way, at the prospect of having the A and D Act "slapped" on him. Harvey was aware of the likelihood of being recalled and picked up by the Police once on leave from the hospital, he pointed out, "anybody can ring up and say you're on the booze, and they'll pick you up again."

Many of the older men and women had already spent terms in hospital rehabilitation units and prison. They were aware, therefore, of the effect of a "bad" record when it came to recommendations for rehabilitative treatment. So Tim pointed out that around 1966 he was recommended for rehabilitative treatment. However, he only had to point out his record of having a number of convictions prior to this. Similarly Harvey could expose his record of having spent terms in prison and various rehabilitation units. Thus Harvey knew that it would be unlikely he would have the A and D Act served on him. The "natural" consequence is, then, another term under the "public drunkenness" charge. This charge is, therefore, a more common and, supposedly, more serious charge, for as a local magistrate pointed out:

...say they get it (conviction for public drunkenness) three times within six months, that becomes a more major offence and you put them in prison for a month and that

sort of thing...(13)

7. Conclusion

The fact that most sentences are meted out to the skid rower "for his own good" raises serious questions of "individual freedom" as a principal value in a democratic society. This is especially pertinent when they can be forced to fund the cost of treatment. Even when the skid rower is remanded for treatment, all that rehabilitation seems to involve is an attempt to prevent him drinking himself to the grave, or to keep him out of prison. It is a convenient way of keeping the skid rower off the streets and out of the public conscience for a short while. A local magistrate pointed out that being arrested and put through the criminal courts get derelict alcoholics "off the streets and being a public nuisance." Earlier he pointed out,

"I'm often sorry to see an obvious alcoholic brought to us in a criminal court. I wonder whether that's the real place for it, although it's a public disgrace certainly, even young men in their teens are swept up out of the gutter, and I tell them so."

Thus, despite the fact that criminal courts and prison are of little effect on the skid row character, they still remain the most common form of control over skid row men. The skid rowers, in turn, manipulate the system to suit their own ends. Often men will be given a choice of either prison or treatment; they will choose treatment if it means an easier term of absence from

13. The 1927 Police Offences Act S.41(a) states that it is possible to get up to three months imprisonment for a person found drunk in any public place. Also see Appendix B.

the normal daily round on skid row. When it comes to the A and D Act, however, most are fully aware that a long history of being in and out of rehabilitation and detoxification clinics can free them from the severe impositions of this act.

It is against this background fabric that the skid rower attempts to negotiate his way through "the nastiness of everyday life" (Brittan, 1979:111). Frequent - drunken - contact with the Police, for instance, can take on a new and less stigmatizing form for the skid rower. Upon walking down the street a man or woman may actually seek out the identity of a particular Policeman just to see if they are known to them. It can come to the extreme situation where, for Madge, the Police became her escort wherever she goes; "you might not be able to see them but they are always just behind in a Police car keeping an eye on me."

Institutional contact and confrontation at all boundaries are couched in a humanitarian language pregnant with moral indignation, where the skid row "type" is dealt with and not the man or woman. From social welfare to the law, the skid rower is confronted with ambiguities and ambivalence. The institutional definitions of his place in the world are that of being an alcoholic, hence "sick," and, on the other hand, of being poor and disreputable, hence a "client" and a "criminal." This chapter has attempted to examine the way the skid rower is processed and how he responds to his guardians. Within this kind of institutional complex the skid rower tries to establish a sense of identity in the cracks or interstices that allow him to

act out his sense of personal identity. But:

Identities are bargained for, and once established are put on the market at a higher price. This means that identity is not considered to be a fixed quality. It has to be constantly confirmed in a complex matrix of social exchange. (Brittan,1977:177)

The skid rower uses various mechanisms in order to secure a mask that presents, if only temporarily, the proper demeanour necessary for the definition of self as a morally worthy or "respectable" person. (Ball,1970:339). The following chapter attempts to examine the response of the skid rower to the institutional definitions of his identity.



"It gives us courage, it helps us through the day. We have our moments but we come around again."

CHAPTER SEVEN

RESPECTABILITY AND IDENTITY ON SKID ROW

1. Introduction

The skid rower views his world as one in which the "Limited Good" Model prevails (Foster, 1967), for he knows that there is no way directly within his power to change his personal identity in the face of institutional definitions of his place in the world. It has already been noted that the skid rower's first commitment is to drinking and the skid row way of life. The skid rower notes with fatalistic certainty his commitment to "the bottle" - one man admitting that he "married the bottle." At the same time, skid rowers attempt to throw doubt on their personal identity, for norms regarding personal identity pertain not to ranges of permissible combinations of social attributes but rather to the kind of information control the individual can appropriately exert (Goffman, 1968a:82).

Ball notes:

respectability is a major aspect in the management of the practical but problematic affairs of the everyday/anyday life. (1970:327)

The skid rower knows that the moral order consists as

perceivedly normal courses of action - familiar scenes of everyday affairs, the world of daily life known in common with others and with others taken for granted. (Garfinkel, 1964:225)

By disidentifying with his own group, the skid rower seeks to control the information communicated concerning his personal identity vis-a-vis being a skid row alcoholic,

and to place himself in the routine world of everyday life that is for him part of being a "conventional" member of society.

This chapter attempts to investigate this lifeworld tension. Our first concern is with the way the skid rower "distances" himself from his skid row "role." Our second concern is with "health" and the way it is used as rhetoric to obfuscate the symptoms of drinking.

2. Identity and Social Distance

The skid rower is continually struggling to maintain enough self esteem to "get by" in the face of adverse definitions of his low social status and dubious personal identity. Archard notes that,

...alcoholics learn to construct a status system which, psychologically, permits them a degree of self esteem not accorded to them by inhabitants of the conventional world.
(1979:35)

"Identity norms" (Goffman, 1968a) pervade the definition of every situation the skid rower finds himself in. The pub drinkers hold the street drinkers in low esteem, while among the latter, sweet sherry and cheap wine drinkers are considered lower than the beer drinkers. However, in the face of his own group and in the face of institutional definitions of his place in the world, the skid rower attempts to "normalise" his conduct.

Those men who are on the wine and sherry know they have hit "the bottom of the barrel " (cf. Becker, 1963), for it was widely recognised that this was the "hard stuff" that "really did destroy your brain" and was extremely "hard on your body." For those who had come off wine and sherry, or who no longer mixed with those who drank on the river bank, there was an appreciation of the

"step up" they had made. As one man said: "It is really good flattening with Harry because there is no pressure to continually drink and to drink wine.."

For those who were the hard-core winos, wine and sherry performed a positive function:

Mac said we all need courage every now and again, - "it gives us courage, it helps us through the day." Mac pointed out that, "we have our moments, but we come around again."

This group more than the intermediate group, tried to utilize "conventionalizing identity norms," as the hard-core man had a greater need to conventionalize his identity since he is the outsider par excellence. The hard-core man attempts to disidentify with his own group in order to make his own identity appear as "normal." Goffman notes that the "normal" and the stigmatized are not persons but rather perspectives (1968a:164). The skid rower attempts to employ a "normal" perspective and by doing so can become extremely "situation conscious" in his conduct. I noted on one occasion:

When Neil came home to the Night Shelter, he took his suit jacket off, then his tie, unbuttoned his shirt slightly, removed his shoes, walked to a chair and, moaning slightly, gingerly lowered himself into it.

This has an all too familiar ring about it. These attempts at "normalised" behaviour allow the skid rower to "distance" himself from his own group. The individual may not so much deny his "role" vis-a-vis skid row, as his virtual self that is implied in the "role." (cf. Goffman, 1961). Disidentification with the skid row world and his role in it, allows the skid rower to distance himself from skid row activities and thus enable him to

look with contempt upon others of his ilk who may be "on the binge." As we have already noted, the skid rower is continuously trying to conventionalize his identity in the face of the stigma associated with skid row alcoholism. Goffman notes:

...it should come as no surprise that in many cases he who is stigmatised in one regard nicely exhibits all the normal prejudices held toward those who are stigmatized in another regard. (1968a:164)

As far as the skid row alcoholic was concerned, he exhibited all the normal prejudices toward those of his own group. Distancing techniques were never collectively attempted. Each individual man struggled for himself, often against ridicule from his fellows and stigmatizing labels from the institutions of social control on skid row, to attempt to maintain his own sense of respectable personal identity. It was often the case that a man would ridicule or rebuke a fellow skid rower by calling him a "bloody alcie," a "wino," or a "piss head." This is part of the struggle for status among skid row men.

The skid rower is always one who, if not already discredited, is at least potentially discreditable. Whether one or the other, disidentification aids as a form of information control concerning the skid rower's stigmatized identity.

The skid rower's first commitment to drinking is not a reflection of irrational and pathological personalities, but involves an organized and finely spun web of meanings which were created as a workable answer to problems of addiction, homelessness and stigmatization. All skid rowers are involved in distancing themselves

from others on the row in order to get by or "pass" (Goffman, 1968a) as a conventional member of society. The skid rower is able to use "health" as a mechanism to "pass" not only when he is confronted by members of the conventional world, but also by others on skid row from whom he wishes to disidentify in order to obtain for himself a sense of personal respectability. The following section attempts to explore the place of health in this and the tension involved in the "rhetoric of health."

3. Respectability and the Rhetoric of Health

Health is on the one hand an external control on the alcoholic's daily round, but is on the other, a practical and managed aspect of everyday life. For, despite the adversity of physical and psychological illness, the deprivations associated with homelessness and chronic poverty - vitamin deficiency, pulmonary diseases and other ailments - are countered and given meaning by a network of social relationships structured around the alcoholic's central activity - drinking (cf. Archard, 1979:64). The following section examines, firstly, some of the health related problems that have led some to live within the inner city and become part of the skid row community; and secondly, the role of "rhetoric" associated with the field of health and the way it serves to obfuscate the relationship between alcohol and health.

(a) Health as a Factor for Skid Row Membership

An important number of the skid row community were men who were pushed to this area by forces beyond their control. This group was made up of ex-psychiatric patients and men who had lost their jobs through accident and injury

and who were incapable of working again.

They found it easy to associate with the hard-core alcoholics and other drinkers of the row, as they occupied the same world both geographically and phenomenologically. Both faced the prospects of wandering the streets at the opening of each day and having to "keep busy." Many, therefore, found company and acceptance in the warm atmosphere of the inner city bars. Some of these men, of course, did not drink and instead had a regular round of walking the streets and watching T.V. in the psychiatric half-way houses.

One man had had a coronary and could not return to his bus driving job. Another had a partially paralysed arm through a motor-bike accident, and another had epileptic fits and found it difficult to hold down a job (1). These men accepted with an air of fatalism the fact that they would no longer work. The only security could be found in the permanent Invalids Benefit or the not-so-permanent Sickness Benefit. But such fatalism was also characterised by periodic "escape attempts" (Cohen and Taylor, 1976) where "the bottle" offered a nice nullifying haze for the harshness of reality. Such attempts were both ubiquitous, heroic, comic, powerful and pathetic, but ultimately entrapping. The only hope for them was to blur the boundaries of paramount reality so they could manage an identity somewhere between skid row and the conventional world. Health as rhetoric was crucial for this concern.

(b) The Rhetoric of Health

Health went beyond being a simple criterion for entry

1. With regard to this latter man, handling timber was his line, however, when he fell sixteen feet from a stack of timber they told him he couldn't have a job because of his epilepsy. He did not mind admitting that he turned to the booze when he shouldn't have, but there appeared nothing for him left to do during the day.

to skid row, to becoming a form of rhetoric that had its inspiration directly from the "normal" world.

Hoggart notes;

When people feel that they cannot do much about the main situation, feel it not necessarily with despair or disappointment or resentment but simply as a fact of life, they adopt attitudes towards that situation which allow them to live a liveable life under its shadow, a life without a constant and pressing sense of the larger situation. (1958:92)

Thus health is re-employed as a form of rhetoric that could explain a man's pale and/or discoloured appearance. It effectively manages to put ill-health in a "normal" context.

Two important functions arise out of this. For those that couldn't pick the code, the rhetoric of health was, firstly, when it was appropriate, a front line of defence - a man could never be sure whether his real identity vis-a-vis skid row was known or not. Secondly, and most importantly, it served as a means by which an alcoholic could define himself as no different from any other human in situations where he is always being set apart by others.

(i) Rhetoric as defence:

This was not just associated with individual attempts, but collusion could exist between drinking partners to cover up the absence of the other.

The absence of a friend may be explained by merely saying he is at home, sick, in bed (2). The contingencies of

2. For example, Bob explained the absence of Bill by saying he was sick in bed. However, later another explanation was offered by a friend who suggested that as it was pay day yesterday, Bill was at home getting "stuck into a bottle."

the daily round dictate that in various regions such cover-up is necessary if the skid rower is to have at least a nominal form of control over information that may betray his social and personal identity.

(ii) Rhetoric as a disidentifier

Even in the face of his own group, the skid row alcoholic may still partake in rhetoric that identifies him with the "normal" world. This practice is at once both dangerous but defensible, for the line between being sick and suffering from the consequences of some drunken escapade is always difficult to define. But, as a result of the extreme individualism of the image of Limited Good, this was always held in tension with fellow skid rowers. Disidentification was dangerous, for it went against the general rubric of fatalism, where respectability is only available in limited quantities. Thus others on skid row would be quick to undermine rhetoric for it was in tension with their understanding of the rules of living as defined by their fatalistic worldview.

Health problems were innumerable, thus providing countless opportunities for the alcoholic to play the "normal role" (Goffman, 1968a:164). This desire to be viewed as "morally worthy" in the face of an adverse definition of the situation could be taken to the extreme and go beyond just recuperating in bed, to reading the Bible when ill. As one of the elderly women said,

I always like to keep it (the bible) handy,
I read two or three chapters and then I feel
much better...

Of course she always kept her Salvation Army Hymn book beside her bed too, as she liked to sing to herself when she was not too well.

However, the extreme ambivalence of this woman's identity with skid row was exposed when she could say on the one hand that she finds comfort in reading the bible, and on the other, swear to a friend that she remembers making it home one night from the pub and at the same time tacitly admit she did try to cut her wrists once she was home.

Health-related rhetoric served as a means to disidentification with skid row and was therefore an important feature of the daily round.

In Goffman's terms rhetoric was a form of "front" (Goffman, 1971), a staged performance designed to hide skid row affiliation and to maximize the presentation of self. This concern was informed by the common cognitive orientation of the image of "Limited Good." That is, in this particular instance health was patterned in such a fashion as to suggest that skid row men view their world as one in which the desired things of life, compared with those in the conventional world, are limited and where "respectability," most importantly, exists in finite quantities. If a skid rower could say he was "not well," this, more often than not, put drinking in the routine framework of having bad health. In this context the results of some drunken debauch would be conventionalized and located in the "of-course" environment of non-reflective everyday life. Health, therefore, was the background fabric to the construction of this "of-course" environment.

(c) Alcohol and the Routinization of Health

Having "a-'turn'-that's-all" aided in placing the alcoholic, even when it's very unlikely, in a routinized

framework and therefore as nothing out of the ordinary, as if most people at one stage or another would expect to be in the same position. Being sick, in one instance led a man to Accident and Emergency at the Public Hospital. When he rolled up his trouser legs to show various cuts and abrasions, it was clear he had "had a fall." He also managed to lose his glasses on this occasion. Such "a turn" was still couched in the rhetoric of health, as were many such falls which resulted in a person "not feeling so well."

"Being sick" was not always rhetoric associated with drinking, but could become a "real" corollary of alcohol. This is clearly the case with many of the health problems found on skid row. For the drinking man, health failure is always imminent. As Anderson notes, "it (i.e. periodic drunkenness) aggravated any latent weakness he may have, and if he does not go to hospital after a debauch with lung trouble, or rheumatism, he is at least lowering resistance to these and other diseases." (1923:135).

Hospital experiences therefore, were common on skid row and became an important aspect of everyday life. Whereas a man might have, firstly, admitted that he had been drinking lately, he would also point out that he had a coronary and had to spend two weeks in hospital. However, more often than not, he would add that the hospital decided to keep him in a little longer just to give his heart a rest from the "booze".

Many had spent time in hospital as a direct result of drinking, one such man had been admitted in various parts of New Zealand some eighty times. In fact hospital

experiences were recounted with a smile, where the experience itself became more important than the actual reason for being there. Clearly, when a man recounts escapades of nurse avoidance just to have a smoke, while recuperating from a heart complaint, then this reinforces the idea that despite the fact that "good times" may be had in hospital, "home" is in skid row.

Time spent in hospital becomes of prime importance, rather than the actual complaint which, to all intents and purposes, is dis-regarded. It is reduced and routinized to "smokes" in locked toilets and other such games of cover-up, and which in the last analysis, is reduced to the most mundane and routine of all statements:

"The Sisters are really nice people though."

The hard-core man eats little, if anything, when he's "gone for the bottle," thus is even more susceptible to disease and malnutrition - there is in the end little resistance. On some drinking escapades food would not be eaten for up to two weeks except for perhaps the occasional pie at the pie cart in the centre of town. Therefore, the risk of malnutrition was high. Most of the hard-core actually looked older than they were, being thin and scraggy, for the years of wine and sherry drinking had told on their appearance. As they became older the frequency of hospital visits would increase as resistance to various health pathologies were lowered, for few ever sought medical assistance in the early stages of illness.

After a debauch, refuge would simply be found in the City Mission Night Shelter or the Salvation Army Hostel, where strength would be regained ready for the next round.

However, it was not unusual for some to end up in the Police cells and prison or rehabilitation units, as they performed the same function.

Nowhere was this commitment to skid row seen to be more strong than in the case reported by a Social Worker, where the client's landlady had allowed him to take a bottle into his room as she knew he had been in some pain recently. Six months later the client had died while receiving treatment for secondary cancer.

Within six months of this man's death, four more of this inner city community of twenty eight men and women had died. The lifeworld of the vagrant and alcoholic is extremely harsh and no more clearly is the harshness expressed than in the health related problems on skid row. Health becomes an integral feature in the everyday battle to maintain enough self-esteem to live. This irony is expressed in health related rhetoric where even awareness of impending death can be pushed aside by routine life on skid row: In one instance a man suffering from terminal cancer in hospital, anticipated getting back into the daily round of collecting the benefit cheque (3) - the most pervasive routine on skid row.

4. Conclusion

Health is one of the few conventional institutional areas skid row men have frequent contact with. They utilize it as a form of rhetoric, firstly, to control

3. Notes from a visit to a City Mission client in hospital with terminal cancer. Only weeks after the visit the client died.

the type of information they give about their identity (for health as rhetoric serves to successfully obscure the relationship between alcohol and having bad health) and, secondly, to aid in placing themselves within the "normal" taken-for-granted world of everyday life.

Thus a routine image can be presented despite routine on skid row being problematical and a scarce resource to be utilized whenever possible. As Brittan notes, the routinised world is reality, and its supposed ubiquity is not questioned (1977:21). The rhetoric of health, therefore, conventionalizes ill-health where it is a result of alcohol.

CHAPTER EIGHT

- CONCLUSION -

THE REIFICATION OF THE SKID ROW WORLD-VIEW

The purpose of this concluding chapter is threefold; Firstly, an overview of the previous chapters is given. Secondly, the overview is used to develop and discuss the skid row 'world-view' to place it within some general framework. Our third concern will be to briefly examine two areas for further research, while taking into consideration the methodological precedents already established.

The life history with which this thesis began provides an indication of the skid rower's "philosophical position" (Denzin, 1970:417). The biographical events were interpreted as a series of fatalistic occurrences over which the individual had little control. The tension between having a sense of relative control over one's environment and being subject to forces beyond one's active control, is manifest in all aspects of the lifeworld, from the spatial and temporal to the social relationships the skid rower has with the institutions of social control on skid row.

The skid rower uses various sites about the city to partake in his idiosyncratic behaviour. At the same time he hopes to manage the presentation of his identity. Some territories hide his drinking behaviour better than others, and it is here that he can feel "at home" in the skid row lifeworld. In other territories, however,

he has to be careful to manage at least an outwardly respectable appearance. On the one hand the skid row territory is 'closed', for it is bounded by the 'four avenues' that delineate inner Christchurch, on the other hand, the territory is relatively open, for within this area the skid rowers, particularly the hard-core, are constantly seeking to establish territories that hide their behaviour. One of the men pointed out, as we walked past a school in the inner city, that he would be likely to sleep in such places when he had a bottle and a friend. He mentioned they would either go behind a building or into the toilets to consume their "bottle of booze." Similarly, Church graveyards were "known" sites as long as one went to the centrally-heated railway station when the sun came up. These are the secluded yet open spaces in which skid rowers drink and at the same time manage identity. Some territories are comparable with a respectable identity, while others are commensurate with drinking. The skid rower emphasized the former in order that the latter be obscured or hidden. Uses of territory can only be understood from the skid rower's subjective point of view.

Similarly, everyday life on skid row has its own standard time which is intersubjectively available. Skid row, in fact, comprises a network of time tracks by which the skid row inhabitant can journey through life. These temporal periods allow him to manage activity and identity in such a way as to give sense to the business of living. Brittan notes that the individual sees himself as exhibiting consistency over a given time-span. At the prosaic level, notes Brittan, "consistency is located

in the routinization of everyday behaviour" (1977:83). By routinizing particular "time tracks" (Lyman and Scott, 1970), the skid rower attempts to "disidentify" (Goffman, 1968a) with skid row and to establish a "front" (Goffman, 1971) that defines him as a "routine" member of society.

A man has always a little time on his hands. Calendar time was unimportant, there is no schedule to keep, no deadline to meet. Many aimlessly wandered city streets. These same people frequently missed trains that would carry them to some other skid row, and they often missed other events. "Time in" on skid row had a different quality about it, for it was governed by events unique to its inhabitants. Routine in the "daily round" was often overshadowed by receiving the benefit cheque, for this was the start of "going for the bottle" that would be characterised by nights out under the stars, drinking partnerships on the river bank and in parks.

However, time had a cosmic dimension for the skid rower which indicated that he was on a "fatalistic" time track. For often institutional contact and confrontation was outside of his active control insofar as they traced the ritual degradation of his identity. Rotoroa Island is seen as the "end of the road," perhaps, the last resting place for skid rowers. Hence, the skid row lifeworld is characterised by fatalism. The skid rower is caught up in a tension between fatalism and wanting to humanize his world, while at the same time wishing to remain a "main-stream" member of society.

The skid rower's commitment is to drinking, thus it is around this central activity that he organizes his life both temporally and spatially so that it provides an order of integrative and sustaining meanings.

The totality of these meanings, which he shares with others, makes up a particular social lifeworld. (Berger et al, 1974:18)

In the face of a hostile physical environment the homeless skid row man constructs a cultural home that provides a sense of security before the terror of nothingness. The lifeworld provides an overall structure of meaning (cf. Berger et al, 1974:62) within which the skid rower can live his life. As such the lifeworld provides a sense of identity that allows him to manage his apparently stigmatized identity in an unrepentant manner before "conventional" society. For it is within the interstitial areas left over by the institutional structures of modern society that the skid rower is protected by identity beliefs of his own:

he feels a full-fledged normal human being. (Goffman, 1968a:17)

Respectability is an important concern in his everyday life. Respectability, in fact, is everyone's problem all the time:

respectability or the attribution of normality and thus moral worth and its recognition seems for Everyman a necessary precondition to ordinary social conduct, to the pursuit of goals and the favourable experiencing of self. (Ball, 1970:359)

Perhaps for the skid rower respectability is even more important because of his dubious identity.

He has to work harder to make respectability appear as a background expectancy, he has to strive to attain this as a 'residual rule of "conventional" culture.'

Whereas the "normal" member of society seeks escape from routine and "the world as burden" (Cohen and Taylor, 1976:200), the skid row man seeks to "carry a burden," to routinize and conventionalize his everyday life. Ironically the skid rower seeks "imprisonment in life" in order that he may feel "at home" in life. However, the skid rower's commitment to drinking makes him the outsider par excellence. Howard Bahr notes:

The primary problem of the skid row man is not alcoholism. Nor is it advanced age, physical disability or moral inferiority. Instead the primary problem is that the combined weight of stigmatization which accompanies many different kinds of human defectiveness is focused upon a few men in a distinctive neighbourhood. (1973:287)

For the skid rower to disidentify with the paramount reality of skid row, he seeks to show commitment to the arrangements and routines of everyday life in the "conventional" world. He tries, in effect, to establish an "interstitial" identity between the various institutional definitions of his identity and his notion of what constitutes identity in the "conventional" world.

The skid rower becomes, in fact, his own moral entrepreneur, for his stereotypes about the row and its men are just as harsh as those of more respectable citizens. (Bahr, 1973). Thus, John MacIver, could note with scorn that he was a fool, he could have had a business just like his father if he hadn't "gone for the bottle."

The lifeworld provides a 'mythological microcosm'

that allows the skid rower to avoid as much as possible a total identification of him with his socially assigned typifications. That is, he tries to 'manage' not being seen as 'nothing but that type'. The management of his identity is in tension with the reification of his world-view that is attached to his role as a skid rower. The skid row lifeworld allows a man, on the one hand, to excuse himself as "just another alcoholic," and on the other, to disidentify with skid row in order to present a "conventionalized" identity.

The world produced by the skid rower is apprehended by him but is not recognised as his product. The skid rower's alienated consciousness is organized in such a way that it becomes part of his lifeworld. It is not experienced as psychological conflict, anxiety or lostness (cf. Berger and Pullberg, 1966:61). It is simply apprehended as a reified state around which the individual organizes his life.

The sector of self consciousness that has been objectified in the role is then also apprehended as an inevitable fate, for which the individual may disclaim responsibility. (Berger and Luckmann, 1971: 108)

This is clearly seen in many of the statements made by the men, e.g.:

Mac said (having arrived drunk at the lunch group), "oh I can't help it, I know I'm an alcoholic."

For the skid rower there was no choice, he was assigned to this position by fate, he became resigned, therefore, to a fatalistic world-view.

However, even while apprehending the world in reified terms, the skid rower continues to produce it (cf. Berger and Luckmann, 1971:107).

By drinking the skid rower is not gambling with fatalism, he is not wishing to alter the seemingly inevitable (cf. Lyman and Scott, 1970:192), but he is humanizing brief moments when he can actively dominate his environment by blurring the boundaries of the paramount reality of "conventional" society that is constantly pushing in on the skid row lifeworld. The prospects and possibilities of trouble are momentarily forgotten in this important activity. Whereas for the "conventional" member of society, alcohol can be the way of escape from the world of work, for the skid rower this is just another aspect of the skid row lifeworld. For the skid rower "these free areas are just woven into the tapestry of life." (Cohen and Taylor, 1976:200)

Fruitful Areas for Further Research

In trying to elucidate the lifeworld of the skid row alcoholic, our desire was not to put oneself "on top" of the topic, but merely to begin to understand the underlying and taken-for-granted meanings that make up the skid row lifeworld. There are many more aspects of everyday life that need to be further explored in order to fully appreciate the world of skid row men.

One of the most common phenomenon of the skid row lifeworld is the boarding house experience. As we noted earlier, it was not clear just how many boarding houses and/or bed-sitting-rooms accommodated skid rowers. However, clearly it is a peculiar world of old wooden

houses that hide a pathetic and sterile social world.

As Harvey Zorbaugh noted in his study of rooming houses:

The rooming-house is a place of anonymous relationships. One knows no one, and is known by no one. One comes and goes as one wishes, does very much as one pleases, and as long as one disturbs no one else, no questions are asked.(1)

This is not dissimilar to the way of life found in various "half-way houses" run by social welfare institutions for skid row alcoholics and ex-psychiatric patients. Both these types of accommodation are important features of the skid row lifeworld.

Similarly, there are many territories that skid rowers made use of that were not able to be adequately covered in this thesis. The Railway Station, the Public Library and even public toilets were all sites that skid rowers use. Clearly, greater 'ethnographic' detail is necessary if one is to understand more adequately the relative importance of these locales.

However, any account of skid row must take into consideration the role of social control agencies. These agencies occupy a central place on skid row in that they help to determine the subculture's official institutional matrix.

Skid row alcoholics have frequent contact with both government welfare agencies and the courts and prisons. Both Wiseman (1970) and Archard (1979) pay special attention to the official reactions of social control agencies on skid row. Wiseman states that the

1. Harvey Zorbaugh, The Gold Coast and the Slum (University of Chicago Press, 1929) P.75

agencies' official policies have ramifications for the skid rower's way of life. Archard concludes:

Thus courts and prisons, common lodging houses and reception centres, mental hospitals and rehabilitation hostels, are all settings that separate and sustain the development of a subculture. (1979:179)

Whereas Archard did not pay particular attention to prison "underlife" as far as the alcoholic is concerned, Wiseman tried to explore prison treatment of skid row alcoholics. However, both studies point to the importance of starting from the "Appreciative" perspective (Matza 1969), where reality is "socially constructed." (Berger and Luckmann, 1971). Archard states:

A naturalistic theory on the social reality of deviant action and social control, in which the analysis emanates from the world-view of protagonists engaged in that reality, forces the sociologist to treat deviance and social control as a subjective process. (1979:200)

If one is to gain a greater understanding of daily routines, then the researcher has to observe and participate in these various aspects of everyday life. This is necessary if the researcher is to see and understand how the men view and define the situations as well as taking into account definitions of the situations made by the agencies of social control.

Furthermore, as David Matza notes (1969:24), first hand contact with a deviant world seems the surest way of avoiding reduction of the phenomenon to that which it is not, thus violating its integrity. Notwithstanding this, Lyman and Scott note that:

The sociologist, seeing man as a stranger, emphasizes the problematic nature of his existence... He is annoyed by the

importunity of unwarranted fellowship; estranged by the coldness of unrequited affection; threatened by the powers of the mighty; frightened by the terror of the unknown; and doomed by the inevitability of death. And always he is confronted by life - things, events, people - which demand responses, require interpretation, cry out for meaning. (1970:12)

The skid row alcoholic must be studied in his "natural habitat" - the world, that senseless void where he continuously strives for meaning, undertakes action, wrecks havoc, and, in the very process of so doing, produces and re-produces his world (cf. Lyman and Scott, 1970:27). In this everyday context of skid row, Lyman and Scott's "Sociology of the Absurd" is, perhaps, made even more poignant.



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(c) The Following New Zealand Statutes

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- (vi) Alcoholism and Drug Addiction Act 1966

APPENDIX A

METHODOLOGY

1. Introduction

The following appendix attempts to, firstly, set some of the background that allowed this research to take place and secondly, to examine the role of the participant observer given the particular theoretical concerns that I had. Following this, three decisions that were made while undertaking this study are explicated. These decisions had three methodological ramifications as well as raising some particular ethical problems. Finally, the observational role as it relates to the taking of field notes is examined.

2. The Christchurch City Mission

Access to this inner city community of alcoholic men and women was gained through the Christchurch City Mission (hereafter C.M.). (1) There were three main reasons for entering the community this way. Firstly, I have had intermittent contact with the City Mission from 1973 onwards. As a result of that contact the City Missioner at the time became a personal friend, and was able thus to introduce me to the present City Missioner. The second major reason was that the C.M. operated various programs that involved "voluntary workers." Since I had worked as a "voluntary worker"

1. The City Mission is an auxilliary of the Anglican Social Service Council of the Diocese of Christchurch.

once a week for most of 1973, I thought this offered possibilities for gaining access to people I wanted to come to know. Finally, the C.M. operated a "drop-in-centre" (known as the "Open Door") and a Night Shelter that these men and women frequented (2). Both of these programs often required voluntary help to cook and prepare meals.

This was the prolegomena to entering the derelict alcoholic lifeworld. The City Mission provided the role that allowed me to be part of this community -- I became a voluntary worker.

It soon transpired that the C.M. was going to close down its "Open Door" and establish two new 'programs' to cater for the two main types of clientele. Upon the closure of the "Open Door," a caravan "drop-in" centre was established in the Square for the teenagers and predominantly Maori youth who used to frequent the old "Open Door." The other program was for the C.M.'s more elderly clients and it operated two days per week in a local church hall. An inner city church provided similar program on two alternative days of the week.

This program catered for many alcoholics and inner city single men and women. They would come to the hall some time after 10a.m. for morning tea and stay for lunch at 12p.m. and leave at closing time around 1:30p.m. I worked as a voluntary worker together with three other voluntary workers to prepare lunch. The fact that there were three middle-aged

2. It should also be noted that the Salvation Army operated a Men's Hostel that catered for some men on a night-by-night basis similar to the C.M. Night Shelter - see below.

"volunteer" women preparing the morning tea and lunch, allowed me to spend much of the time actually talking and socializing with the lunch group clientele, rather than having to spend a lot of time "working" in the kitchen.

3. Participant Observation

...The task of the ethnographer is not merely to describe events as he might see them from his observer's perspective, but also to get "inside" those events to see what kind of theory it is that the natives themselves inductively use to organize phenomena in their daily lives. In terms used in phenomenology, the task is to discover how natives "constitute" the phenomena which exist for them in their lives. (Psatha, 1968:502-503)

Psathas goes on to point out, that the challenge is to understand the meaning that the actor's act has for him (1968:510). Being a "participant observer" furnished the possibility of entering the taken-for-granted lifeworld that is the foundation to subjective meaning (3). The situation is analogous to Schutz's "The Stranger" (1971:91-105), and the "situation of approaching." Here Schutz describes the position of one "who tries to be permanently accepted or at least tolerated by the group which he approaches" (1971:91). "The Stranger" undergoes a process of transformation whereby he slowly becomes familiar with the alien culture to the extent that he is able to know how to find his way

3. The general methodological approach used in the research was primarily informed by R. Bogdan and, S. Taylor, "Introduction to Qualitative Research Methods A Phenomenological Approach to the Social Sciences," 1975; subsequently by approaches similar to J.T. Howell's "Hard Living on Clay Street," 1972; Elliot Liebow's "Tally's Corner," 1967; Sherri Cavan's "Liquor License: An Ethnography of Bar Behaviour," 1966, and Roebuck and Frese's "The Rendezvous," 1976.

about in it, to be able to participate in it as an ensemble of practices (cf. Giddens, 1976:161). (4)

What becomes a critical topic of investigation is the "construction of social reality" from the activities of social actors. Schutz has stated the problem in a slightly different way:

...The cultural pattern of the approached group is to the stranger not a shelter but a field of adventure, not a matter of course but a questionable topic of investigation, not an instrument for disentangling problematic situations but a problematic situation itself and one hard to master. (1971:104)

The process of "approaching" can now be traced through three methodological steps taken in the study. Access to the "situation in general" has already been described. The present concern is with access to the "specific situation," to the actual "lifeworld" of underlying taken-for-granted meanings that are being constituted and re-constituted by actors.

As Dean et al note, the aim in using 'unstructured methods,' is to "make a virtue of non-standardization of frequently re-directing the enquiry on the basis of data coming in from the field to ever more fruitful areas of investigation." (1969:20) Data collection does not take place in a vacuum, for the "perspectives and perception of social reality are shared by the observed and the observer." (Vidich, 1969:86).

The following, therefore, is an attempt to trace the methodological implication of the three steps taken while doing the research. Each step represents an

4. Cf. Schutz, the strange fact or previously unknown become compatible and consistent with previous warranted knowledge. (1971:105)

attempt to re-define the researcher's place in the skid row lifeworld. What is crucial to the participant observation method, is the ability to secure the data within the medium, symbols and experiential worlds which have meaning to the actors.

Its intent is to prevent imposing alien meanings upon the actions of the subjects.
(Vidich, 1969:79)

(a) The Soup Kitchen

I have already pointed out that I worked as a voluntary worker in a soup kitchen/lunch-time "program" run by the C.M. This was one of two such programs, the second run by another Church on the southern side of the city (see Map P.6). For me, this involved being committed to voluntary work two mornings a week while often frequenting the second group merely as a friend of the men and women who came to both. I began as a voluntary worker in the last week of May 1978 and worked through six months to the first week in December.

Dean et al note that acceptance depends, among other things, upon the researcher having a legitimate role in the eyes of the informants (1969:69). Being a voluntary worker speeded acceptance in the present case as voluntary workers have always been 'integral features' of the C.M. for many years. Thus the clientele could easily accept my new face among the other voluntary workers.

I was able to spend much of my time in casual conversation with the men. I soon established a closer relationship with a couple of men plus one woman, who thereafter acted as key informants. By only the second week one of the men talked freely to me of backgrounds to various lunch group clientele -

if only to 'distance' himself from the same group. These key people were informed of my interest in the work of the mission and its people and the fact that I was trying to do some research. My explanation seldom went beyond these simple terms (5). Although most listened to this brief explanation, informants appeared to take little cognizance of the "research role." Informants were, in fact, happy to accept my presence, most entering into further detail of people they knew, but, more especially, also of their own biography and experiences. One must add that with respect to biographical detail, this was always given with much reserve.

A note on the Setting

The hall (6) used for the lunch group was adjacent to a large grey-stone church. It was situated just across the road from the large office blocks of the inner city. The would-be large hall looked miniscule beside these towering buildings.

As it was a hall used by other church groups, the situation required a certain amount of preparation. Tables were pulled out, chairs put around, the heaters were lit and, most importantly, the pool table was pulled out from the wall. Once lunch had officially finished, by about 1-1:30p.m., there was some putting away that had to be completed. There were always a few men and women willing to help with these jobs.

5. Dean et al: "the fieldworker needs to have a plausible explanation of the research, that makes sense to the people whose co-operation he seeks" (1969:69).
6. For purposes of simplicity, we shall restrict our comments to the lunch group where I was a voluntary worker. In both cases physical and temporal arrangements were the same.

Upon entering the windowless hall one became totally cut off from the outside world - the passage of time was relatively unimportant.

The kitchen was quite separate from the activity area of the clients. It was the domain of the voluntary workers and only limited access was given to the men at special times. The "volunteer ladies" seldom ventured beyond the kitchen, they saw it as very much their territory. They had little reason to come into the larger part of the hall unless they desired to communicate with the men or women of the group. The geographical separation of the kitchen, and the mere presence of the ladies and their belongings established their territorial claim. This territorial claim, combined with an element of distrust of the men on the part of the ladies, ensured that both groups kept within their boundaries. This was clearly demonstrated when the women first came to the kitchen:

They both said the kitchen was very good, although Mrs M. was worried about where to hang the coats they had, she said they can't hang them in the toilets because they had to be somewhere where they can keep an eye on them. Mrs S. said they will just have to hang them on one hook in the kitchen.

In this 'backstage' region the ladies maintained distorted views of the men that further consolidated their sense of social distinction. Thus the volunteer role was in tension with being a researcher, and was always potentially restrictive of observational opportunities.

The fact that I spent most of morning-tea-lunch-time in the hall with the men quickly aided in my being

designated as something more than just a "voluntary worker." This enabled the establishment of some close relationship with some of the men and women as I expressed an interest in their conversation. Through deliberately spending more time among the clientele of the lunch group, I was able to control definitions of my role in the situation. (cf. Bogdan and Taylor, 1975:51)

The various daily concerns were soon gained from informants in the lunch group. Knowledge of these concerns was further extended as I began voluntary work in the C.M. Night Shelter in the middle of July continuing through to the 6th December, 1978. Once more it involved helping with the meal once a week. As with the lunch group, meal preparation, as far as I was concerned, was minimal, as there was usually one other person working as well. Once the meal was over, by 6p.m., I spent the rest of the time watching T.V. with the men through to 10p.m. In this setting regular times were spent with one of the Night Shelter clientele - who belonged to the 'hard-core' group (7).

Working in both the lunch setting and the Night Shelter, ensured ongoing contact with the men. The two settings tended to be complimentary in the sense that the lunch setting provided a casual and respectable atmosphere where no explanations were needed, whereas the Night Shelter existed for those who were homeless thus explanations were often given for a man's presence in the shelter.

This contact was an ideal starting point for the next stage of entry into the skid row world. This was

7. For a description of this setting see Chapter Four, "The Setting."

the world of bars and drinking territories.

(b) Beyond the City Mission

It was often the case that drinking and visiting various pubs followed the lunch group as few had little else to do once lunch was over. Thus on a number of occasions I left the lunch group with the men to spend the rest of the day walking the streets and drinking in the pubs with them.

This was managed with two key informants who understood my task, and thus "sponsored" my appearance in pubs and on the streets. They deliberately introduced me to many of their friends pointing out that I was "wanting to find out about life." They recognised the need for the researchers to "experience it" for himself. They therefore took me to places where "it was all at." Being introduced to various skid row characters by these two well-known drinkers, eased social relationships between myself and the men to the point that most would immediately embark upon a resume of some of their drinking and 'living-out' experiences.

I became, in effect, "one of the boys." One entire night was spent with these two men. Drinking was started in the early afternoon of the 25th October, 1978, after the lunch group, it carried through to 9p.m. when bottles were taken back to their 'ramshackle' flat. By 10p.m. both had passed out on their bed only to begin drinking again at approximately 5a.m. through to 9a.m., when they passed out once more.

This was not without its difficulties. Some of the men insisted that to see it "as it really was,"

one had to drink. This on occasions led to tensions between maintaining an observer role while at the same time being a participant. I was aware of the problem of drinking and having to remember and record events afterwards. These 'escapades' were carefully managed when it came to the amount of alcohol consumed.

Contact with a third informant was established through "city wanderings." By spending many hours in the Square a close relationship was established with another of the men who only occasionally came to the lunch group. Tim spent most days, virtually all day, sitting in the Square with the occasional bottle of sweet sherry. This was found to be a good opportunity to sit and "just talk." Some valuable 'life history' material was gained from these conversations. Tim was also able to point out a number of characters of skid row as they passed through the Square.

A stay of three consecutive nights in the C.M. Night Shelter in the final week of field work, added valuable material for the daily concerns. One night was spent in the Night Shelter on the 30th October plus various nights spending many hours watching T.V. with the men, aided in establishing a certain familiarity with the setting and the inhabitants. However, spending three consecutive nights in early December, allowed a glimpse into the "underlife" of the Night Shelter, the various strategies employed in getting a "bottle" in, personality clashes and conversations that were the result of the day's activities. These nights also allowed glimpses into early morning routine as the men had to leave the Night Shelter by 8a.m. I was therefore also able to leave with various groups of men and walk

the streets or spend time in the Square.

These last three nights in the C.M. represented an end of time spent in the field as such. An attempt was made to "round off" the data accumulated and 'fill in the gaps.'

Excursus - Ethics

Going "beyond the mission" posed particular ethical problems that were brought into sharper focus with the possibility of 'trouble' occurring in the hotel bars or on the streets with the contacts that were made with the Police. This type of tension must be managed by every Participant Observer who attempts to 'submerge' himself/herself in the everyday life of the protagonists in the phenomenon under study. The tension arises out of one of the important assumptions undergirding the participant observation method: the continuous attempt to carve out a role as observer and participant within the context of interaction situations being observed (cf. Archard, 1979:205).

Many field-workers have noted the importance of being honest with respect to the research intentions and problems associated with "overidentifying" with the group under study (see Howell, 1973: Methodological Appendix; Dean et al, 1969c; Bogdan and Taylor, 1975:51ff). At no stages in this research did I attempt to 'pass' as a skid rower or alcoholic - age precluded this possibility. The task of the participant observer, Archard notes (1979:205), is to maintain a close yet simultaneously distanced relationship with the subjects.

I made my presence as a researcher/observer

known. By allowing relationships to be established on such a basis, this helped to ameliorate and to overcome the possibility of physical violence or being involved in petty criminal activity. The mere fact that one mixed with skid rowers in many "back bars," placed me in situations where I was on the fringes of such criminal behaviour. To remain true to the skid row world it is necessary to take cognizance of such activities, however, they were always men with a peripheral association with skid row, thus not the 'real' subjects of investigation. Furthermore, the fact that I remained an overt researcher, tempered any possibility of being involved in criminal activities, although it did not stop some skid row men talking of some of their past petty criminal activities.

Given the fact of the 'marginality' of this group, and the fact that I was collecting information that welfare institutions could use in a discriminatory way against individual men, my field notes were kept strictly confidential, myself and my thesis supervisor were the only people who read them. All subsequent writing-up used pseudonyms for skid rowers and "skid row hotels and bars."

As Matza notes (1969:25) the decision to take an "Appreciative perspective," delivers the analyst into the arms of the subject who renders the phenomenon, and commits him, though not without regrets or qualifications, to the subject's definition of the situation.

...his aim (i.e. the analyst) is to comprehend and to illuminate the subject's view and to interpret the world as it appears to him. (1969:25)

(c) Interviews

(i) Life histories

Some information that was lacking was a greater range of life history material. A considerable amount of life history data was already accumulated in the field notes - this data aided primarily in making character sketches of some of the key informants.

Six interview were carried out, of varying lengths, with four men who belonged to the 'hard-core' group. They were conducted in different settings, two being conducted while still 'in the field.'

The first set of life history material was gained through spending two afternoons with Tim sitting in the Square. Most of the biography was gained through casual conversation. However, during the second session a few days later I had to ask more questions to fill in gaps of notes taken in the first session and to gain more recent biographical information.

Two other interviews were conducted in the C.M. interview rooms. These two men were both regulars to the lunch time group and to the C.M. The interviews were conducted in the mornings as they were collecting their benefit cheque from the C.M. The interviews were carried out by the C.M. clerical worker while I merely sat in on the clients biographical narrative. This was thought a more 'natural' approach as the clerical worker usually had a brief 'chat' to the men as they collected their money. The clerical worker knew both men well and was primed as to the type of information

required, thus could probe at crucial points of the client's biography.

The fourth and fifth interviews were conducted on two visits to a client in hospital. As with the previous two interviews, the time was mostly spent in narrative on the part of the client with the clerical worker probing at appropriate points. Both these interviews were of short duration as the client was being treated for secondary cancer and was therefore in some pain.

In all the interviews the researcher relied on memory to reconstruct the biographical narrative. As this generally involved a lot of information this was recorded on tape straight after each interview and supplemented with brief notes on significant points. Once this was completed, these notes and recordings were transcribed in the evening or as soon after as possible. Notes were never taken during the conversation as it was thought this would lead to stress and an interruption to the flow of the narrative.

(ii) Institutional Contact

The following interviews were thought to be crucial in order to confirm some of the "inside" information I gained from the men. Interviews were carried out with representatives of the Salvation Army, the National Society for Alcohol and Drug Dependence (NSAD), a Solicitor, a Magistrate, and the City Mission Court Chaplain as well as two hotel proprietors and one barman. In all of these cases the concern was to ascertain what contact was made with the skid row men ('hard-core' and intermediate groups especially) and what

the kind of contact was - whether it was recurring, regular or irregular; how the men were dealt with - whether referred, rehabilitated, imprisoned etc; how long they were imprisoned or institutionalized for; degree of success for rehabilitation. Finally, special attention was paid to contact with men 'under' the 1966 Alcohol and Drug Addiction Act (A and D Act).

As well as the above information, further questions were asked of the City Missioner and a C.M. clerical worker, regarding C.M. policy and rules for the Night Shelter and waiting room.

In all cases, with the exception of the barman and hotel proprietors, the interviews were recorded on tape and transcribed at a later date. With the Salvation Army, two interviews lasting approximately one hour each were conducted. The first interview was concerned with the Poulson Street Hostel for approximately fifty four men, while the second interview was concerned with the Bridge (rehabilitation) program run in conjunction with the hostel (8). Other interviews varied between forty and twenty minutes.

Interviews with the two hotel proprietors and the barman were not taped for two main reasons. Firstly, the interview took place in a public place. Secondly, the nature of the topic may have been sensitive for a hotel proprietor as information was also sought on when the men drank or bought bottles at a bar - this was occasionally before official opening hours. Furthermore,

8. I am indebted to Captain Brinsdon of the Salvation Army for spending such a large amount of time with me.

information was also sought on whether men were actually accommodated in certain hotels in the city. Notes were usually made immediately after the interview period. Only a limited time could be spent with each of the proprietors in the two separate hotels as both were busy men and no prior appointment was made apart from a telephone call the same day. Most time was spent talking to the barman, as the atmosphere was more relaxed. I simply talked between the barman serving other guests. This also allowed me to make brief notes in breaks. Furthermore, the interview with the barman proved more successful as he had less reason to cover up information. The barman, therefore, was more willing to answer questions concerning drinking hours and "bottle buying" habits of the skid row men than the proprietors were.

4. Field Notes

Field notes were never taken during an observation or conversation, but once I was by myself, I would note a few key points/phrases to aid in remembering and writing up events later. In periods of long observation - when a whole day was involved - or in periods of 'intense' observation - when interviewing for the life histories - notes were made on tape afterwards as this was far quicker than writing notes. This would then be transcribed, usually in conjunction with other written notes made as soon after the event as possible. Thus on most occasions events were written up immediately following an observation period.

In an observation period as much activity and

conversation material was recorded as was possible. This included not only recording conversations, but also where men and women sat and, when walking down the street, how fast they walked and how they walked. Throughout field note writing, time was taken to periodically reflect on the researcher's position in "the scheme of things" to see how my presence altered the real nature of events, and to try and draw out significant events and phrases to see how they could 'fit' in with the researcher's reading of relevant theoretical concepts.

Field notes were given page numbers and paragraph numbers - in all approximately 500 typed pages of field notes were taken, representing approximately six months observation - to aid in indexing at a later date.

Some indexing was undertaken throughout the study. However, the bulk of the indexing was done once the field work was completed. An Index was made under broad headings at first - e.g. Accommodation, booze and being drunk, the Night Shelter, Pool, Police, references to the past and jobs, being busy and trouble. However, as time progressed field notes were re-indexed to 'bring out' other concerns - e.g. bar behaviour, daily lives, drinking and friends, health, institutions and rehabilitation clinics, and a broad category was developed on the men's view of their lifestyle, 'self' and friends, and waiting and time.

This indexing was carried out both for the interviews and the life histories. Under each heading relevant page and paragraph numbers were listed with a brief explanation. Thus large bits of information could be re-organized under these various headings and

sub-headings. This was the foundation to writing up the thesis.

5. Conclusion

Throughout this thesis we have emphasized the necessity to remain true to the subject's definition of the situation; to interpret everyday life as experienced by the inhabitants of the skid row lifeworld. In Chapter Two we noted that taking this methodological step was 'radical.' It can now be said that given the nature of the phenomenon to be studied, this step was necessary if one was to prevent imposing alien meanings upon the phenomenon.

Participant Observation, then, remains the only technique available which could be used to attempt to understand the skid row lifeworld. The lifeworld is constructed out of the consciousness of everyday life of its inhabitants. The taken-for-granted elements of the consciousness of everyday life are constantly being shared with others, and as such, are open to the participant observer as he/she enters the 'face-to-face' relationship. Alfred Schutz has said:

It is only from the face-to-face relationship; from the common lived experience of the world in the We, that the intersubjective world can be constituted. This alone is the point from which it can be deduced. (9)

This statement is made even more poignant for the Participant Observer as he is seeking to describe and understand a lifestyle that is completely outside

9. Alfred Schutz, The Phenomenology of the Social World, Heinemann Educational Books, 1972, P.171

orthodox conventional lifestyles. As one begins to share more fully the skid row lifeworld, one gradually gains access to the concerns and contingencies that exist in the daily round, and to the level where members are engaged in creating and maintaining the world - the world can be understood as an "authentic frame of meaning." (Giddens, 1976:148)

It is hoped that taking the three methodological steps indicated, allowed me to come to grips with the skid row lifeworld. Drinking with the men, gaining some biographical background and trying to understand something of the agencies of social control on skid row, allowed me to interpret the skid rowers interpretations of the world, to take hold of the taken-for-granted in order to expose the structure that is the lifeworld of skid row.

To conclude, our task has been to explicate the production and re-production of the skid row social lifeworld as the accomplished outcome of skid row men and women. However, one must always take cognizance of Giddens' sobering thought:

But it is always important to stress that social science stands in a relation of tension to its 'subject matter' - as a potential instrument of rational autonomy of action, but equally as a potential instrument of domination. (1976:159)

APPENDIX B

VAGRANCY LAW (1)

The following is an attempt to briefly trace the history of vagrancy law in New Zealand. As much of our present law has developed out of 19th Century British law it would be pertinent to briefly look at the history of some British law on vagrancy.

According to Chambliss (1967) the first vagrancy statutes emerged during the 14th Century. He notes that this was a period when rural serfdom was breaking down and labourers were migrating to the cities to search for more well paid jobs. The Black Death had also severely reduced the working population. These first statutes were essentially anti-migratory measures aimed at ensuring the feudal landowners had an adequate source of cheap labour, by forcing labourers to accept employment at low wages and to remain in the rural areas.

These laws became redundant, Chambliss notes, (1967:71), with the disintegration of the feudal order. With the beginning of the 16th Century, concern became focused on criminal activity rather than those refusing to work for the feudal landowners. The increasing emphasis upon commerce in England meant that the law became aimed at the protection of commercial travellers and the transportation of goods. This change in the law had wide ranging ramifications, even to the present day

1. This appendix is based on an unpublished paper written by Cynthia Wilkinson tracing the development of vagrancy law in New Zealand. I am indebted to her research. Any errors, however, must remain mine alone.

statutes, as we shall see below. With the great fear of highwaymen that was generated in mid 16th Century, England, vagrancy became punishable by death. The concept of criminality changed to include those who attempted to obtain charity through fraudulent means, while by the end of the 16th Century harvest workers were excluded from the statutes. By the 18th Century the statutes had become more detailed and specific about the types of people who were to be affected by the vagrancy laws. Laws were directed toward "the prevention of crime, the preservation of good order, and the promotion of the social economy" (Earl of Halsbury, quoted in Chambliss, 1967:74).

Changes from the 18th Century onwards have been in extending and clarifying the categories covered, but the focal concern of these statutes has not changed.

Wilkinson notes that 19th Century British law, was the official legislation with regard to vagrancy in New Zealand, until 1866, when an Act to define and restrain vagrancy was introduced. This legislation clearly continues the British trend with the "idle and disorderly" being defined as those who (among other things) had no (or insufficient) visible lawful means of support, habitual drunkards (i.e. those convicted of drunkenness three times within the past twelve months), prostitutes, and those being in the possession of weapons or disguises by night. Thus the attempts to restrain criminality and other threats to the economic and public order were made clearly explicit. Chambliss notes that this criminalistic emphasis in vagrancy remained in English law, and, furthermore, such emphases were taken

over by the colonies.

The list of people defined as Rogues and Vagabonds included those imposing upon charitable institutions by false pretences, those engaging in obscene behaviour, gambling, prostitution and trespassers.

Wilkinson notes:

Those offences which threatened the economic status-quo (e.g. begging or having "insufficient lawful means of support"), public order and/or morality were seen as less serious than those which emphasised criminal intention and imposition upon charitable institutions.

This latter focus can be compared with 13th and 14th British legislation which aimed at restricting demands for charitable assistance made on the churches.

This Act also enabled the Police to seize the property of any person charged under the Act and sell it to pay the cost of the jail sentence.

Wilkinson points out that the Police Offences Act, 1884, consolidated various General Assembly Acts and Provincial Ordinances, and aimed at providing a uniform law for the whole of New Zealand. The 1866 Vagrancy Act and its amendments became included along with many other punishable offences in a more general act. From then on vagrancy law became part of section two of the Police Offences statutes.

Emphasis upon crime prevention was continued, and the list of categories of places which could be defined as "public" was extended to cover all possible vagrant and indecent offences.

Vagrancy also came to be seen as a residual problem caused by some social pathology (Stewart, 1975:146).

As such, provisions were made for the rehabilitation of "habitual drunkards." On three or more convictions of drunkenness within six months, a person could be remanded to hospital or else where for up to seven days for treatment (2). The expenses and cost of maintenance were to be paid by the person convicted.

The Habitual Drunkards Act of 1906 continued this emphasis and made provision for the rehabilitation of the person so labelled. An habitual drunkard was defined as any person who had been convicted for drunkenness three times within nine months preceding any other conviction for drunkenness (3). The habitual drunkard could be committed to any institution "whose objects involved care and reclamation of people addicted to drink." The period of committal had to be specific and not less than twelve months. Wilkinson goes on to say, at the time this act was passed, there were no such approved institutions so the government specifically requested the Salvation Army to establish one.

This is an important turning point in the penal policy regarding the treatment of alcoholics; for it is the first recognition that imprisonment did little to deter or rehabilitate the alcoholic from his commitment to booze. As we have noted in Chapter Six the Alcohol and Drug Addiction Act of 1966 fully endorsed this thinking. However, it remains clear that this treatment rationale has only been theoretically introduced into the penal system as justification for the continuing legal processing

2. 1884, No. 24, S 21

3. 1906, No. 45, S2

of alcoholics. (see Archard, 1979:85).

Both the 1884 Police Offences Act and the 1906 Habitual Drunkards Act were covered by the Police Offences section of the 1908 Consolidated Statutes Enactment Act. Offences relating to rogues and vagabonds were extended in scope and made more specific. The discrepancy in definition of an "habitual drunkard" between the 1884 and 1906 Acts were resolved in favour of the latter, and regulations with regard to committal to a corrective institution followed those outlined in that Act. However persons convicted for drunkenness were still liable for imprisonment but could be remanded to hospital or elsewhere for treatment.

The 1927 Police Offences Act consolidated the 1908 Act and all its amending acts, and is still in force today, together with its subsequent amendments.

Wilkinson notes that,

"it has changed little since the 19th Century statutes, and amendments to vagrancy law have tended to extend the list of offences and update penalties rather than change or abolish existing ones, even if outdated. The vagrancy section of the Police Offences Act has become extremely broad and general through attempts to cover such diverse areas as drunkenness, prostitution, obscenity, lawful means of support, and criminal intent."

It is comprised as follows: section 40 deals with the interpretation of the term "public place," which has been extended more and more over time in order to cover as many vagrancy related offences as possible.

Section 41 - 46 cover drunkenness and riot. Various penalties for being found drunk in a public place are outlined; the sentence increases with the number of

convictions.

Section 44 outlines the "treatment and maintenance of drunken persons after arrest" and continues the rehabilitation policy begun in the 1884 Police Offences Act. A clause was inserted to the effect that any person remanded to a hospital etc. for treatment is liable to pay treatment costs, and failure to do so is punishable by up to three months imprisonment.

Section 45 - 48 relate to prostitution, obscenity, and public order.

Section 49 - 51 relate to idle and disorderly persons. No major changes in definition have occurred since the early legislation. It is interesting to note that the onus is upon the accused to prove his means of support is lawful.

The next sections deal with criminal intent, and again there are no major changes. Those changes which did occur relate to increasing elaboration of definitions and extensions of circumstances with regard to trespass etc.

The sections from 55 onwards relate to police custody, right of appeal, and legal procedure.

Continued emphasis upon criminal intent and lack of major legislative change despite major changes in social conditions, especially with the advent of the Welfare State, can be seen to confirm a point made by Chambliss:

...when social conditions change and previously useful laws are no longer useful there will be long periods when these laws remain dormant. It is less likely that they will be officially negated... lack of change in vagrancy statutes... can be seen as a reflection of society's perception of a continuing need to control some of its

'suspicious' or 'undesirable' members.
(1967:75)

The breadth and generality of the vagrancy statutes led the 1974 Select Committee on the Police Offences Act to note with some concern that the vagueness of the act meant that it could be extended "to activities which society might not wish to make criminal." (4) This point is well covered by G.P. Curry (1971) in his essay on vagrancy.

With the ratification of the 1966 Alcohol and Drug Addiction Act the vagrants position with regard to the law is made even more ambivalent for he is defined as both a "patient" and as a "criminal". Under this act he can be committed for up to two years treatment on the evidence of some respectable person that the former is an alcoholic. And as we have already noted the alcoholic can be taken into Police custody, examined by two Doctors and on their depositions remanded for treatment as an alcoholic. This act has already been discussed in Chapter Six.

Skid rowers are engaged in a form of behaviour that affects few but the men themselves. Nevertheless they are seldom free from outside interference and control. Such "deviant" activities Schur called "crimes without victims", for they are still seen as challenging the rules of conventional society (see Archard, 1979:178).

4. Select Committee Report on the Police Offences Act
1947, 1974, P.8

The dedicated pursuit of culturally approved goals, eschewing of interdicted but tantalizing goals, the adherence to normatively sanctioned means - these imply a certain self-restraint, effort, discipline, inhibition. What is the effect of others who, though their activities do not manifestly damage our own interest, are morally undisciplined, who give themselves up to idleness, self-indulgence, or forbidden vices? What effect does the proprinquity of the wicked have on the peace of mind of the virtuous? (Young quoted in Archard, 1979:178)