NEW ZEALAND
SOCIOLOGY

ate and
tive, the
research
ᵤᵧ ᵣₑ ᵣₑₗₐₜₑᵤ ᵤᵢₛᵤᵢₚₗᵢₙₑₛ, witn a predominant, though
no exclusive, concern with New Zealand.

Articles for publication: Contributors should consult the
detailed instructions inside the back cover and submit two
copies together with a computer disk (IBM compatible) to:
New Zealand Sociology
C/- Sociology Programme
Massey University
Palmerston North, NZ

Books for **review** and **advertising copy** should be sent to:
New Zealand Sociology (Reviews)
C/- Sociology Programme
Massey University
Palmerston North, NZ

Issues: 1 Volume per year, 2 issues per Volume.

Subscriptions:
Student rate   NZ$15.00 per Volume
Individual rate   NZ$22.00 per Volume
Institutional rate   NZ$40.00 per Volume
Surcharge for overseas postage   NZ$7.00 per Volume

Mail subscriptions to:
New Zealand Sociology (subscriptions)
C/- Sociology Programme
Massey University
Palmerston North, New Zealand

ISSN: 0112 921X

Papers in this Journal are indexed by the International
Bibliography of the Social Sciences

Copyright: 1998 The Editors, New Zealand Sociology

New Zealand Sociology

NEW ZEALAND
SOCIOLOGY

CONTENTS

ARTICLES

Erratum
Please note that Glenn Danes was also a contributory author to
the paper entitled *Expanding the Boundary of Moral Panics: the
Great New Zealand Zeppelin Scare of 1909* published in
Volume 13(1) and there attributed to Robert E. Bartholomew
and Bryan Dickeson.

Theoretical Perspectives on Social Movements

Margaret Denton
Hastings

Abstract

[1]Social movements[2] are excellent social 'laboratories' in which we can examine many of the basic questions that

---

[1]   I would like to thank Paul Perry and Paul Green and two anonymous reviewers for their comments on earlier drafts.

[2]   I will be using the expression 'social movement' in the wider sense of human activity purposively aimed at social change, whether formally organised or not. This excludes social trends that arise without intervention, such as the ageing of the population increasing the demand for retirement services. There have been various attempts to define the term rigorously, but every definition is easily attached as being arbitrary. As Alain Touraine (1988:63, in Escobar & Alvarez, 1992:6) has noted, the differences between sociologists over how to define social movements are at root epistemological. A wider definition the does not solely focus on organised social movements has the advantage of including important social action that would otherwise be ignored, but has the disadvantage that writing either falls prey to the charge of 'reification', or becomes quote long-winded and tedious in the attempt to avoid such charges. I do not mean to imply, by using the term 'social movements' that I am referring to some sort of social entity. I do mean that there are people and groups, ideas and practices, which are identified, by the people involved and by others, as belonging to social movements. To indicate something of the challenge that a definition can pose in the sheer variety of social phenomena to be covered, one example of what can be included by the term 'social movement' lists:

continue to trouble sociologists (Bauggley, 1997:152). For example, with regard to the structure-agency debate, social movements are an attempt to transform or defend structure through agency. With regard to the macro-micro split, social movement organisations involve both individuals and institutions in affecting both individual and institutional change. With regard to the ideal-material cleavage, social movement supporters must negotiate both ideal and material realities in their efforts to bring about social change. The sociological theory of social movements thus has the potential to inform a wide range of theoretical debate.

In this article I will examine four contemporary theoretical perspectives on social movements: new social movement theory, resource mobilization theory, social construction theory, closure theory and the critical literature surrounding these approaches for insights into these basic questions. As the theoretical approach used to study social movements to a considerable extent reflects the intellectual heritage and the political conditions prevailing in the country that the sociologist is located in (Neidhardt & Rucht, 1991:433), each perspective is located in that context. I will discuss the insights that each perspective provides and examine

---

'Liberalism, the American Revolution, the Methodist movement, Temperance, the Civil Rights movement, Populism, the Sepoy rebellion, the Taiping rebellion, the Labour movement, 'cargo cults', McCarthyism, Pan-Africanism, the Peace movement, Technocracy, Messianism, Zionism, the Free Love movement, the New Right, the New Left, the Natural Childbirth movement, Surrealism, Feminism, Freudianism, Progressivism, Neorealism, and Antidisestablishmentarianism' (Gusfield, 1970:2).

some common critiques of each perspective. These critiques fall into three broad groups: oversimplification, poor definition and the avoidance of important issues[3]. The charge of 'oversimplification' often refers to a generalisation being interpreted by others as being a principle or law and so disproved by exceptions. The charge of inadequate definition often reflects a problem in writing about boundaries that are somewhat fuzzy in reality and defy a discrete demarcation. The charge of 'silencing' important aspects of reality reflects the problem that in drawing attention to some aspect of reality, there will necessarily be other aspects that remain unhighlighted. To some extent these problems in theorising are inevitable but all theorists need to address how these limitations to knowledge can best be taken into account. Beyond the epistemological 'static' that each theoretical approach generates, there is the theoretical question of whether or not the perspective has answered the questions it sought to address and this alerts us to rather different sort of difficulty, one that can be theoretically addressed.

New Social Movement Theory

New social movement theory is continental European in origin (Buechler, 1995:441; Canel, 1992:22, Munk, 1995:670). It is particularly strong in countries that had strong socialist movements earlier this century and thus a Marxist intellectual heritage. By the 1960s the difficulties in using traditional Marxist theory to explain changing social realities was readily apparent. Although it is not longer the case today, in the late 1960s it seemed that capitalism had overcome the problem of

---

[3]   Other frequent criticisms include charges of 'reification' and 'reductionism'.

economic cycles and recession that were so central to Marx's analysis. Moreover, the most active and radical social movements were not working class movements but student, peace, and women's movements and these movements were not ostensibly articulating class demands. The events of 1968 seemed like classical revolutionary action, but they were carried out by what Marx would have considered more privileged people (Scott, 1990:56).

New social movement theory tackled the situation by challenging the Marxist ideas that all historically significant social action stems from the social consequences of the prevailing capitalist mode of production, and that the significant actors are defined by the class relationships of capitalism (Buechler, 1995:441-2; Canel, 1992:23; Cohen, 1983:231, Eder, 1993:6). New social movement theorists understand social movement action to be based on political, ideological and cultural imperatives as well as purely economic ones and that identity was defined by differences such as gender, ethnicity and sexuality as well as by class (Buechler, 1995:442; Canel, 1992:23-4).

Most new social movement theorists had a considerable empathy with traditional Marxism, but were disillusioned with its explanatory power. As Scott (1990:80) argues, much of this theory was originally motivated by the desire to find a substitute for the working class as the oppositional force in society. Although there is no consensus among the theorists as to which groups and organisations qualify as new social

movements[4], the peace, feminist, ecological, local autonomy, anti-nuclear, citizens, youth and squatters movements have all been given as examples of new social movements (Adam, 1993:332; Cohen, 1985:663; Bartholomew & Mayer, 1992:141; Kriesi, 1989:1079; Tucker, 1991:75).

Although new social movement theorists do have different perceptions of the movements that they study, there are common themes that emerge from the literature, that identify the characteristics of both new

---

[4]   This lack of consensus as to which groups to include in the category 'new social movement' reflects disagreements about how each word in the label should be understood (Cohen, 1983:1985). Most new social movement theorists think of 'new' as being in contrast to the 'old' social movement, the labour movement. These theorists consider the women's movement to be a 'new' movement (Kriesi, 1989:1079), but Habermas considers the women's movement to be part of the 'tradition of bourgeois-socialist liberation', and not a new movement (Adam, 1993:321). Does 'social' include politics and economy as well as culture, or is the 'social' distinguished from politics and economics? Touraine, for example, is reluctant to define the peace movement as a new social movement because it is critical of the state, so he views it as a political movement rather than a social movement (Scott, 1990:131). Does 'movement' mean organised collective behaviour against the prevailing social system or, at the other extreme, any change or shift in social phenomena? Tarrow distinguishes a movement (mass opinion) from a protest organisation (a form of social organisation) and protest events (forms of action). Mellucci (1989:24) critiques this conception of 'movement' as creating a metaphysical entity based on empirical generalisation, and defines movement as a form of collective behaviour that involves solidarity, conflict, and changing the system.

social movements and new social movement theories. Common themes include the new issues, new values, new forms, and new politics generated by the movements, and which are located in cultural rather than economic imperatives (Adam, 1993:321-2; Buechler, 1995:442; Canel, 1992:22; Cohen, 1983:664; Kriesi, 1989:1079; Klandermans, 1991:26-8; Lustiger-Thater, 1992:178-9; Melucci, 1989:205-6; Tarrow, 1991:400; Tucker, 1991:75).

The attention paid to culture rather than politics as the defining locus of new social movements has been regarded by commentators both as a point of debate within new social movement theory (Buechler, 1995:451-3; Eder, 1993:4-5) and as a criticism of the theory (Adam, 1993:320-1; Bartholomew & Mayer, 1992:153; Canel, 1992:22; Lustiger-Thater, 1992:178-9). Whilst the theorists stress the construction of a collective identity within social movements, there is a tendency to ignore the way that political action is involved in constructing the identity (Adam, 1992:320; Batholomew & Mayer, 1992:153). New social movement theorists fail to elucidate the ways in which the movements not only resist economic and political power, but also become enmeshed in and articulate political and economic power (Adam, 1993:327). Whilst new social movement theory has celebrated the successes of the movements in using culture to expand the political, there has been little critical examination of the limitations of identity politics (Lustiger-Thater, 1992:178-9). The theorists have been reacting against a Marxist tendency to reduce social life to economic principles. Yet the emphasis on culture, private lives, personal issues and the interpersonal formation of identity means that theorists have emphasised human agency at the expense of exposing

213

social constraints. In stressing agency, social structure is hidden.[5]

Another manifestation of the show-hide problem of abstraction is the critique of theory which suggests that it has tended to 'oversimplify' phenomena. An example of this sort of criticism directed at new social movement theory is the complaint that it tends to ignore the diversity and tensions of new social movements, both within each organisation or network and between various groups (Adam, 1993:32; Melucci, 1989: 195, 202; Neidhardt & Rucht, 1991:454). On the one hand it is impossible to make a generalisation by pointing to similarities without simultaneously suppressing or hiding differences that may well be altogether too tedious to list, even if it were possible to enumerate them all. Yet, given the diversity of definitions of new social movements by different theorists, the lack of acknowledgement of movement diversity may well reflect the threat that such an acknowledgement would pose for the theorist's own preferred perspective, rather than a reluctant concession to succinct expression. This suggests that what we choose to silence may not be entirely neutral. It may well

---

[5]   A similar critique has been directed to the macro-micro divide. New social movement theory has also been criticised for failing to analyse the process by which individuals and groups make decisions, develop strategies and mobilize resources; even though these are all integral to the identity developed (Canel, 1992:35-6). This criticism of the macroscocial orientation of new social movement theory demonstrates another familiar dichotomy in social theory. In drawing attention to macrosciological phenomena, its microsciological features tend to be hidden by being assumed or ignored.

be influenced by an unconscious desire to bolster our own position.[6]

Differences in defining new social movement theories also take the form of a boundary debate (Kriesi, 1989). Do we count only those people who are paid up members of an organisation as belonging to a social movement, or does anyone who gets involved in organised action belong? Yet either definition emphasises politics at the expense of culture. Is someone who defends the rights of women in a private conversation a feminist, even though she may have no formal links with a feminist organisation? Whatever cut-off point we choose is bound to be arbitrary. We may be able to draw clear boundaries for research purposes but

---

[6]   Other foci of debates between new social movement theorists which also evoke cries of oversimplification, are the question of class base of new social movements and the debate about what is 'new' about the movements that the theorists are considering. The original new social movement theory argument was that the social base of movements has shifted from class, and that other forms of domination and deprivation exist that cannot be reduced to class. However, many new social movement theorists now argue that new social movements do indeed have a middle class base, and seek to theorise the interconnection between class and movement base (Bagguley, 1992; Buechler, 1995:453-6). The claim that the movements that have appeared since the 1960s are demonstrably new is also recognised as problematic, as it is difficult to locate ways in which all the movements considered 'new' are similar to each other, and yet different to previous movements (Buechler, 1995:459; Steinmetz, 1994:179; della Porta, 1995; Canel, 1992:35-6; Dalton et al, 1990; Mooers & Saers, 1992; Melucci, 1989: 43-4; Calhoun, 1995).

that does not mean that there is a corresponding discrete boundary in social reality.

These critiques of new social movement theory movements can be viewed as raising important fundamental concerns about the adequacy of the perspective in describing and explaining the social reality of the movements; but they can also be regarded as relatively meaningless academic bickering. How successful has new social movement theory been in the terms that it set for itself? New social movement theory sought to address the failure of Marxist theory to explain what appeared to be historically significant social action. By connecting politics to culture, new social movement theory has certainly advanced the explanation of the social action that the new social movements engage in, which is, undeniably, historically significant. Yet new social movement theory has failed to elaborate what the historical significance of the social action that the new social movements engage in actually is. By contrast, Marxism is quite clear that the historical significance of the labour movement is that it will be instrumental in replacing a decaying capitalism with socialism. New social movement theory focuses on the internal culture of the movement as the practise of what is desired on a larger scale, but tends to gloss over the question of how a 'small scale experiment' (Marx & Engels, 1848[1992]:36) can be enlarged upon. The difficulty is that new social movement theory fails to confront the issue of power (Darnovsky *et al*, 1995; Mooers & Sears, 1992; Pakulski, 1991; Sethi, 1988). Certainly, new social movements can be seen as a major protagonist of social change, but it is unclear whether they can emerge as vehicles of historical transformation (Boggs, 1986). Some new social movement theorists, such as Laclau & Mouffe, have tried to deal with this by stressing the need

216

to locate a principle of unity to bring together various social struggles. Any such principle has remained elusive to discovery (Carroll & Ratner, 1994:13). A more common approach has been to dismiss the need for political power. This position agrees with Foucault that power and domination are ubiquitous, and not centred in capitalism or state relations (Steinmetz, 1994:181). Yet those adopting this approach have failed to theorise the mechanism of change. To be sure, there is the commitment to change by example, creating alternatives that more and more people will adopt. This seems to suggest that the idea is that the growth of alternatives will underwrite the withering of present social relations; yet this is supposed to be happening at the very time that inequality is growing, and power is becoming ever more focused in smaller elites within and between communities of all sizes. There seems little recognition of the cultural, political and economic processes that selectively use social movement ideologies and demands to suit the interests of those with power to influence change. For example, despite the best intentions of the feminist movement, equal pay in the context of declining real wages has meant an increased workload for many women forced to contend with menial, unsatisfying and poorly rewarded jobs as well as family responsibilities (Denton, 1993:180-182).

New social movement theory could explain social change by developing a theoretical explanation of how change can spread as innovations are copied by others. This would in turn draw attention to questions of the opportunities and constraints presented by social processes that any attempted innovation is enmeshed in. Hence the responses of those with power to influence social reality by impending or facilitating continuity and

change would come into view, and thus the importance of existing social relations to the success or failure of innovation would be taken into account.

Resource Mobilization Theory

This approach to social movements emerged in the United States of America at the same time that the new social movement approach emerged in continental Europe, and in response to a similar increase in social movement activity. Resource mobilization theory emerged from a different theoretical heritage, however, and in a different political and cultural context.

In comparison with Europe, the USA state has had less direct involvement in economic and cultural initiatives. The civil rights movement and others that followed in the USA in the 1960s and 1970s were perceived as making traditional demands for redistribution, political rights, and equality. The USA also has a history of civil disobedience, of voluntary associations, and of cultural and moral protest movements that were viewed as involved in the politics of the day, rather than opposed to involvement in party political processes. Social movement ideals were already embedded in US politics and, because there already existed a climate of co-operation between social movements and political institutions, the movements were easily co-opted. Movements tended to get drawn into single issue politics using pressure group tactics; which in turn made the movements more entrepreneurial, more competitive, more active, and less like talk shops than their European counterparts (Mayer, 1991:51-2, 53, 58). The absence of a strong socialist movement in the USA also made it difficult to conceive of the social movements of the 1960s and 1970s as being

particularly new (Larana et al, 1994:26-7; Neidhardt & Rucht, 1991:435).

Resource mobilization theory emerged as a reaction to the theoretical explanations of collective behaviour that had previously been used to explain social movements in the USA (Benford, 1993:197; Buechler, 1993:218-9; Canel, 1992:22; Cohen, 1985:674; Kitschelt, 1991:325-6; Mayer, 1991:49; Neidhardt & Rucht, 1991:422). Traditionally social movements had been theorised in the USA as an 'elementary' form of collective behaviour, such as crowds rioting. This line of explanation had been developed largely in response to the rise of facism in the 1930s. This traditional approach has its roots in Durkheim's view of collective action as anomic and irrational behaviour that is the result of rapid social change (Canel, 1992:22). Durkeim's theory prompted European interest in mass psychology, which in turn influenced Park and Burgess and the Chicago school of the 1920s. In the 1930s to 1950s American studies of social movements and their participants perceived social movements to be abnormal phenomena. The various theoretical approaches: collective behaviour, breakdown, mass society and relative deprivation, all emphasised what was 'wrong' with the individual, or what was 'wrong' with the social life that these individuals were immersed in. The younger sociologists of the 1960s and 1970s, who were often movement sympathisers or movement activists themselves, could hardly fail to notice some flaws in the adverse assessment of themselves and their movements. Against this they preferred to postulate social movements as an extension of institutional action, and social movement activity as normal, rational, and highly organised challenges by aggrieved groups.

219

Blumer and Smelser developed influential theories that were so widely accepted that attention became focused on what they did not explain: how collective action came to be mobilized. Olson's theory of collective action and Dahredorf's theory of conflict and domination gave theoretical leverage against the earlier collective behaviour theories, but at the same time opened the space to explore the organisational forms and modes of communication used by social movements. The debates around these issues gelled into a what came to be known as the resource mobilization approach (Benford, 1993:197; Cohen, 1985:674; Kitschelt, 1991:325-6; Munk, 1995:669; Neidhardt & Rucht, 1991:441; Pakulski, 1991).

Resource mobilization theory has developed in two main directions, the organisational-entrepreneurial approach of McCarthy and Zald; and the political model of Tilly, Oberschall, Gamson and Tarrow. The organisational model focuses on organisation dynamics, leadership and resource management. It uses economic and organisational theories to study social movements. The political model studies the opportunities for collective action, the role of pre-existing networks, and horizontal links within the aggrieved group (Canel, 1992:39; Cohen, 1985:674,6). The perspective taken by resource mobilization theory is that of the social movement organiser, concerned with the imperatives of mobilization, or that of the acute observer of the political environment.

In resource mobilization theory, then, the political nature of social movements tends to be stressed, rather than the cultural nature which is emphasised by new social movement theory. A continuity between political parties, social movements and pressure groups is

perceived and the nature of the political system is considered critical to social movement development as political opportunities are needed for social movements to mobilize. Social movements are certainly perceived to be mobilising for conflict, but it is not conflict against the institutions of the State; rather it is conflict that is considered to be built into institutional relationships. Resource mobilization theory thus regards social movements as agents of social change, but that social change is political rather than cultural in character.

As a consequence of the emphasis on the political aspects of social movements within resource mobilization theory, the critical issue for the continued viability of a social movement becomes a question of social movement strategy. Social movement strategy in turn depends on the internal and external limits or constraints on the organisation. For resource mobilization theorists the variables stressed are objective ones: organisation, recruitment, resources and tactics. The individual participant is assumed to be a rational actor, using strategic and instrumental reasoning. Individual motivation thus becomes a focus of interest, particularly in the organisational-entrepreneurial approach, as the individual will calculate the cost and benefits of participation. So resource mobilization theory sets itself the task of solving the 'free-rider problem' which asks why individuals will participate in action at considerable personal cost if the benefits are allocated to everyone in the aggrieved group regardless of their participation[7] (Buechler, 1993:218-9; Canel, 1992:23-4,

---

[7] Not all resource mobilization theorists regard this as a significant problem. Oberschall (1994) reminds us that resource mobilization theory pioneered the notion of nonbeneficiary participants and contributors to a social

38-9; Cohen, 1985:674-5; Klandermans, 1991:24-5; Scott, 1990:111-5).

A series of critiques of the silences of resource mobilization theory are readily made by commentators with a knowledge of new social movement theory. Whereas new social movement theory is accused of ignoring politics by focusing on culture, resource mobilization theory is accused of ignoring culture by focusing on politics. Whereas new social movement theory fails to consider the ways strategies are developed and resources mobilized, even though these are integral to the identity and ideology developing within the social movement; resource mobilization theory marginalises the construction of both ideology and collective identity, even though these processes are critical for effective mobilization (Buechler, 1995:222-2, 228-31; Canel, 1992:46-8; Kitschelt, 1991:330; Scott, 1990:111, 120). Theoretical silences are certainly easier to spot when a competing theory gives voice to them.

As a meso-level theory, resource mobilization theory is often considered to have potential to bridge the theoretical gap between microsocial and macrosocial theories. Yet resource mobilization theory is also critiqued as failing to address both macrosocial and microsocial issues. Resource mobilization theory can be seen to fail to do this whenever it fails to address both the context and the content of social movement activity. The individual participant's preferences and identity are typically treated as given. The processes involved in

---

movement; and that it was resource mobilization theory that rescued social movement participants from atomistic portrayals, and planted them in communities, networks and social categories.

forming preferences and identity, the microsocial aspects, are thereby ignored. Equally, the background conditions, the socio-historical context of the social movement is also ignored, particularly by the organisational-entrepreneurial approach. Although resource mobilization theory is concerned with political opportunities, there is little concern to discuss the limitations of prevailing economic relations, the state monopoly of coercive power or the hegemonic cultural code. Such theoretical silences are usually a matter of personal choices by the theorist in choosing particular issues to explore. Yet the charge of theoretical silence seems to imply that it is possible to construct universally valid, stable generalisations that provide a theory of everything, and deny that there are actual limitations to the human capacity to abstract. If there are any such limits, it becomes important to understand how these limitations interact with the empirical limitations of the theorist's own experience, both social and sociological.[8]

Given that most resource mobilization theorists considered micro and macro issues already reasonably well answered by theorists such as Smelser, their brief was altogether more focused than new social movement

---

[8] Other critiques of a significant silences include that resource mobilization theory is biased toward organised groups, and that, like new social movement theory, movement diversity is oversimplified. Buechler (1995:229-30) argues that the bias towards organised groups ignores the way that some social movements utilise diversity as a resource, an asset, rather than a liability. Formal organisation is asserted to be not the only possible mode of mobilization, and not necessarily the most important, or the most common form (Buechler, 1995:223-4; Kitschelt, 1991:330; Scott, 1990:119).

theorists. What needed further elaboration was the organisational dynamics of the movements, concerning both leadership and resource management within the organisation, and the use of available opportunities and resources for collective action beyond. In its own terms, resource mobilization theory has to a considerable extent answered the questions it has raised, with the exception of the 'free-rider problem'. The free-rider problem has generated considerable interest within resource mobilization theory, but no satisfactory solution (Cohen, 1985:676-8). The model of the rational actor on which it is based has been heavily critiqued as irrelevant to social activity because it is individualistic, and so ignores the collective, solidary, purposive and moral character of rationality within social movements (Buechler, 1993:225-9; Kitschelt, 1991:330; Scott, 1990:121). There is certainly no shortage of theoretical approaches to understanding moral rationality in sociology, yet resource mobilization theorists do not seem interested in exploring an enlarged perspective. Sociologists who have been concerned with the silence around movement values evident in resource mobilization theory have more typically moved into social construction theory instead.

Social Construction Theory

Social construction theory arose from discontents with resource mobilization theory (Benford, 1993:199; Snow & Benford, 1998:198; 1992:136; Snow et al, 1986:466; Williams, 1995:125). Social construction theory disputes the resource mobilization theory assumption that beliefs and grievances are constant and ubiquitous and also the rational actor model central to resource mobilization theory. Resource mobilization theory tends to side-step ideology, whereas social construction theory emphasises

224

that far from being a 'given', social movements actively engage in the production of beliefs and grievances, of ideas and meaning, for themselves and for others (Benford, 1993:198; Snow & Benford, 1988:198; Larana et al, 1994).

This insight into the inadequacies of resource mobilization theory largely derived from the rediscovery of culture in American sociology which has stimulated interest in interpretative issues. The work of Erving Goffman (1974) has been highly influential. Most work using the social construction approach has been concerned with utilising and elaborating Goffman's frame analysis (Mayer, 1991:67-8; Snow et al, 1986:465)[9].

Social construction theory recognises that mobilization not only requires social conditions to be ripe

---

[9]   I am following Steven Buecheler (1995:441) in referring to the approach as social construction rather than frame analysis, as this allows the inclusion of those social movement theorists who are interested in how culture comes to be constructed by social movements, but do not use frame analysis. However, in calling this approach 'social construction', I do not mean to include new social movement theorists, such as Alberto Melucci, who are interested in processes of social construction, and are labelled 'social constructivist' (Bartholomew & Mayer, 1992:141), but do not examine the actual processes of construction within movements. In fact, Buecheler (1993:225) only two years earlier considered social construction to be but a strand of resource mobilization theory. The boundary between social construction theory and both resource mobilization theory and frame analysis is not as well established, and hence as well fenced and sign posted as those between new social movement theory and resource mobilization theory.

for collective action to occur, but that people must collectively define the situation as ripe, and persuade others that it is so on an ongoing basis (Benford, 1993:199). The main area of interest has been in micro-mobilization processes; how people in social movements interact and communicate in such a way as to produce a congruence between the changing interests, values and beliefs that the individuals involved in a social movement have and the activities, goals and ideology that are being defined and redefined for the organisation. These processes are referred to as 'frame alignment', deriving from Goffman's (1974:21) concept of 'frame' as a 'schemata of interpretation' that helps individuals organise and analyse both the experience of their own lives and other events beyond (Snow et al, 1986:464).

As this perspective has emerged relatively recently, there is little in the way of critical literature. Yet it is quite easy to construct criticisms of the oversimplification, silencing and boundary problems. For example, in spite of the use of Goffman's term 'frame', there is little discussion in the social construction theory literature of what counts as a frame. The idea of a frame seems to imply some sort of static, rigid, overarching structure, even though social construction theorists are at pains to point to the dialectic, interactive, dynamic nature of framing efforts (Snow & Benford, 1988:24). Given that people are quite capable of retaining incongruous and at times conflicting values, beliefs and ideas in their minds, how well integrated does a set of ideas have to be to form a 'frame'? At what point do we draw the boundary and say that this person has this frame from which to approach this issue, whereas that person does not?

Given that the central concern of social construction theory is to explicate the ways in which social

movements actively engage in the production of beliefs and grievances, of ideas and meaning, for themselves and for others the central focus on ideas may seem unsurprising. Yet Groves (1995:437, 457-8) draws attention to the way that the focus on ideas by social construction theorists has caused them to fail to account for other ways in which beliefs, grievances, ideas and meanings are constructed. Groves argues that emotions no less than ideas emerge and develop as a result of interactive processes within social movements, and beliefs and meanings become attached to these emotions. Another 'silence' in this narrow conceptualisation of the processes of social construction is the failure to consider the importance of material elements in the process. Granted, there are a few models to draw on[10] as sociological concern has primarily attended to the macro aspects of material reality as evidenced, for example, in the mode of production.

Williams (1995:125) points to another silence within social construction theory, in that it typically ignores the way that the culture constructed is also a response to the external, strategic needs of the movement. The relationship between the social movement's cultural resources and the wider cultural repertoire is crucial, not only to the developing political struggle, but to the process of frame alignment undertaken by the movement (Williams, 1995:140). This critique also remains within the arena of culture, and does not address the extent to which political or economic considerations affect the construction of the movement's culture.

---

[10]   Actor-network theory excepted; see Latour, 1997; Callon & Latour, 1981; see also Knorr-Cetina, 1997.

Closure Theory

For sociologists in Britain as well as those in continental Europe, the social movements of the 1960s and 1970s highlighted the inadequacies of traditional Marxist theory. In Britain, however, the social movements had a comparatively low profile, with close links to the labour movement. This enabled social movements to influence policy making, particularly through Labour Party politics or the 'urban left' in London. Many social movements operated as pressure groups, which encouraged a political analysis rather than a cultural analysis of their activities (Neidhardt & Rucht, 1991:433, 5; Rudig et al, 1991). In these circumstances, the sociology of social movements did not thrive in Britain as it did in continental Europe and the USA. One influential perspective did emerge, closure theory which, like the continental European counterparts, sought to overcome the difficulties perceived with the received version of Marxist theory. Closure theory turned to the conceptual repertoire of Max Weber. Within Britain closure theory became absorbed into a class-reductionist political sociology, and a sociology of social movements did not develop (Bagguley, 1997:147, 149-50).

Social closure is a term used by Max Weber to describe the way in which social groups tend to become closed to others. Groups will maximise their advantages by manipulating access to resources and opportunities for the benefit of group members. Examples given by Weber (1948:401) include the merchant and craft guilds of the Middle Ages, each of which sought to monopolise a whole trade, and the Hindu caste system.

Fred Parkin (1968:1979) in his study of the anti-nuclear movement, and in later theoretical work,

developed the concept of social closure by considering two forms of closure: exclusion and usurpation. Exclusion refers to the actions of a group which restricts the access of others to resources and opportunities that they have some sort of control over. Usurpation refers to the actions of a group which aims at gaining control over opportunities and resources that they have limited, if any, access over. Parkin (1979:75) refers to the traditional caste system and the stratification of ethnic communities in the USA as examples of exclusion and collective industrial action as an example of usurpation. Parkin also considers a third form of closure, dual closure, where a group practices both exclusion and usurpation with respect to different groups. Parkin (1979:90-1) offers the example of the Australian labour movement, which historically has been simultaneously involved in political and industrial action against employers (usurpation) and against foreign workers (exclusion)[11].

---

[11]   There is a definitional squabble over the key terms: exclusion, usurpation and dual closure. Raymond Murphy (1988:52-4) uses the concepts differently to Parkin. Murphy argues that usurpation cannot easily be distinguished from exclusion. Exclusion is involved in usurpation, as a subordinate group that organises itself to usurp the dominant groups' privileges will exclude members of other groups, including the dominant group that it is organising against. Murphy prefers to consider usurpation to be a type of exclusion; one that creates a group of excluded ineligibles. Usurpation thus involves what Parkin refers to as 'dual closure'; biting into the advantages of other groups by excluding those even lower. Murphy then conceives of dual closure as excluding lower groups without biting into the advantages of higher groups, which is what Parkin would call exclusion.

As Scott (1990:135, 150) notes, social movements articulate the grievances and demands of groups which are excluded from benefits that most citizens enjoy, or who are excluded from elite groupings and the processes of elite negotiation. Social movements oppose specific forms of social closure. In articulating the grievances of groups that are themselves excluded, they verbalise issues excluded from normal social, including political, decision making.

The literature that discusses social movements from the closure theory perspective is very limited. Closure theory is a more general theory of the processes of social inequality that is more often identified with class theory, and is rarely highlighted, even in the literature that discusses the class status of social movements (see, for example, Bagguley, 1992; Eder, 1993; Kriesi, 1989; Mooers & Sears, 1992; Steinmetz, 1994). Although closure theory was developed by Parkin while studying social movements, closure theory is not as widely recognised as a theoretical approach to social movements as new social movement theory, resource mobilization theory or social construction theory.

The process of closure revolves around the opportunities and constraints presented by cultural, political and economic processes. However, this process has not been elucidated by closure theory, as it has not shown how groups maximise their advantages by manipulating access to resources and opportunities for the benefit of group members.

Conclusion

The variety of theoretical approaches to social movements found in the literature very clearly show

international differences between social movements in different countries depending on the political realities and the political heritage that they are situated in. Yet the sociological heritage and the social realities that the theorists are more attuned to are also reflected in their theorising. New social movement theory and social construction theory are both concerned with culture, and have little to say about the political situation that the movements find themselves embedded in whilst resource mobilization and closure theories are concerned with politics to the exclusion of culture. New social movement theory and closure theory are concerned with macro analysis, social construction with micro and resource management with meso-level analysis. These theoretical approaches tend to line up on one side of the divide in the classical sociological dualisms such as structure-agency or ideal-material, depending on where they are located in terms of the culture-politics divide. It would seem that these dualisms are not easily overcome. Sociologists who are familiar with both new social movement theory or resource mobilization theory have called for an integration of the two perspectives (see Canel, 1992; Cohen, 1985; Melucci, 1989), but as yet little has been achieved beyond the listing of strengths and weaknesses of each approach. Integration would require a broader framework that can incorporate the insights of each approach but that has yet to appear.

All the current approaches to the sociology of social movements available in the literature fail in their own terms at the point where they attempt to explain the social processes of continuity and change. All the theoretical approaches assume that social movements are a response to structural conditions that produce

some sort of social disadvantage, yet fail to indicate how social movements, in responding to these problems, affect change in objective social conditions. For new social movement theorists there is the often implicit assumption that change can spread as innovations are copied by others, but no explanation of how this occurs. In resource mobilization theory the rational actor model fails to capture the collective, solidary, purposive and moral character of social processes within social movements, yet alone evoke any sensitivity to social movement influence on the collectivity beyond the movement. For social construction theory the impact of social construction processes on broader processes of social change is also assumed rather than considered. With closure theory the process of how social closure occurs is also assumed rather than elaborated. Perhaps this points to what is needed for a broader approach to social movements that can incorporate both cultural and political concerns to emerge and that is a clear theorisation of the processes of social change that the movements become involved in.

References:

Adam, B.D., 1993. 'Post-Marxism and the new social movement', *Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology*, 30(3):316-336.

Amin, S., 1990. 'The social movements in the periphery: an end to national liberation?' in S. Amin, G. Arrighi, A. Gunder Frank & I. Wallerstein, *Transforming the Revolution: Social Movements and the World System*, New York, Monthly Review Press.

Bagguley, P., 1992. 'Social change, the middle class, and the emergence of "new social movements": a critical analysis', *The Sociological Review*, 1:26-48.

Bagguley, P., 1997. 'Beyond political sociology? Developments in the sociology of social movements', *The Sociological Review*, 147-161.

Bartholomew, A., & Mayer, M., 1992. 'Review Article: *Nomads of the Present*: Melucci's Contribution to New Social Movement Theory', *Theory, Culture and Society*, 9:141-159.

Benford, R.D., 1993. '"You could be the hundredth monkey": collective action frames and vocabularies of motive within the nuclear disarmament movement" *The Sociological Quarterly*, 34(2):195-216.

Boggs, C., 1986. *Social Movements and Political Power: Emerging Forms of Radicalism in the West*, Philadelphia, Temple University Press.

Buechler, S.M., 1993. 'Beyond resource mobilization? Emerging trends in social movement theory', *The Sociological Quarterly*, 34(2):217-235.

Buechler, S.M., 1995. 'New Social Movement Theories', *The Sociological Quarterly*, 34(2):217-235.

Canel, E., 1992. 'New social movement theory and resource mobilization: the need for integration', in W. Carroll (ed.), *Organising Dissent: Contemporary Social Movements in Theory and Practice*, Canada, Garamond Press.

Calhoun, C., 1995. '"New social movements" of the early nineteenth century', in M. Traugott (ed.) *Repertoires and Cycles of Collective Action*, London, Duke University Press.

Callon, M., & Latour, B., 1981. 'Unscrewing the big Leviathan: how actors macro-structure reality and how sociologists help them do so' pp.277-303 in K. Knorr-Cetina and A.V. Cicourel (eds.), *Advances in Social Theory and Methodology*, Boston, Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Carroll, W.K., and Ratner, R.S., 1994. 'Between Leninism and radical pluralism: Gramscian reflections on counter-hegemony and the new social movements', *Critical Sociology*, 20(2):3-26.

Cohen, J.L., 1985. 'Strategy or identity: new theoretical paradigms and contemporary social movements', *Social Research*, 52(4):663-716.

Cohen, J.L., 1983. 'Rethinking social movements', *Berkeley Journal of Sociology*, 28:97-117.

Crippen, T., 1994. 'Neo-darwinian approaches in the social sciences: unwarranted concerns and misconceptions', *Sociological Perspectives*, 37(3):391-401.

Dalton, R.J., Kuechler, M., & Burklin, W., 1990. 'The challenge of New Movements', in R.J. Dalton & M. Kuechler (eds.), *challenging the Political Order: New Social and Political Movements in Western Democracies*, Cambridge, Polity Press.

Darnovsky, M., Epstein, B., & Flacks, R., (eds.), 1995. *Cultural Politics and Social Movements*, Philadelphia, Temple University Press.

della Porta, D., 1995. Review of *Power in Movement*, Sidney Tarrow, 1994; in *Acta Sociologica*, 38:275-8.

Denton, M., 1993. 'Class Theory and Class Analysis', *New Zealand Sociology*, 8(2):166-189.

Eder, K., 1993. *The New Politics of Class: Social Movements and Cultural Dynamics in Advanced Societies*, London, Sage.

Escobar, A., & Alvarez, S.E., 1992. *The Making of Social Movements in Latin America*, Boulder, Colorado, Westview Press.

Goffman, E., 1974. *Frame Analysis*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press.

Groves, J.M., 1995. 'Learning to feel: the neglected sociology of social movements', *The Social Review*, 435-461.

Gusfield, J.R., 1970. *Protest, Reform and Revolt*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.

Kitschelt, H., 1991. 'Resource mobilization theory: a critique', in D. Rucht (ed.), *Research on Social Movements: The State of the Art in Western Europe and the USA*, Boulder, Colorado, Westernview Press.

Klandermans, B., 1991. 'New social movements and resource mobilization: the European and the American approach revisited', in D. Rucht (ed.), *Research on Social Movements: The State of the Art in Western Europe and the USA*, Boulder, Colorado, Westernview Press.

Knorr Cetina, K., 1977. 'Sociality with Objects', *Theory, Culture and Society*, 14(4):1-30.

Kriesi, H., 1989. 'New social movements and the new class in the Netherlands', *American Journal of Sociology*, 94(5):1078-1116.

Larana, E., Johnston, H., & Gusfield J.R. (eds.), 1994. *New Social Movements: From Ideology to Identity*, Philadelphia, Temple University Press.

Latour, B., 1998. 'On actor-network theory: a few clarifications' Internet Document version 1.1 http://www/keele.ac.uk/depts/stt/stt/ant/latour.htm Actor Network Resource: an Annotated Bibliography, Centre for Social Theory and Technology, Keele University.

Lustiger-Thater, H., 1992. 'New social movement discourse: the unsolved democracy', in W. Carroll (ed.), *Organising Dissent: Contemporary Social Movements in Theory and Practice*, Canada: Garamand Press.

Mayer, M., 1991. 'Social movement research and social movement practice: the US pattern', in D. Rucht (ed.), *Research on Social Movements: The State of*

the Art in Western Europe and the USA, Boulder, Colorado, Westernview Press.

McCarthy, J.D., & Wolfson, M., 1996. 'Resource mobilization by local social movement organizations: agency, strategy and organization in the movement against drunk driving', *American Sociological Review*, 61:1070-1088.

Marx, K. & Engels, F., 1848[1992]. *The Communist Manifesto*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Melucci, A., 1989. Ed J. Keene & P. Mier. *Nomads of the Present: Social movements and Individual Needs*, Philadelphia, Temple University Press.

Misztal, B., 1988. 'Social movements of the core and periphery', *The Australian and New Zealand Journal of Sociology*, 24(1):65-82.

Mooers, C., & Sears, A. 1992. 'The "New Social Movements" and the Withering Away of State Theory', in W. Carroll (ed.), *Organising Dissent: Contemporary Social movements in Theory and Practice*, Canada, Garamand Press.

Munk, G.L., 1995. 'Actor formation, social co-ordination, and political strategy: some conceptual problems in the study of social movements', *Sociology* 29(4):667-685.

Murphy, R., 1988. *Social Closure: The Theory of Monopolisation and Exclusion*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Neidhardt, F., & Rucht, D., 1991. 'The analysis of social movements: the state of the art and some perspectives for further', in D. Rucht (ed.), *Research on Social Movements: The State of the Art in Western Europe and the USA*, Boulder, Colorado, Westernview Press.

Oberschall, A., 1994. Review of A.D. Morris and C. McClurg (eds.), 1992 *Frontiers of Social Movement*

Theory, Yale University Press, in *Social Forces*, (72):1269-1271.

Pakulski, J., 1991. *Social Movements: The Politics of Moral Protests*, Melbourne, Longman Cheshire.

Parkin, F., 1968. *Middle Class Radicalism: The Social Bases of the British Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament*, Manchester, Manchester University Press.

Parkin, F., 1979. *Marxism and Class Theory: A Bourgeois Critique*, London, Travistock.

Rudig, W., Mitchell, J., Chapman, J., & Lowe, P.D., 1991. 'Social movements and the social sciences in Britain', in D. Rucht (ed.), *Research on Social Movements: The State of the Art in Western Europe and the USA*, Boulder, Colorado, Westernview Press.

Sethi, H., 1988. 'Action Groups in the New Politics', in P. Wignaraja (ed.), *New Social Movements in the South: Empowering People*, London, Zed Books.

Scott, A., 1990. *Ideology and the New Social Movements*, London, Unwin Hyman.

Snow, D.A., & Benford, R.D., 1988. 'Ideology, Frame Resonance and Participant Mobilization', *International Social Movement Research*, 1:197-217.

Snow, D.A. & Benford, R.D., 1992. 'Master Frames and Cycles of Protest', in A.D. Morris & C.M. Mueller (eds.), *Frontiers in Social Movement Theory*, NewHaven and London, Yale University Press.

Snow, D.A., Rochford, E.B., Worden, S.K., & Benford, R.D., 1986. 'Frame alignment processes, micromobilization and movement participation', *American Sociological Review*, 51(4):464-489.

Steinmetz, G., 1994. 'Regulation theory, postmarxism and the new social movements', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 36(1):176-211.

Tarrow, S., 1991. 'Comparing social movement participation in western Europe and the United States: problems, uses, and a proposal for synthesis', in D. Rucht (ed.), *Research on Social Movements: The State of the Art in Western Europe and the USA*, Boulder, Colorado, Westernview Press.

Touraine, A., 1985. 'An introduction to the study of social movements', *Social Research*, 52:747-87.

Touraine, A., 1992. 'Beyond social movements?', *Theory, Culture and Society*, 8(2):75-98.

Williams, R.H., 1995. 'Constructing the public good: social movements and cultural resources', *Social Problems*, 42(1):124-144.

Weber, M., 1948 [1916]. Ed H.H. Gerth & C. Wright Mills, 'India: the brahman and the castes', in *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Our Way Looks Distant

Mike Lloyd
Sociology and Social Policy
Victoria University of Wellington

Abstract

This paper speculates on a mix of issues around the theme of islandness. More broadly it has to do with the international-local nexus within academic sociology. Part of the 'our way' I want to discuss is sociology, which according to Bryan Turner is a 'supranational consciousness' which should eschew national boundaries and produce a 'global sociology of humanity'. But this seems to open up a whole raft of problems for New Zealand sociologists, who are physically situated on this shaky isle, at least some of the time. What are the effects of the valorisation of internationalism? What does it do to the objects of inquiry of local sociology? Is there any way out of the double constraint of a small market for New Zealand sociology, and the discipline itself saying 'go global young (wo)man'? The paper does not contain definite answers: it does offer some speculative thoughts on islandness. Nevertheless, these could help us to go somewhat astray to, in Latour's words, feel the island, to set it 'irreduced and free'.

Introduction: casting the network

What kind of a place, spatially, is New Zealand? What kind of a sociology do we have here? The answer to the first question, for me, and many others, is simple: New Zealand is a group of small islands. One thing that allows me to say this so bluntly is my own biography. I

was born only twenty minute's walk from a local beach, and have never lived more than half an hour's drive from the sea. There are also many other reminders of New Zealand's islandness. For example, our milk cartons contain 'family quizzes', one of which asks, 'how far inland is the furthest point from the sea'? The answer: a mere 100 kilometres.

An answer to the second question, however, is far more complex and cannot be adequately attempted here. Nevertheless, at the risk of casting a network too far, what I want to do below is to connect the answer to the first question to a reflection on the second. That is, I want to use the obvious islandness of New Zealand, or more generally, its antipodality, to reflect upon the local production of New Zealand sociology and how it is interpellated, enrolled and disenrolled in and by the broader network that is international sociology. I want to offer two readings on the theme 'our way looks distant', which most people will recognise as a play on the title to one of the earliest Australasian works on antipodality/distance – Sinclair's *Distance Looks Our Way: the effects of remoteness on New Zealand* (1961). The first reading has a slightly negative tone, that is, I want to suggest that 'our way' – New Zealand sociology – is distant from this local collection of islands. Briefly, work from other social sciences and humanities which does engage themes of local islandness is discussed and it is suggested that in comparison sociology has been neglectful of local spatiality. But secondly, I want to read 'our way looks distant' in a more positive light: generalising beyond the local is something that sociology has always done, and this partly explains its enduring strength and vitality. But the point here is that we should also turn the sociological viewpoint back on itself in order to reflect upon recent aims for a global, international, or

cosmopolitan sociology. I want to be optimistic and hope that sociology's looking distant can be more engaged with the local, can be non-apologetic about using local material, and yet still connected with the sociological network. It only remains to note that given space limitations the argument below is intended to be provocative, to start a conversation, rather than to be completely convincing.

Islandness: some existing New Zealand work

As noted above, this paper's title is a play on the important early work of Sinclair, who is well known as one of the first historians to be concerned with national identity in these isolated islands. This is exemplified in the books *Distance Looks Our Way* (1961) and *A Destiny Apart* (1986). Other historians have also contributed, for example, Fairburn's *The Ideal Society and its Enemies* (1989), amongst other things, considers preconstructions of the colony as a rural Arcadia, and how this compared with the actual experiences of taming the local frontier environment, both contributing to the national cultural character. In a more cultural studies mode, Brawley and Dixon (1993) offer a history of cinematic constructions of the South Seas. In their typical manner, historians have not shied away from collecting masses of data on the local, including much that is relevant to islandness/ distance. We should not forget art historians either, for as Clark puts it, 'that art historian Peter Tomory should seek to encapsulate the history of New Zealand painting under the rubric of "Imaginary Reefs and Floating Islands" is evidence of the hold of the "island mentality" on the national imaginary' (1995:9). Ian Wedde's collection of art history essays and cultural criticism under the evocative title *How to be*

Nowhere (1995) contains further powerful points on island locatedness.

Geographers have also not been remiss on the island front. Much of their attention is to the physicality of the environment, but this is useful island knowledge. More important, we can point to the international journal published out of the Victoria University Geography department, *Pacific Viewpoint*, for an indication that social-geographical approaches to New Zealand's Pacific islands context are alive and well. While geographer's work on spatiality can at times seem reductionist, there is little doubt that recent developments in socio-cultural geography have minimised some of the differences between geography and sociology (excellent examples are Soja (1989) on postmodern geographies and Massey (1997) on 'power geometry').

Anthropology, with its outgoing ethnographic impulse, has always had a lot to do with islands. Greg Dening's *Islands and Beaches* (1980) is a well known exemplar, but here I cannot resist quoting a piece from the New Zealand born anthropologist Michael Jackson. In a fictional story involving a typical kiwi bloke and an anthropology student, a conversation flows thus:

> "Cheers," Frank said, lifting his glass.
> "Cheers," I said.
> "Anthropology, eh?" Frank said.
> "Yes," I said.
> "You interested in the Pacific?" Frank asked.
> I said I was, but that I'd never been outside New Zealand.
> "You don't think New Zealand's the Pacific?" Frank said. (Jackson, 1994: 10)

Fictional, but nonetheless a simple and powerful point. Alongside Jackson's fiction, anthropologists are still engaged in ethnographic work which often deals with issues of centres and peripheries (for a useful discussion see Besnier, 1988). These ethnographies include work on island sites, the best example being Levine and Levine's work (1987) on the fishing community of Stewart Island. Their fieldwork involved living on the island for eight months plus three shorter return visits. Sociologists do ethnographies as well (although mostly as graduate students), but I cannot think of any similar study of local island communities by a New Zealand sociologist.

But perhaps most impressive in terms of a consistent, almost pervasive, treatment of islandness/distance is New Zealand literature and its secondary study. To see this, one need only consider two longstanding literary journals: *Islands* and *Landfall*. The very names indicate how much of our literature is grounded in New Zealand's isolated island landscape, indeed, the phrase 'distance looks our way' comes from the poet Charles Brasch. Poets, as a group, have tended to look at islandness through a melancholy lens:

> ... like resourceful castaways they have attained a state of subsistence and yet still scan the horizon for envoys from the world beyond. Hence the constant coupling of the 'island' theme with that of the 'landfall' ... 'How much in how many of our poets is sea coast stuff' as Curnow put it. (Clark, 1995:15)

If we cannot see this concern with islandness/distance in the literature firsthand, there are several well-known essays which have strongly argued

the case. Early amongst them is John Mulgan's *Report on Experience* where he speaks of the emptiness of the land and the psychic consequences of distance:

> [New Zealanders] live like strangers or as men might in a dream which will one day wake and destroy them ...
>
> They come from the most beautiful country in the world, but it is a small country and very remote. After a while this isolation oppresses · them and they go abroad. They roam the world looking not for adventure but for satisfaction. (Quoted in Jackson, 1994:100).

While Mulgan is close to dangerous generalisation, there is nonetheless something compelling in this statement. It resonates with part of the New Zealand experience.

Similarly, Chapman's essay 'fiction and the social pattern' (1973) suggested that isolation produced a conformist, homogenous society which tended to limit the amount and type of fiction that was produced. But, it is in a later piece by Patrick Evans (1980) that a more startling spatial analysis is suggested. Drawing on Atwood, Evans talks of a kind of spatial insanity pervading New Zealand literature:

> [there is] a problem that European colonization caused almost universally - how to reconcile strong cultural preconceptions about a new country with the kind of life to be found there. More often than not we fail even to recognize this problem, according to the Canadian writer Margaret Atwood, who suggests that anyone who as a result lives in

> one place while thinking he is in another is mad. Because of particular accidents of history and geography this kind of 'insanity' has dominated New Zealand writing from the first, providing theme and subject-matter for much of our fiction; it still haunts us today, not only in a way that shapes our writing but also in a way that affects our judgement of what is written (Evans, 1980:71).

New Zealand Pakeha writing reflects a nation where, in the evocative phrase of Allen Curnow, 'there is never a soul at home'. Images, representations, and dare I say it, the 'reality' of the island landscape, have a great deal to do with this spatial insanity.

Of course, things have changed since the 1950s. Homogeneity and conformism have decreased, at least in the writing of fiction. And, this is one area where we can be sure of continuing academic analysis, because the secondary comment on New Zealand literature and the landscape is still forthcoming. For example, Lydia Wevers is currently engaged in a project on 'country of writing' which looks at nineteenth and twentieth century texts and how New Zealand was presented as a textual, cultural and imagined landscape ('Marsden fund research grant' 1998), and Diane Hebley has recently published a book on *The Power of Place: Landscape in New Zealand children's fiction, 1970-1989*. Such study of literature and landscape has to be the most consistent contribution to the cultural analysis of New Zealand's island landscape.

The above comments are enough to establish prima facie evidence that the majority of the social sciences and humanities in this country have made significant

comment on New Zealand's inescapable islandness. In my view, sociology is the exception. I do not know of any New Zealand sociology that has analysed this topic in depth. There are some initial forays into islandness by local sociologists, which are briefly discussed below, but my question is, given that spatiality has been recuperated in social theory for a number of years (eg. see Soja, 1989; Thrift, 1996), what has happened here? Are we waiting for a sea-bound message in a bottle – 'study local spatiality' – when all around us is the presence of New Zealand's islandness? Such irony seems worth discussion and in this it seems important to do two things. First, to ask what it is about sociology that makes it skip over the local and the particular. This is pursued next by considering two examples of well-known sociologists' work on islandness and location. Second, looking at the initial sociological forays into islandness we see that they draw more heavily on cultural studies than sociology, therefore it is worth asking why this might be so.

Examples: Two Big Fish in the Network

The first is that of Erving Goffman. After successfully completing an MA in 1949 at the University of Chicago, Goffman spent eighteen months on the Scottish Shetland islands, specifically, one very small flat island, population 300 (Manning, 1992). His brief from his supervisor was to study the 'social structure' of the island, but left to his own devices Goffman rejected the supervisory guidance, posed as an American interested in agricultural techniques and actually studied the way the islanders disclosed and hid information from each other. He gathered his ethnographic data mainly via a job as a part-time washer-up (Manning, 1992:7) and from studying the characters staffing the hotel where he

stayed (Lemert & Branaman, 1997:xiv). The dissertation, titled 'Communication Conduct in an Island Community' was passed in 1953, but it is in the pages of *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1959) that we find the main published mentions of his Shetland Island study. But do not expect to find anything resembling a detailed ethnography of an island community. As Manning argues, Goffman's ethnographies must be seen as conceptual in nature: '... the key to understanding his ethnographies is to see them as ethnographies of concepts rather than of places. They are utopian ideal-types (such as the total institution) existing nowhere ....' (1992:17). Even in his PhD, 'there is an unresolved tension between the construction of general (if not universal) frameworks and the observation of the minutiae of everyday life on the island' (1992:31). Thus, Goffman's eighteen months on a small island played an important part in the formulation of the dramaturgical perspective, but has provided little knowledge of island social worlds.

Certainly, the attempt to produce both ethnographic description and theoretical/conceptual extrapolation is a crucial part of good sociological ethnography, and the concerted manner in which Goffman pursued this goal is one of the reasons many now regard him as a major and systematic social theorist (see Drew & Wootton, 1988). However, we can trouble Goffman's island sociology with a simple question: if his aim was to study communication frameworks and impression management, why go to the considerable bother of travelling to a cold and isolated Scottish island and living there for eighteen months? Hasn't something been lost, or at least unexamined, in Goffman's tendency to privilege the general over the particular? Namely, the actual island locale and how it

figured in the social world Goffman studied. Further, is it not it the case that in the late 1990s we could not conduct such covert ethnography and expect the 'natives' to remain passive, uninformed providers of interesting conversational exchanges and face-work? In short, Goffman seems to have produced an ethnography of Nowhere Island, populated by ideal-typical nobodies. While he did spend considerable time there, we are left with a disembodied and aspatial trace, which treated the island as a resource and not a topic of study. While this is not the only way sociologists work[1], on the other hand it is a common approach in sociology.

My second example is Bryan Turner. Some time ago Bryan Turner addressed an annual meeting of Australian social scientists, offending many of them with his comments on Australian sociology. The address was subsequently published in the *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Sociology*, and while Australia is in fact the smallest continent, the paper contains some points relevant to islandness. The import of Turner's comments is that Australian sociologists behave as if each of them was an island: 'While sociologists are more likely than most to pay lip-service to notions of *gemeinschaft* and community, their actual behaviour is far closer to the norms of *homo economicus* and Robinson Crusoe' (1986:275). As well as these contentious comments, Turner offered an important characterisation of sociology as an academic trade. With particular reference to British sociology, Turner suggested that the lack of well developed patronage and

---

[1] For a contrast to Goffman see Cohen (1987), who also studied a Shetland island community, but with much more attention to the locality.

the intense competition for academic posts resulted in sociology displaying a 'serial crisis of paradigms'. But, supposedly, such a crisis is functional, for the continual critique and overthrow of established paradigms is 'in fact a job-creation scheme which has proved relatively successful for most tradespeople within the market' (1986:275). Turner used a core-periphery model, identifying Australia as part of the periphery, to suggest that the effect of peripheral isolation is to intensify the paradigm shifts and to heighten the creation of differences and argument amongst individual scholars who are positioned within even tighter market restraints.

This reading of Australian sociology was of course debatable – two critical comments by Bryson and Emmison followed Turner's paper – and the fact that it is now twelve years old dates the argument. Nevertheless, in the last piece of Turner's paper there is an important extension of the spatial metaphor which makes it still pertinent. Turner points out that there is no necessary correlation between spatial and theoretical core - one can be intellectually marginal regardless of geographical centrality. This is then linked to a very strong claim:

> The problem is that, while sociology has always developed within the confines of national markets, sociology is essentially a form of *supranational consciousness*. Institutionalised sociology thus developed within the confines of national markets, but the form of consciousness promoted and required by sociology is *wholly cosmopolitan*. ... sociology is both the historical effect of and the secular consciousness of rationalisation. (Taylor, 1986:279, emphasis added)

So we have a kind of Catch 22: sociology should be a supranational consciousness, but sociology only makes it to the periphery on the back of real geographical expansion of capitalist, urban and literate culture, which, in its local permutations, fosters the construction of parochial and nationally embedded sociology cultures (Turner, 1986:280). Turner ends by calling for sociologists to transcend the false consciousness of national embeddedness, be true to their own discipline and start living for rather than off sociology.

One of the things that concerns me with Turner's argument, is the notion that sociology is 'wholly cosmopolitan', and in fact by 1990, and with a move back to England, Turner's views on this were slightly modified. In a paper titled 'Two faces of sociology: global or national?' (1990), now with Euro-American examples, he does state for example that the nature of scholarship is closely connected to the nature of the national university tradition and structure, that 'In the context of government dominated university systems, it is hardly possible to see what ... the 'free floating intelligentsia' or 'socially unattached intellectuals' ... could mean' (Turner, 1990:354). Despite this concession, the same spectre of cosmopolitanism returns: 'Yet the calling of a sociologist is also to wider and broader goals, which would include in principle a commitment to the universalistic character of the discipline, the global features of intellectual life ... to engage (once again) with the tensions between our local concerns with national issues and our vocation, albeit underdeveloped and ill-defined, for a global sociology of humanity' (Turner, 1990:355-356).

Turner is clearly being very prescriptive here, but in my view it is a devious argument. In setting forth a

manifesto for an emancipatory 'global sociology of humanity' he is likely to gain many sociologists' votes, however, we can already see in the practices of international sociology enough problems to cast doubt on the beneficence of such a leviathan. Sociology itself does little to foster equality within its own 'conditions of marketing' (McHoul, 1997), that is, the global/local binary privileges the global, where the 'global' often turns out to be no such thing, it being mostly Euro-America acting at a distance to delimit sociological voices. Where, how and what one can say, internationally, in sociology is connected to the location you speak from and about. This is not some kind of empty small town parochialism. Practically I am referring here to things like: a colleague submitting a paper to an international journal and being asked to provide a map of New Zealand (when it was not necessary); another colleague having a book proposal accepted by Sage but being told to drop the New Zealand case study because it was not relevant for an international audience and the continual agonising over just how much local detail can be put before referees of international journals. As Janet Wolff has put it in a discussion of metaphors of travel in cultural criticism, the 'suggestion of free and equal mobility is itself a deception, since we don't all have the same access to the road' (1997:189).

Goffman and Turner are but two examples of sociological writing relevant to islandness/distance, but they are carefully chosen, not purely because they suit my argument, but because I believe they are symptomatic of the broader discipline. Together they nicely represent sociology's spectrum: Goffman's interest in face-to-face interaction gives us the micro; and Turner's interest in rationalisation and global generalising

tendencies gives us the macro. Of course, a great deal of sociological theory in the last twenty to thirty years has been devoted to further explicating, or dissolving, the micro-macro link. I do not wish to gloss this literature here but to point out the peculiar tensions that are set up when sociology comes out of its home in Europe and moves to the small islands of New Zealand.

Turner is **partly** right in saying that sociology is a supranational consciousness, and Goffman is **partly** right in nonetheless orienting sociology to (inter)action. In the current state of the discipline, both of these are essential registers for the speaking of international sociology. But, in the local context, for example, the fact that the market for identifiable New Zealand sociology is minute – ex All Blacks would have a far higher book publication rate than sociologists – we are faced with a simple problem: how do you practice sociology, locally? By 'practice' we can read what our universities increasingly demand of us: publication in international sources. Thus, local sociologists sooner or later have to confront a sometimes unfavourable political economy of publication. As Nick Perry put it in a critical review of a local sociology textbook, we face the almost intractable difficulty of being in a context where '"market failure" is endemic. There is at once a paucity of texts and a limited space in which they might move' (Perry, 1991:399). While New Zealand sociologists can speak the international registers of sociology as well as anyone else, it is unfortunately the case that international audiences know, or want to know, little of the particulars of the New Zealand social formation. How does a 'supranational consciousness' deal with the particulars of 3.5 million people on some islands in the bottom of the Pacific? It is my belief that New Zealand sociology's

exceptional neglect of islandness is one result of the hegemony of internationalism' in sociology.

The above points are not unconnected to the rise of globalisation as a sociological topic and some recent calls for a 'Sociology for One World' (Archer, 1991, and for a critique see Smart (1994). Thankfully, within the now very large literature on globalisation, there are a number of eloquent discussions of the subtleties of local-national-global interactions (and its very nomenclature). Appadurai (1995) for example, wishes to draw attention back to the 'neighbourhood', which is defined as 'life-worlds constituted by relatively stable associations, by relatively known and shared histories, and by collectively traversed and legible spaces and places' (Appadurai, 1995:215). In an argument which nicely links the neighbourhood, the local, the translocal, and the global, Appadurai argues that any consideration of globalisation still needs to consider the neighbourhood, because there is the 'central dilemma ... that neighbourhoods both *are* contexts and at the same time *require and produce* contexts' (Appadurai, 1995:209, original emphasis). He finishes with the powerful point that in the theorisation of globalisation, 'it is unlikely that there will be anything mere about the local' (Appadurai, 1995:222). In my view, and this could reflect the relative youth and small size of New Zealand sociology, we have only scratched the surface of our local situation, including islandness.

A New Network Goes Fishing

As mentioned above, there are some initial sociological forays into islandness. I am referring here to the work of Nigel Clark (1995), Nick Perry (1994) and Claudia Bell (Clark & Bell 1994). But interestingly, the existence of

this work does not weaken my argument that sociology has neglected islandness, for what we find is that these works are much closer to cultural studies than traditional sociology.

Nick Perry's work has the least explicit mention of islandness, but is nonetheless sensitive to the issues of distance: 'The notion of estrangement and the distinction between centre and periphery is *always* a matter of attitude; it may also, but need not be, a matter of geography' (Perry, 1994:117). Perry wants to retain the preeminence of theory within sociology, and he uses the very islandy/fishy metaphor of 'flying by nets' to do this. That is, he suggests that 'sociology is, or more precisely, can be, a fly-by-net discipline. The net is a metaphor for theory' (Perry, 1994:114). The metaphor reaches an apogee in the following statement:

> Without such nets nothing can be caught, yet when a net closes nothing new can be caught. Until recently, however, New Zealand's high culture simply lacked that plurality of nets and that range of trawling grounds which might counteract the dangers of using aging but well-tried methods and equipment in the same favoured locations. For a writer who missed the net - and even for those who did not - the only alternative was to catch the boat. (Perry, 1994:124)

Overall, his book *The Dominion of Signs* can be seen as an attempt to fly by the net of sociological theory, but to apply it to local materials and to the very question of what the local is.

How appropriate then that we find Perry's metaphor of flying by nets appearing in the most detailed

sociological analysis of islandness – Nigel Clark's 'imaginary reefs and floating islands' (1995). Clark is out to stress the power of signification. His paper is subtitled, 'speculations on the digital refiguring of the antipodes' and not surprisingly we find him questioning dichotomies of local/global or lived/mediated, which culminates in his organising question:

> While an association with a particular physical place is by definition an aspect of national, regional and local identities, the significance given to the actual location of these places in space is not a cultural constant. In some geo-cultural entities, to put it simply, there has been more concern with positioning on the globe than in others.
>
> What, then, would an electronically-induced transcendence of antipodality mean for those cultural formations that have referred to themselves and been known by others as 'the Antipodes'? (Clark, 1995:8).

Clark's paper does not fully answer this question, and we could not expect it to. But in posing it by intermixing a concern for longstanding constructions of antipodality and the impact of new technologies – the digital refiguring – he has without doubt posed an important sociological question. And it is one concerned with much more than islandness as geography. It is thoroughly socio-cultural in its understanding of place, viewing locality as 'primarily relational and contextual rather than as scalar or spatial' to borrow from Appadurai (1995:204).

Without having provided a lengthy description of this existing work, it should be clear that it is closer to cultural studies than traditional sociology. It is about culture, about signification, about systems of meaning, and it draws more strongly on literature and cultural theorists than sociologists. A short answer as to why there is this move to cultural studies may simply be 'because it works'. Without doubt, cultural studies provides some useful analytical tools, but even before this, it provides a convivial environment for the study of such things as islandness and distance. In other words, cultural studies provides the conditions of possibility for the study of New Zealand's islandness, whereas in the past sociology did not. As a suspicion, it seems that the study of island spatiality has been viewed by local sociologists as banal, trivial, and unimportant. While we have to be careful about saying cultural studies celebrates the banal (see Morris, 1990), it is certainly far more interested in 'the everyday' than sociology[2].

Recently, Roy Boyne (1998) has commented that whereas sociology wants to deny culture, cultural studies wants to deconstruct it, and with respect to spatiality, New Zealand sociology is still largely stuck in denial mode. Sociologists still teach the majority of undergraduate courses in such a way that students come to think sociology is about the study of Society. And that is with a capital S, because we find our

---

[2] Again, recent exceptions to this appear more like hybrids between sociology and cultural studies. A relevant example is Ann Game's 'deconstructive sociology' (1991) which includes a substantial analysis of Bondi Beach and its place in Australian iconography.

students parroting a view that it is Society that determines all the things going on in New Zealand. At times the degree of reification has to be seen to be believed. This is a sad state of affairs, because social theory, of course, has a whole range of much more 'irreductionist' (Latour, 1993) views on offer. In one way or another, these shift the emphasis from saying that Society shapes things, to saying that the social is precisely a product of what elements are held together. Thus, the new focus is on the holding together, the structuring, the process, and this is exactly what I think sociologists have found so appealing and useful in cultural studies and how it can be applied to things like island spatiality. Hopefully, the hybridising of sociological and cultural studies approaches could yet produce an important rectification of sociology's neglect of this topic. It is in this sense of sociology looking distant, for Cultural Studies does come from offshore, that there is room for a positive reading of 'our way looks distant'. I conclude on this point below.

Conclusion: Cutting the Network, Staying Connected

If with Dening we could see 'that the world is an ocean and all its continents are islands' (1980:23) then feelings of geographical exceptionalism could be reduced. Also, we could then turn to analyse our own position on these shaky isles, and perhaps make international others interested in antipodean sociology. But first this requires us to better understand sociology as a network. I find Latour's work (eg. 1987, 1993), or more generally Actor-Network-Theory, very useful in this regard. Basically, what Latour argues is that the local/global binary needs dissolving: 'the words "local" and "global" offer points of view on networks that are by nature neither local nor

global, but are more or less long and more or less connected' (1993:123). On this view, sociology as a network is not like computer or engineering networks (eg. the phone system) which depend on standardised parts both strong in their own duties, and strongly linked to other elements. Rather, the sociological network is of a kind built on 'dissemination, heterogeneity and the careful plaiting of weak ties ... [where] each tie, no matter how strong, is itself woven out of still weaker threads' (1997:2).

Such a view helps very much to reconceptualise the view that New Zealand is a peripheral boundary, or that the locals are predominantly concerned with boundary protection. As Marilyn Strathern (1996) has argued, the concept of boundary is overused and not very subtle, and linked to this we need to avoid a 'celebrating margins' discourse. Instead, we should attend to processes of mutual translation. Networks (of whatever size) depend upon simultaneous processes of translation and purification: sociology is able to be transported to New Zealand only by being purified (or rendered down) and then translated and expanded in its new site, and this is an ongoing process – the network is an endless process of standardisation, purification, proliferation, and extension. But, at the same time, the actors within the network, and the network itself as an 'actant', are able to 'cut' or 'stop' the network at contingent and strategic moments. The most obvious current example is the host of sociology conferences addressing themes of 'sociology for a new millennium'. This is a 'stopping' of the network; a belief that it can first be summarised, held stable, so that we then know where to take it next. Strathern's important extension of this argument is that the very way that networks are stopped (and restarted) is full of claims to ownership and issues of access. Any

construction of belonging is also a dividing; any construction of property is also a disowning. Applying this here, the point is that when New Zealand sociologists are offered belonging in the international network of sociology it is also bought at the cost of division – there is differentiation over relevance, admission and topicality – and at risk of disownership – founding fathers and canons construct 'stopped' traditions which exclude other candidates (see Connell, 1997).

In other words, from the New Zealand point of view, the sociological network is shot through with foreign ownership and uneven access. Of course, this is a traditional sociological argument about inequality, but to frame it within a notion of network logics, particularly the strength of weak ties, gives it quite a new meaning. Nick Perry put this very well some time ago:

> Too much of New Zealand sociology has allowed the form of its theory to be tacitly determined by someone else's content. The local significance of overseas work rests upon what it can teach New Zealand sociologists about the practice of theorising. The significance for overseas readers of such New Zealand work might then be to inform (and to affirm how problematic and contingent are) their own constructions of 'the normal' (Perry, 1991:401).

So, if we take 'the normal' to be a stopping of the network, the task is to shift where the sociological network is stopped or cut, and then to let it proliferate again.

This is a point which Peter Beilharz has also made from an Australian base. As he puts it, 'At the level of the world system, why not establish the centres by reference to the peripheries rather than peripheries by centres? (1998:5), why not consider 'the question of cultural traffic, because it opens the possibility that the edges also teach us about the centres. So if you want to understand France, on this perspective, you need to know about Algeria, or Great Britain: India, Africa, Australia; or more laterally, if you want to examine positivism, look at Brazil and not only France' (1998:9). If such opening of cultural traffic is only partly successful it may in turn allow the extension of the sociological eye to those realms previously considered to be banal, trivial, or unimportant. As Harvey Sacks once put it, 'this- and-that is what the world is made up of' (quoted in Silverman, 1993:51); obviously I have been suggesting above that islands are an important part of the this-and-that of New Zealand. Hence, local sociology could in some small part include the study of island spatiality, without finding this a threat to the discipline's coherence. As Beilharz comments, 'viewed historically, the ongoing crisis of sociology may not be a crisis at all, so much as a series of movements of different kinds' (1998:10). Similarly, movements in, out and around the islands, with related analyses, are no sign of crisis, nor of trivial preoccupations, but might be the very stuff local sociology is made of.

Acknowledgments

References

Appadurai, A., 1995. 'The production of locality' in Fardon, R. (ed.), *Counterworks: Managing the Diversity of Knowledge*, London/New York, Routledge.

Archer, M., 1991. 'Sociology for one world: unity and diversity', *International Sociology*, 6(2):131-147.

Beilharz, P., 1998. 'Sociology as history – centres and antipodes', paper presented at the International Sociological Association conference, Montreal.

Besnier, N., 1998. 'From the margin to the centre', inaugural professorial address, Wellington, Victoria University of Wellington.

Boyne, R., 1998. 'Before the body: sociology and the subject', paper presented at 1998 British Sociological Association annual conference, Edinburgh.

Brawley, S., & Dixon, C., 1993. '"The Hollywood native": Hollywood's construction of the South Seas and wartime encounters with the South Pacific', *Sites*, 27:15-29.

Chapman, R., 1973. 'Fiction and the social pattern', in Curnow, W. (ed.), *Essays on New Zealand Literature*, Auckland, Heinemann.

Clark, N., 1995. '"Imaginary reefs and floating islands": speculations on the digital refiguring of the antipodes', *Sites*, 31:1-30.

Clark, N., & Bell, C., 1994. 'Signifying antipodality: from imperial monuments to hyper-rural simulations', *Sites*, 29:1-17.

Cohen, A. P., 1987. *Whalsay: Symbol, Segment and Boundary in a Shetland Island Community.* Manchester, Manchester University Press.

Connell, B., 1997. 'Why is classical theory classical?', *American Journal of Sociology*, 102(6):1511-1557.

Dening, G., 1980. *Islands and Beaches*. Chicago, Dorsey Press.

Drew, P., & Wootton, A., 1988. *Erving Goffman: Exploring the Interaction Order*, Cambridge, Polity.

Evans, P., 1980. 'Paradise or slaughterhouse: aspects of New Zealand proletarian fiction', *Islands*, 28:71-86.

Fairburn, M., 1989. *The Ideal Society and its Enemies*. Auckland, Auckland University Press.

Game, A., 1991. *Undoing the Social: Towards a Deconstructive Sociology*. Buckingham, Open University Press.

Goffman, E., 1959. *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. Harmondsworth, Penguin.

Hebley, D., 1998. *The Power of Place: Landscape in New Zealand Children's Fiction, 1970-1989*, Dunedin, University of Otago Press.

Jackson, M., 1994. *Pieces of Music*. Auckland, Vintage.

Latour, B., 1987. *Science in Action*. Cambridge, Harvard University Press.

Latour, B., 1993. *We Have Never Been Modern*. Cambridge, Harvard University Press.

Latour, B., 1997. 'On Actor-Network Theory: A Few Clarifications'. http://www.keele.ac.uk/depts/stt/ant/latour.r

Lemert, C.C., & Branaman, A., 1997. *The Goffman Reader*. Malden, Blackwell.

Levine, H.B., & Levine, M.W., 1987. *Stewart Island: Anthropological Perspectives on a New Zealand Fishing Community*. Wellington, Department of Anthropology, Victoria University of Wellington.

McHoul, A., 1997. 'Condensing Foucault', in O'Farrell C. (ed.), *Foucault: the Legacy*, Brisbane, Queensland University of Technology.

Manning, P., 1992. *Erving Goffman and Modern Sociology*, Stanford, Stanford University Press.

'Marsden Fund Research Grant', 1998. *Off the Record*, 5:9.

Massey, D., 1997. 'A global sense of place', in Gray, A. & McGuigan J. (eds.), *Studying Culture: An Introductory Reader*, Second Edition, London, Arnold.

Morris, M., 1990. 'Banality in cultural studies', in Mellencamp P. (ed.), *Logics of Television: Essays in Cultural Criticism*. Bloomington, Indiana University Press.

Perry, N., 1991. 'Review of *New Zealand Society*', *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Sociology*, 27(3):396-402.

Perry, N., 1994. *Dominion of Signs*, Auckland, Auckland University Press.

Silverman, D., 1993. *Interpreting Qualitative Data*, London, Sage.

Sinclair, K., 1961. *Distance Looks Our Way: The Effects of Remoteness on New Zealand*, Auckland, University of Auckland Press.

Sinclair, K., 1986. *A Destiny Apart: New Zealand's Search for National Identity*, Wellington, Allen & Unwin/Port Nicholson Press.

Smart, B., 1994. 'Sociology, globalisation and postmodernity: comments on the "sociology for one world" thesis', *International Sociology*, 9(2):149-159.

Soja, E.W., 1989 *Postmodern Geographies*. London, Verso.

Strathern, M., 1996. 'Cutting the network', *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 2:1-19.

Thrift, N., 1996. *Spatial Formations*, London, Sage.

Turner, B.S., 1986. 'Sociology as an academic trade: some reflections on centre and periphery in the sociology market', *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Sociology*, 22(2):272-282.

Turner, B.S., 1990. 'The two faces of sociology: global or national?', in Featherstone M. (ed.), *Global Culture,* London, Sage.

Wedde, I., 1995. *How to Be Nowhere*, Wellington, Victoria University Press.

Wolff, J., 1997. 'On the road again: metaphors of travel in cultural criticism', in McDowell L. (ed.), *Undoing Place?* London, Arnold.

Resisting legal marginalisation: inserting identity in critical socio-legal thought

Warwick Tie
Sociology Programme
Massey University

A failing project

The past decade has seen a significant degree of Australasian socio-legal energy invested in theorising and researching the relationship between formal and indigenous conceptions of law (see, for example, works by Jackson, 1987, 1988; Pratt, 1992; Morris and Tauri, 1995; Wickliffe, 1995; and collections by Kawharu, 1989; Hazlehurst, 1995a, 1995b, 1995c; and Wilson and Yeatman, 1995). Despite that considerable investment, there are few indications that indigenous perceptions are fundamentally altering the shape of formal law. Debates about the relationship of the New Zealand Treaty of Waitangi to that nation's constitutional law, for example – which symbolise the cusp of inter-ethnic understanding – remain dominated by discourses the origins of which are either in European liberal philosophy (see for example, Moore, 1998; Brookfield, 1989 and Palmer, 1992, 1995) or European legal theory (good examples being McHugh, 1989 and Keith, 1995). Indeed, as Moana Jackson lamentably opines (1995a:34-5), the ironical outcome of this otherwise laudable recognition of indigenous legal systems is the re-colonisation of indigenous peoples through the assimilation of their views via the language of legal pluralism.

To foreshadow the language through which I shall discuss this regressive situation, formal legal systems

have the potential to use perspectives from indigenous peoples (and others) in a functionalist manner, as a resource for adapting their own self-identity (as 'core social institutions') to the diversifying nature of socio-cultural life. The field of socio-legal orders is thus interpreted as a self-regulating organism to which the various expressions of law contribute, rather than as a stratified domain of potentially independent legal sub-systems with diverse forms and identities. The outcome is the maintenance of the hegemonic status of formal law.

This problem of misrecognition pivots on the issue of identity. Specifically, the various perspectives that emerge and/or exist on the boundaries of formal legal thought fail to be accorded an identity that is independent of professionalised law. To this end, indigenous conceptions of legality tend to get subsumed by jurisprudence as a result of the latter's failure to recognise the specificity and irreducible nature of the former.

This essay interrupts that regressive situation by inserting the dimension of identity into a particularly insightful and progressivist form of theorising about legal pluralism (Hunt, 1993), one which uses the Foucauldian concept of governance to articulate the relationship between the professionalised justice of formal state law and the array of regulatory orders and modes that constitute the wider domain of legality. This addition is pivotal for the recognition and validation of non-European conceptions of law in their own terms.

Beyond the legal domination of law

Questions about the most suitable way to conceptualise the fields of legality and regulation have been usefully posed as a confrontation between the rule-based image of law and those that portray law as a reflection of social processes (Hunt, 1993:301-8). The latter, flying under the name of socio-legal theory – and constituted by the 'law and society movement' and 'critical legal studies' – emerged in resistance to the cloistered image of formal law as a rule-based and self-referential institution. Principal protagonist for formal law was H.L.A. Hart (1961). His conception of law firmly embedded the notion of legality within professionalised justice by arguing that the grounds for legal rules lay in the activities of legal officials. Finnis's 'classical natural law' theory – as a significant co-contributor to this 'positive' conception of law as it has been generically called – departed slightly from this perception (1980), positing that legal norms have their origin within social interaction. The ability to distinguish between plebescatory norms and those of a higher order (i.e. law) resides, however, only with those at the zenith of academic jurisprudence.

The most strident challenge to the rule-based paradigm has come from Ronald Dworkin, who has argued that the most significant issue in law is the interpretation of rules, not the rules themselves (Dworkin, 1986). This thesis, however, merely repositions legal debate around questions about the nature of law's founding force (that is, about the nature of its meta-rule). In a step that is more sensitive than Hart's or Finnis' approaches to the pluralised reality of social life, Dworkin maintains that the source of the founding force is in a 'law' that exists 'beyond law'. Ironically, however, only

appellant judges have access to that realm, not social scientists or lay commentators. Thus, in the same way that Hart and Finnis locked the analysis of law within the halls of professionalised justice, so too has Dworkin, relegating critical legal insight to the historically contingent abilities of senior jurists.

Critical legal studies and the 'law and society' movement have effectively undermined the insular image of law that has accompanied this rule-based perception of legality. In the process, however, they have unreflexively substituted the 'interior' viewpoint and 'coherence' framework used within orthodox legal theory with an 'exterior' perspective and an 'incoherence' paradigm (Hunt, 1993:304). Following leads given by the American Realists, the law and society movement, for example, has adopted a perspective that is 'exterior' to law in order to monitor the effects on groups of 'internally generated' legal outputs. The critical legal studies movement, for its part, has highlighted the incoherence and incompleteness of the liberal legal project. That uncompleted state arises from law's inability to recognise the stratified fields of interaction within which it is embedded (for example, of gender and class relations). As might be expected, this failure leads to incoherent effects in legal decision-making (such as sexist assumptions pervading ostensibly value-free legal decisions). As a consequence of using these approaches in their studies of law, both the law and society movement and critical legal studies have merely inverted the theoretical terrain of positive law, thereby failing to transcend it. By taking the logic of the rules-based approach as their point of orientation, these putatively counter-hegemonic forms of legal critique inadvertently conserve that very paradigm.

A number of theoretical interventions into the field of law attempt to 'go beyond' the law/society dualism upon which the rules-based and socio-legal models are predicated. These replace the prevailing root images of law and society – as autonomous domains that exist alongside one another – with a view of social life as a field of mutually constituting modes of law and regulation (Hunt, 1993; Cain, 1994; Santos, 1995) or discourse and myth (Goodrich, 1987, 1990; Douzinas *et.al.*, 1990; Fitzpatrick, 1992). A principle intention of such moves is to demonstrate that the various domains of regulation are interconnected and interpenetrating. Their mutual constitution does not occur because of some ill-defined, pre-discursive association that exists between them, as functionalist narratives might assert but, rather, by virtue of a variety of historically specific discourses and strategies. Given the fully contingent nature of that field, it is thereby further envisaged, interventions into it have the potential to create discursive spaces for far-reaching redevelopments of the concept of legality.

Alan Hunt's contribution to this approach (1993) is emblematic of these projects, as well as novel. He wishes to argue that, contrary to prevailing legal pluralist sentiment, power is contained by key institutions such as the state and that any analysis of law must bear this in mind. This meshes with prevailing constructivist insights about the connections that exist between power and knowledge, in so far as it is seen that the state's 'rules-based' conception of law determines how the overall field of legality is imagined. Causing some tension with that constructivism, however, Hunt suggests that the domain of state law has a materiality that goes beyond its discursive effects and uses this to explain the continued ability of the state to vaunt and legitimate

particular viewpoints over others. The abiding ability of the state to do so suggests the existence of some material basis to its power, appearing as an apparently on-going (yet perpetually unsuccessful) 'unification' impulse (Hunt, 1993:313).

The amalgamation of the constructivist and materialist approaches is somewhat problematic in that it presupposes the existence of either a non-interpretative position, from which the dynamics of law can be determined in a neutral manner (as constructivism appears ultimately to presuppose), or, alternatively, of a 'true' standpoint whereby subjects develop the 'correct' understanding of history, *en route* to perfecting the emancipationist dreams of the Enlightenment. Either way, it resurrects the problem of what it means to find or create a valid perspective on law.

In order to avoid falling prey to the Scylla of thoroughgoing constructivism or the Charybdis of epistemology (that is associated with the development of materialist accounts), Hunt develops a series of concepts around the concept of governance. These suggest a new discursive terrain which, once inhabited, promises to render the dualism of constructivism/epistemology incomprehensible and, therefore, redundant. The device that creates this writing position is Hunt's location of law in the 'wider context' of 'regulatory modes', which function through the conduits of 'objects' that are to be regulated, of regulatory 'agents', regulatory 'knowledge' and regulatory 'strategies' (Hunt, 1993:315-19).

The critical point in Hunt's representation of legality is the manner in which the fields of regulation (of objects, agents, knowledge, and strategies) and of state-law interact. How this occurs is a question that lies at the
270

core of 'our contemporary concerns' (Hunt, 1993:305). To place another interpretation on the issue, it is to ask about how shared normative expectations might arise amidst a recognition that socio-cultural life is extraordinarily diverse. It also raises the question of how perspectives might be developed to create these basic shared-expectations, in the knowledge that no unifying vantage points exist for the task. Moreover, it signals the crucial nature of questions about how such perspectives might elide a crude pragmatist acceptance of prevailing belief-systems, given that there is no self-evident 'beyond' that can be used to take understanding beyond its present limitations.

In the same way that the uneasy tension between constructivism and epistemology chides easy resolution, Hunt resists the temptation to suggest that the governance paradigm will produce an innovative general theory of law. Rather, he anticipates a far more limited outcome that reflects his rather more circumspect expectations about what constitutes the proper reaches of contemporary theorising. The practice of theory can simply no longer be put to the task of creating universalistic explanations for institutions and events, on the presupposition that the theorist somehow has access to perspectives that are unsullied by political and cultural aspirations. This does not strip the governance framework of its critical pretensions. It simply qualifies them. Other theoretical approaches to law can be engaged with and criticised when they threaten to impede the unravelling of the relationship between state-law and social regulation. Engagement will not now occur, however, for the imperialist purpose of demonstrating the superior value of a particular paradigm (Hunt, 1993:305).

Toward an enriched sense of democracy

While offering profound insights and nuanced analyses about the multiple pathways through which power functions between various forms of regulation (and specifically between the site of state-law and the omnibus field of regulation), the constitutive theory of law threatens to retard the development of a dialogic sense of democracy to which it attempts to contribute. Its support for a vibrant civil sphere within which social conflicts can be negotiated is signalled in Hunt's strident resistance to the currently popular move of dismissing the state/civil distinction: 'since there is no other label we need to retain the concept of civil society and to sustain political commitment to the respect that a viable civil society is an important criteria of the health of a social formation (Hunt, 1993:310). The hope for the future, to this end, lies in the facilitation of social conditions that have the potential to enable dialogue between differing communities of tradition and life-style. The constitutive approach does not fulfil this goal, however, being retarded by its silence on matters of identity and its associated susceptibility of liberal political adventure.

The concepts that the constitutive theory of law deploys for mapping the connections between state-law and the diversified field of regulation – associated with *governance* – are not 'neutral', in that they are more able to speak about the contours of regulatory modes than the dynamics of centralised power. The emphasis that is placed on knowledge, strategies, modes of regulation, regulated objects and regulatory agents, provides a useful lexicon for describing the mechanisms through which power is exercised within both formal and non-formalised legal settings. Conversely, however, the functionalist form of explanation that is used in Hunt's

272

work to explain the machinations of state-law, in which the state exists to legitimate norms, is less helpful. It minimises the extent to which patterns of disputation and collective agency that occur in and around the state can be narrated. This situation exists because there is no causal form of analysis included that might help explain, for example, why some norms get legitimated rather than others.

In the absence of that causal dimension, the constitutive model inadvertently relies on an intentionalist source of explanation – as frequently found in conventional liberalist discourse – in which people are cast as the causes of social change. The existence of an active subjectivity akin to this is graphically demonstrated in the notion of the 'us' through which the text is written and legitimated (Hunt, 1993:305). The decontextualised nature of that identity stymies the full realisation of the theory's counter-hegemonic political horizons. That said, it is quite apparent that the text is written with the emancipationist intention of loosening the human subject from the limited horizons of rule-based law. This absence of an identity for both the author and the 'to be emancipated' human subject needs to be addressed if the constitutive theory of law is to outwork its political vision.

'De-liberalising' the position: providing the 'observer' with identity

In her appropriation of systems discourse, socio-legal theorist Drucilla Cornell (1992) highlights the enigmatic identity of 'the observer' in Niklas Luhmann's work on systems theory. This observer is the one who sees that which exists beyond the boundaries of prevailing social

systems. In the field of law, the observer is the person who understands the requirements of justice in any given case, who can identify what is required by 'the law that exists beyond institutionalised law'. Within orthodox legal theory, the observer has variously been cast as the legal official (by Hart), the jurisprudential theoretician (Finnis), and the appellant judge (by Dworkin). Each is a masculine lawyer and, as Drucilla Cornell retorts, this failure to appreciate the gendered and stratified nature of social systems ensures that law will remain restrained within the limits set by masculinist and hierarchical interpretations of social life.

Cornell inhabits Luhmann's discourse for the purpose of disrupting it, in order to argue that all systems – as self-referential as they appear to be to Luhmann – in fact presume the existence of perspectives that are exterior to themselves. This move is done in order to legitimate movements that oppose those legal reforms which erode the rights of marginalised groups, such as those concerning women's access to abortion services. Using Luhmann's functionalist notion of structural differentiation, Cornell supports the idea that systems give rise to sub-systems which, due to the specialist roles which they come to play, develop a measure of autonomy in the manner in which they perceive social life. As such, the core of a system repeatedly fails to in its ideological regulation of the peripheral domains. Moreover, systems are not equal as Luhmann appears to assume, in his sense that they can be characterised primarily by the functions that they play. Rather, they are stratified in relation to one another. Using Lacan and Derrida, Cornell suggests that systemic differentiation is stratified by gender. She does so *en route* to suggesting (in response to Luhmann's constant return to the role that 'the observer' plays in the interpretation of a system)

that the identity of those who can understand the requirements of justice in any given situation is *woman*. From the marginalised position within the gender hierarchy that *woman* inhabits, initiators of change (those that 'observe') are able to display the limitations of the prevailing images that constitute the system. To this end, a system is never 'self-limiting' and self-regulating as Luhmann contends but, rather, is 'de-limited' by the insights generated from subject-positions that form within its differentially stratified sub-systems (Cornell, 1992:84).

Hunt is proposing a similar sort of argument, and hence the reason for interrupting it with Cornell's focus on the issue of identity, except that his argument proceeds 'in reverse'. Beginning with an assumption akin to that of structural differentiation, he suggests that the field of law is characterised by a proliferation of sites and modes of regulation that function in a 'relative autonomous' manner to one another. In a similar manner to Cornell, he thereby highlights the diversity of the system, not its unity. His use of the term 'relative autonomy' signals a desire, also similar to that of Cornell's, to demonstrate the differentially stratified nature of the legal system. In Hunt's case, however, the goal is not to legitimate forms of subjectivity that emerge in the borderlands of formal law, as with Cornell. Rather, the goal is to correct an overstatement that is associated with those very subject-positions and which has become a problematic legal pluralist orthodoxy, that the field of law is constituted by an array of equally positioned legal forms (Hunt, 1993:320-5). As such, the notion of a *core* within law is reintroduced to legal pluralism – that is, *state-law* – whose universalising pretensions are de-limited by the machinations of irreducible modes of regulation.

The question that capture's Cornell's attention, about the identity of the observer, is invigorated by Hunt when he informs (Hunt, 1993:305, emphasis added) that the goal of grounding studies of law in the concept of *governance* is to create a device that better addresses *'our* present concerns' (about the relationship of state-law to other modes of regulation). Clearly, this use of the personal pronoun 'our' raises pertinent questions about the author's affiliations, of the range of associations that constitute the collective to which he alludes and, moreover, in whose concealed name the study is legitimated. The issue of identity is thus firmly and centrally implicated within the image of law that is being fashioned through the concept of governance.

The appearance of this putatively universal identity within Hunt's writing would be unproblematic from the perspective of liberal political philosophy. Such notions of 'self' lie at the fulcrum of positive law, in its celebration of moral autonomy and personal responsibility. Hunt evades the problematic issue of authenticity to which the liberal notion of selfhood gives rise and, more significantly, attempts to elide the universalising tenor which attends totalising theories such as liberal political philosophy. The universalising pretensions of the liberal position – where law is championed in the ostensibly particularlist name of 'the citizen' – runs counter to the more circumspect horizons of the theorising-mode through which the governance paradigm is presented. As inadequate as the personal pronoun 'us' becomes for conveying this intention to abjure universalising pretension and essentialised subjectivity, the term does clearly signal the enduring role that the concept of *identity* plays in the processes through which the reader is rendered malleable to the call of the governance paradigm.

276

The central point of interrupting Hunt's constitutive theory with Cornell's observations about the identity of the observer is to highlight the pertinence of the subject-positions from which socio-legal activism is launched. In the absence of attention being given to the observer's identity, the governance paradigm is at risk of simply reproducing the same moral-political neutrality toward stratified differentiation that is implied within liberal legal discourse, and thus unable to become 'critical' in the sense of offering sustained, non-pragmatist critique towards its chosen end of an enriched sense of democracy.

A potentially more fruitful basis for developing accounts of legality, of identity-positions and of their connections with an enlivened sense of democracy emerges from an examination of the 'selection mechanisms' through which innovative legal frameworks are chosen for implementation. This approach draws upon the distinction which Rom Harré makes (1981:161) between 'mutation forces' (which can refer either, in a humanist tenor, to individuals' activities or, conversely, in an anti-humanist tenor, to strategies of governance) and 'selection mechanisms' (the enabling and constraining effects of class, gender, and ethnic social relations on the activities of individuals or, alternatively, to the reach of particular strategies of governance).

Accounts of law that focus on mutation forces might theorise about change in terms of the activities of eminent jurisprudential thinkers (such as Hart or Dworkin) or the emergence of particular strategies of governance (ordinances, rules, legislation) and systems of knowledge (positive law, for example). The constitutive theory of law, I contend, is of this kind. If

anything at all is to be *explained*, from this perspective, it is the inability of social science to develop adequate explanatory accounts of the 'deep-structural causes' that might lie beneath these localised and historically contingent activities (for this type of argument, refer to Unger, 1987). As such, limited – if any – attention is given to explaining social phenomenon, such as the dynamics of centralising forms of power like state-law. Rather, they are presented in the static form of the functional roles with which they are attributed.

Alternatively, the forms of evolutionism that focus on selection devices – and that are privileged in this text – attend to the social processes through which collective cognitive learning occurs (Eder, 1987). An array of innovative legal frameworks, knowledge forms, and regulatory practices might arise at any one time but only those that accord with the tenor of prevailing social relations and conflict will be selected. As Hunt informs, the 'production of a regulatory mechanism involves some definite limitations on the strategies that may ultimately find legislative expression' (Hunt, 1993:319). The goal of my contribution to the debate is to supply terms and propositions that can assist the development of narratives about the evolution of those limitations.

The 'selection' thesis assumes the following range of ideas. First, social change does not rely on increases in the cognitive capacity of each individual, as liberalist analyses and Darwinian emphases on variations between single subjects might suggest. Rather, the pivotal entity within social evolution is 'culture' which reflects, in turn, the outcome of 'collective learning' processes (Eder, 1987:102). This captures something about the collectivism which Hunt portrays in his

reference to the 'us' who have current concerns about the relationship of law to the wider field of regulation.

Clearly, some humanist residues remain embedded within this approach, suggesting that 'moral progression' can occur through the formation of shared identities. This need not fall headlong into a liberalist celebration of *the self* and *the group.* Rather, as Kate Soper intimates (1990), it can support a more qualified notion of identity that abjures the search for authenticity in favour of demonstrating the inescapable nature of the notion of *selfhood*, as enigmatic as that idea is. Even the anti-humanist deconstruction of *self-hood*, she argues (Soper, 1990:149), occurs in the name of a putative subject who is to be emancipated from arbitrarily constructed constraints (of imposed forms of identity, for example). Interest in the issue of identity, therefore, does not equate with establishing the existence of a pre-discursive authenticity. Rather, identity is about establishing the where and when of the self's dialogic formation (Taylor, 1992:27-33). The purpose is to chart the emergence of that which, to paraphrase poet James K. Baxter, 'fills the gap in my coat'. It is in this limited sense that it is possible to speak of a collective that can share concerns, visions, and horizons of hope – as Hunt does – in the sense that it is difficult not to assume the existence of such identity.

Second, the possibility of progressive socio-cultural change is conditioned by the nature of 'class' struggles for 'control of the classificatory system' (Eder, 1987:105). Control of that system (which includes the institution of law) determines which narratives about social life are presented as truths for mass consumption, which life-styles are acceptable, and what sources of

normative order are to be respected (and that thereby become sedimented as the prevailing image of culture).

The concept of class, as used here, has no *a priori* meaning. Rather, it refers to a range of potential action-oriented interests that can assemble into social movements (Eder, 1987:107). Apparently, for Hunt, the state represents one of those enduring social movements – formed through the coalition of eighteenth century European bourgeois interests – as do the possible combinations of interest that might coalesce around beliefs, practices, and visions that are not directly associated with the state.

Third, class-groupings form around mutually antagonistic viewpoints that together constitute a 'collective learning process in which we as the observers also take part' (Eder, 1987:125). This proposition begins to sharpen the constitutive theory of law. Unlike the constitutive theory's functionalist equivalent of this point – which assumes that an unsullied perspective is available on the maelstrom which constitutes the 'collective learning process' that, once discovered, can enliven social participation – there is no epistemological standpoint that observers can inhabit that is not at the same time an aspect of that which is observed. To observe is to participate in the social conflict that shapes the learning process. Moreover, the ideals which propel people to actively participate in that learning process (of creating truth, justice, beauty, morality) exist beyond the collective, in an ineffable space. The critical cusp though which collective learning proceeds, ironically, is the conflict that arises between adherents of alternative images of those same ideals, where no *a priori* knowledge exists about how those very ideals might inform the 'just' resolution of their discord.

Fourth, in light of the central role and undetermined outcomes of conflict, the collective learning process can dissipate as easily as it can develop (Hahlweg, 1991). It has no equilibrium, as is suggested by orthodox forms of evolutionist theory and, as such, has no essential form or direction. This borrows the proposition from nonequilibrium thermodynamic theory that living beings are dissipative structures. As individuals, we die; as collectives we fall apart. There is no sense – *contra* the constitutive framework – that future imagined horizons will necessarily have a sense of 'us' around which to coalesce.

This proposition suggests that when human groups encounter increasingly complex and threatening social conditions they face the challenge of retaining internal coherence. The creation or maintenance of identity is a pivotal device in this. At such points the level of a groups' 'self-regulating' capacity to heighten their adaptability to changes in their socio-cultural surrounds becomes all important and the advance of collective cognitive learning equates with an ability by human groups to enhance their 'adaptability' to ramifying environments (Hahlweg, 1991:440-1).

Existing groups, by definition, have successfully adapted to the environments in which they live. Prior adaptation does not ensure continued fittedness, however, when that environment changes. The future nature of an identity will reflect how a group has fared in its struggles with those whose conceptions of value, worth, truth, etc. differ, or in the extent to which both end up having to accommodate the others' perspective and thus, equally alter their self-perceptions.

To a degree, the amorphous sense of 'us' which Hunt uses to convey a notion of identity is usefully 'loose', being able to convey the idea that a wide range of interactions are involved in such processes. In another sense, however, it is too restrictive in that it fails to signal the inherently conflictual and precarious nature of such interactions, through which all forms of identity are forged and refined.

Fifth, a collective's ability to enhance its levels of adaptability reflects both their history with change and the nature of social structures that either restrict or favour the selection of particular ideas and behaviours. Previous evolution will determine the resources with which a group faces change. In the cultural domain, those resources might exist as a collective memory that is held in classical texts, art, and mythological narratives. The range and scope of the strategies that allowed successful adaptation to environmental alterations in the past, and which remain accessible to the collective memory, will determine a group's capacity to negotiate future contingencies (Hahlweg, 1991:442). Cultural artefacts that had no prior survival-related function may be re-imagined and re-configured in ways that address prevailing social problems. This process of 'exaptation', as Gould and Vrba term it, refers to the co-option of functional characteristics that were previously unselected for any particular evolutionary purpose or that emerged to meet purposes of a differing kind (Gould and Vrba, 1982 cited in Hahlweg, 1991). The indigenous reinvigoration of mythologies as foundations for strengthening their democratic claims against the nation-state, represent this nicely (see, for example, Jackson's use of the mythologically-charged metaphor of 'fishing' as a basis for socio-legal theorising (Jackson, 1995b)).

In addition, and sixth, a group's ability to develop (expat) pre-existing cultural capital depends on its capacity for undetermined, creative activity, that most difficult trait to account for. As great as that imagination might be, however, it cannot fully compensate for the limited range of raw conceptual, figurative, and pictorial resources that the imagination is given to work with at any one time and place. Nor does it overcome resistance from other groups whose survival or well-being is threatened by the development of new self-understandings by collectives that seek change. The strength of that resistance – in either substantive terms (in the case of physical force that is mounted against the change) or ideological (in the case of attempts to discredit the 'value', 'truth', or 'morality' of the innovations) – becomes a real constraining element in a group's prospects for enhancing its adaptability. Thus, for example, Jackson's use of mythologically-charged metaphors to found legal argument is liable to be discredited by orthodox jurists on the basis that the sciences are ostensibly the only true source of epistemological validity.

Final reflections

In sum, the reworked evolutionist framework outlined above provides a device for identifying social dimensions which give rise to and condition the subject-positions that emerge both within a system and around its margins. Moreover, it portrays the notion of identity as a site of collective agency that prevents the easy incorporation of counterhegemonic identities into prevailing thought-systems (such as liberal law). As signalled, this is my concern with the non-authorial discursive positions that emerge through the governance paradigm. Rather, the

evolutionist framework represents identity as the outcome of struggles between unequally positioned groups over control of a society's various classificatory systems (such as law). These struggles are mounted in the name of valued horizons (such as justice, beauty, and truth) which, ironically, cannot orient those groups' perspectives. As a consequence, the best indicator of progress is continued existence in the face of diversifying social circumstances.

This approach usefully fills the silence that exists around 'identity' in the constitutive approach, without denuding the insights which the latter supplies about the mechanisms through which power functions within the field of legality. This appropriation of evolutionist discourse does not endorse the universalising pretensions that have often been associated with evolutionism, in which evolutionist theory is held to map out the entire domain of social life in a seamless and functionalist manner (for example, see Runciman, 1989). Rather, evolutionist discourse has been used here in a more qualified manner, for the modest task of amending the understated role of *identity* in Hunt's emblematic attempt to overcome a particular shortfall in contemporary legal pluralist theory (namely, the generalised failure by legal pluralists to appreciate the continuing role of centralising power within the field of legal relations). Without such amendment, the idea of state-law is reduced by functionalist argument to an institutional receptacle of competing social claims. All sense of dynamic inter-class conflict over control of its outputs is marginalised. The only sense of agency which emerges in the text, that can signal the existence of a mechanism through which such conflict can develop, is the de-contextualised subjectivity of the author. The form of evolutionism that is contributed here overcomes that

difficulty by presenting the issue of identity in the same aspectival tenor through which the governance paradigm portrays social life but by portraying group identity (the surface appearance of the collective learning process) as the site through and over which struggle is mounted for control of classificatory systems such as law.

References

Brookfield, F.M., 1989. 'The New Zealand Constitution: the search for legitimacy' in Kawharu, (ed.), *Waitangi: Maori and Pakeha Perspectives of the Treaty of Waitangi*, Auckland, Oxford University Press.

Cain, M., 1994. 'The Symbol Traders' in Cain and Harrington (eds.), *Lawyers in a Postmodern World: Translation and Transgression*, Buckingham, Open University Press.

Cornell, D., 1992. 'The Philosophy of the Limit: Systems Theory and Feminist Legal Reform' in Cornell, Rosenfeld, and Carlson (eds.), *Deconstruction and the Possibility of Justice*, New York and London, Routledge.

Douzinas, C., Warrington, R., & McVeigh, S., 1991. *Postmodern Jurisprudence. The Law of the Text in the Text of Law*. London, Routledge.

Dworkin, R., 1986. *Law's Empire*. London, Fontana Paperbacks.

Eder, K., 1987. 'Learning and the evolution of social systems: an epigenetic perspective' in Schmid and Wuketits (eds.), *Evolution Theory in Social Science*, Dordrecht, D Reidel.

Finnis, J., 1980. *Natural Law and Natural Rights*. Oxford, Clarendon Press.

Fitzpatrick, P., 1992. *The Mythology of Modern Law*. London and New York, Routledge.

Goodrich, P., 1987. *Legal Discourse: Studies in Linguistics, Rhetoric and Legal Analysis.* Basingstoke, Macmillian.

Goodrich, P., 1990. *Languages of Law: From Logics of Memory to Nomadic Masks.* London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson.

Gould, S.J., & Vrba, E.S., 1982. 'Exaptation - A Missing Term in the Science of Form' in *Paleobiology,* Vol. 8:4-15.

Hahlweg, K., 1991. 'One the Notion of Evolutionary Progress' in *Philosophy of Science,* Vol. 58:436-51.

Harré, R., 1981, 'The evolutionary analogy in social explanation' in Uffe and Harré (eds.), *The Philosophy of Evolution,* Harvester Press.

Hart, H.L.A., 1961. *The Concept of Law,* Oxford, Clarendon Press.

Hazlehurst, K.M. (ed.), 1995a. *Legal Pluralism and the Colonial Legacy: Indigenous Experiences of Justice in Canada, Australian, and New Zealand.* Aldershot, Avebury.

Hazlehurst, K.M. (ed.), 1995b. *Perceptions of Justice: Issues in Indigenous and Community Empowerment,* Aldershot, Avebury.

Hazlehurst, K.M. (ed.), 1995c. *Popular Justice and Community Regeneration: Pathways of Indigenous Reform.* Westport, Praeger.

Hunt, A., 1993. *Explorations in Law and Society: Toward a Constitutive Theory of Law.* York and London, Routledge.

Jackson, M., 1987. *The Maori and the Criminal Justice System - A New Perspective: He Whaipaanga Hou.* Wellington, Department of Justice.

Jackson, M., 1988. *The Maori and the Criminal Justice System - A New Perspective: He Whaipaanga Hou, Part .,* Wellington, Department of Justice.

Jackson, M., 1995a, 'A Colonial Contradiction or a Rangatiratanga Reality' in McElrea (ed.), *Re-Thinking Criminal Justice Vol. 11: Justice in the Community* Wellington: Institute of Criminology, Victoria University.

Jackson, M., 1995b, 'Comment' in McLay (ed.), *Treaty Settlements: The Unfinished Business.* Wellington: New Zealand Institute of Advanced Legal Studies and Victoria University of Wellington Law Review.

Kawharu I.H. (ed.), 1989, *Waitangi: Maori and Pakeha Perspectives of the Treaty of Waitangi.* Auckland: Oxford University Press.

Keith, Sir K., 1995, 'The Roles of the Tribunal, the Courts and the Legislature' in McLay (ed.), *Treaty Settlements: The Unfinished Business.* Wellington: New Zealand Institute of Advanced Legal Studies and Victoria University of Wellington Law Review.

McHugh, P.G., 1989, 'Constitutional Theory and Maori Claims' in Kawharu (ed.), *Waitangi: Maori and Pakeha Perspectives of the Treaty of Waitangi,* Auckland: Oxford University Press.

Moore, M., 1998, 'New Zealand Constitutional [People's] Convention Bill: Explanation'. Occasional paper. Labour Party of New Zealand, Wellington.

Morris, A., & Tauri, J., 1995, 'Maori Justice: Possibilities and Pitfalls' in McElrea (ed.), *Re-Thinking Criminal Justice Vol. 11: Justice in the Community,* Wellington: Institute of Criminology, Victoria University.

Palmer, G., 1992, *New Zealand's constitution in crisis: reforming our political system.* Dunedin: McIndoe.

Palmer, G., 1995, 'Where to from here?' in *Treaty Settlements: The Unfinished Business,* McLay (ed.), Wellington: New Zealand Institute of Advanced Legal

Studies and Victoria University of Wellington Law Review.

Pratt, J., 1992, *Punishment in a perfect society : the New Zealand penal system, 1840-1939.* Wellington: Victoria University Press.

Runciman, W.G., 1989, *A Treatise on Social Theory, Vol. II Substantive Social Theory.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Santos, B., 1995, *Toward a New Common Sense: Law, Science and Politics in the Paradigmatic Transition.* New York: Routledge.

Soper, K., 1990, *Troubled Pleasures: Writings on Politics, Gender, and Hedonism.* London: Verso.

Taylor, C., 1989, *Sources of the Self.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Unger, R.M., 1987, *False Necessity.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Wilson, M., & Yeatman, A. (eds.), 1995, *Justice and identity : antipodean practices.* St. Leonards: Allen & Unwin.

Wickliffe, C., 1995, 'A Maori Criminal Justice System' in McElrea (ed.), *Re-Thinking Criminal Justice Vol. 11: Justice in the Community,* Wellington: Institute of Criminology, Victoria University.

Acknowledgements

'I Really Don't Know Much About It But...':
A Typology of Rhetorical Devices Used in
Talk About Maori/Pakeha Relations

Farida Tilbury
Victoria University
Wellington

Abstract

This paper is an analysis of rhetorical devices used in talk about 'race relations' in New Zealand. I argue that Maori and Pakeha skilfully manipulate language to provide an argument rather than just an opinion or viewpoint when talking about race relations in New Zealand. The articulation of attitudes occurs in a dialogic form, using a number of specific linguistic devices designed both to convince and to 'impression-manage'. The same devices can be used to support a variety of different arguments and perspectives, from very liberal to very conservative. Rhetorical devices are creatively utilised by actors to legitimate their positions.

Sometimes touted as having 'the best race relations in the world', New Zealand has recently come under scrutiny for the entrenched negative attitudes of Pakeha towards Maori and other minorities. Recurring negative themes in the discourses of Pakeha New Zealanders have been analysed elsewhere (Mead, 1982; Nairn and McCreanor, 1990, 1991; McCreanor, 1993a, 1993b; Wetherell and Potter, 1992). In this paper the form rather than the content of these discourses, as well as oppositional ones, is investigated. By looking at the forms of language, that is, the ways in which ideas about race relations are expressed,

an understanding of how ideology and counter-ideology is produced and reproduced may be gained[1].

Rhetoric - the art of persuasion

The devices described below are rhetorical. Rhetoric is a word used often in daily life and in sociology, but its meaning is ill-defined. In colloquial use rhetoric means 'hot air', empty speech, language used to deceive or, in Shakespeare's words, 'sound and fury signifying nothing'. It is a charge frequently levelled at politicians known for their verbosity and linguistic acrobatics. In sociology rhetoric is synonymous with communication or discourse generally. This fuzzy, catch-all use detracts from its utility as a concept referring to a specific type of discourse. It is useful to return to the original meaning of the word, which was coined by the ancient Greeks, to mean the art of persuasive speech (Cherwitz and Hikins, 1986; Hauser, 1986; Billig, 1987). Frances Bacon argued that rhetoric is the art of achieving influence or suasion by adapting communication to subject matter and to audience (Cherwitz and Hikins, 1986:56).

I use the term 'rhetorical devices' to describe forms of expression which take account of, and are constructed in relation to, an audience's possible reaction. They consist of standard forms which can be used in support of quite different arguments. The commonality or consistency of form indicates that the speakers belong to a single speech

---

[1] See Billig (1987, 1991), Nairn and McCreanor (1990, 1991), van Dijk (1987, 1988, 1993) and Wetherell and Potter (1992), for detailed analyses of the connection between everyday language and the generation and perpetuation of ideology.

community – they share the basic linguistic resources and knowledge of how to use these to produce and understand arguments (Coulthard, 1977:32; Scott and Lyman, 1981:360). The recognition of these common forms acts as 'the very glue of social experience' for it allows people to engage in reasoned argument without having to worry that they will be talking past each other (Cherwitz and Hikins, 1986:52). These expressions are best seen as 'speech acts' (Austin, 1962) as they perform at least two actions – convincing and 'impression management' (Goffman, 1990 [1959])[2].

When people talk about race relations they use rhetorical devices to give accounts of their views of reality. Since 'accounts are constructed to have specific consequences' (Potter and Wetherell, 1987:43), it would appear that there are at least two purposes speakers seek to achieve in giving their accounts (Billig, 1987; van Dijk, 1987). One of the purposes behind any expression of an attitude or viewpoint is to persuade or convince. This involves presenting a credible argument in order to persuade others to see events in the light that the speaker wishes, to convince the listener to share the speaker's 'definition of the situation' (Thomas, 1928; Goffman, 1990 [1959]; Billig, 1987). Claims-making about the nature of reality is frequently a function of communication. Communication is thus inventional, creating and recreating, refining and interpreting reality (Cherwitz and Hikins, 1986:57).

---

[2]   Language use often has more than one layer of activity (Clark, 1996). In this paper I am concerned with only two – persuasion and impression management.

Another purpose behind any account-giving is impression management or face saving (Scott and Lyman, 1981; van Dijk, 1987; Billig, 1991; Silverman, 1993; Clark, 1996). According to Scott and Lyman, '[e]very account is a manifestation of the underlying negotiation of identities' (1981:357), it is an attempt to claim a positive identity. In conversational interaction people claim a positive image or respect for themselves. This sense of self-respect is known as 'face' (Clark, 1996). Face is 'the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself [sic]' (Goffman, 1967:5). Erving Goffman pointed out that people manage the impressions that others receive of them; people will generally try to present themselves to their audiences in the best light, often to achieve a particular end. But we also impression-manage to appear in a positive light to ourselves (Billig, 1991:130). For example, being 'racist' has a normative injunction against it as it has become a socially undesirable trait (Billig, 1987, 1991; Van Dijk, 1993; Verkuyten, 1998). As a consequence, people not only want to convince others that they are not racist, they themselves want to believe that they are not. Thus they will use rhetorical devices to present themselves as non-racist. This will often include an attempt to present oneself as rational, for prejudice and racism are currently defined in terms of irrationality (Billig, 1987; Verkuyten, 1998). Similarly, when expressing their views people will use strategies to appear reasonable, intelligent, liberal, thoughtful, appraised of the facts and competent members of society. These two functions are intertwined, for the attempt to convince has a face saving aspect to it, and the concern for appearing reasonable is part of the repertoire of persuasive devices.

While some researchers have shown how some of these devices are used by the dominant Pakeha majority

when expressing 'prejudiced' opinions[3], I argue that both Maori and Pakeha use the same rhetorical devices and that these may be applied for different ends. The same conventions for expression may be the vehicle for quite different arguments. Thus more liberal and more conservative arguments[4] are supported through the use of the same linguistic forms. Individuals will also use the same devices for different ends in different contexts. This demonstrates that the 'use of rhetoric requires inventional as well as managerial activity because to describe reality through language it is necessary to search for the most substantive bases on which to rest claims and to search for the best methods of their expression' (Cherwitz and Hikins, 1986:67). Since the principles of rhetoric exist over and above their specific use in a specific argument (Cherwitz and Hikins, 1986:67), it is possible to map these principles.

In the same way that accounts of actions are 'standardized within cultures so that certain accounts are terminologically stabilized' (Scott and Lyman, 1968:47)

---

[3]   See, for example, the work of Billig (1987, 1994), Essed (1991), Nairn and McCreanor (1991), Van Dijk (1987, 1993), and Wetherell and Potter (1992), who have analysed how 'white' majorities express racist views.

[4]   Liberal and conservative have a number of different meanings. They are used here as ideal types to distinguish pro-Maori views from anti-Maori. Thus more liberal arguments were those in favour of affirmative action policies, returning disputed lands, developing parallel health, justice and education systems, encouraging Maori language in schools and so on. Liberalism and conservatism in this context can be seen as a continuum, where conservative discourses favour policies which focus on the interests of the Pakeha majority and support assimilation of minorities into the majority culture.

and therefore recognizable to hearers, the linguistic structure of these standardized rhetorical devices is recognisable, readable, hearable. The same structures can be used to argue quite different positions. Just as the content of accounts is standardized and recognizable to hearers and becomes part of a cultural repertoire of discourses, so the form of the accounts or arguments is also standard (Scott and Lyman, 1981; Nairn and McCreanor, 1991, 1990; Wetherell and Potter, 1992).

In sum then, rhetorical devices can be conceptualised as tools which are used to construct arguments comprehensible to an audience. The audience may not share the views being expressed using these devices, but they can 'hear' the speaker because they share knowledge of the tools. In this manner discourses of resistance can be heard. It is often the standard form for the story which pulls off the argument, for it is the structure which is recognized by the hearer. If we read tools as rhetorical devices, and house as ideology, contrary to Audre Lorde's contention that different tools are needed to dismantle 'the master's house' (Lorde, 1984:110-113), it would appear that the same tools **can** be used to dismantle it, and to build a new house.

The data

The data are taken from interviews conducted for PhD research which is an investigation into the relationship between people's personal friendship networks, their sense of their ethnic identity and attitudes to 'race relations' issues.

The findings so far indicate that Maori and Pakeha utilise a range of arguments from a variety of discursive repertoires when expressing their views about race

relations issues in New Zealand. The more conservative arguments tend to come from Pakeha and Maori whose main circles of association are Pakeha. The more liberal arguments tend to come from Maori and Pakeha who have stronger Maori networks. These arguments are frequently constructed in opposition to the more dominant conservative discourse. For this paper I focus on the forms the arguments take, the structures of the rhetoric used, rather than their content, though in many cases the two are connected.

The illustrative examples are drawn from semi-structured interviews with a snowballed sample of eight Maori and eight Pakeha from broadly working class backgrounds aged between 20 and 45. The names are pseudonyms and the ethnic identities are self selected. Respondents were asked about their friendships and about their sense of ethnic identity and the contexts in which it becomes salient. They were then asked to comment, if they had anything they wanted to say, on a list of issues concerning Maori/Pakeha relations such as land protests and activists who had been in the media recently, Maori language, Maori sovereignty, parallel systems, New Zealand's race relations generally and so on. Most of the following examples are taken from these discussions. Methodologically it is interesting to note that although there was no ostensible audience that the respondents were setting out to convince[5], their viewpoint was expressed in a dialogic or argumentative form. The viewpoint or belief was

---

[5]   I am aware that the construction of the arguments may have been influenced by the respondents' perception of my viewpoint as interviewer, and their attempts to convince and impression-manage to that. However since the devices are recognizable as common to everyday talk, it can be argued that they are not context specific.

never just stated outright but was always supported with an argument, reflecting the rhetorical nature of communication (Billig, 1987).[6]

Before discussing the rhetorical devices and their functions I would like to emphasise that these are only some of the strategies discovered, and some possible functions. There is also an interplay between many of the devices. No comment is made on the extent to which there is a conscious manipulation of these for specific ends. For the current typology, I have selected eight rhetorical techniques and examples from the interview transcripts which illustrate these in use. A future paper will demonstrate how these devices were combined by participants in the research to produce accounts of their views on 'race relations'.

A typology of rhetorical devices

The following is a list of rhetorical devices used in talk about 'race relations' in New Zealand. These have been grouped into devices which are available for both conservative and liberal arguments, and those exclusively used in the more conservative discourses[7].

---

[6]   Silverman advises approaching the interview as a local accomplishment, where the researcher treats responses as displays of perspectives and moral forms (1993:107). The devices described here are some of the tools available to display these forms.

[7]   It is interesting to conjecture whether the use of these linguistic devices has increased as a result of what some have identified as 'the new racism' – racism based within cultural rather than racial difference. One characteristic of this new style of racism is the ambivalence with which it is expressed. Cultural norms of egalitarianism sit uncomfortably with those of individualism and meritocracy,

Following this is a more detailed discussion of some of the devices available for both (those labelled with an asterix).

Rhetorical devices available for both liberal and conservative arguments

1. Emphasise similarity between self and audience – includes complicity (appealing to the listener as a sharer of the experience) – 'you know'; 'you're probably the same yourself'.
2. Disclaimers *, tentativeness, hedging – 'um...well'; 'I don't know much about it but...'.
3. Using personal experience as proof of correctness of one's view – 'I've seen it myself'.
4. Revealing the thought processes which led to one's arrival at a particular conclusion * – 'I used to disagree but I've changed my mind because...'.
5. Emotional displays - includes tone of voice – 'It really hacks me off.'.
6. Exemplification * – 'See, like, if my grandfather owned a car...'.

---

a contradiction noted in the 1940s by Gunnar Myrdal (1944). The result is the desire to appear non-racist and reasonable in one's views (egalitarian) while maintaining an underlying inclination to discriminate. It becomes a conscious or unconscious attempt to disguise racist sentiments (Elliott and Fleras, 1996). This has also been called aversive racism (Gaertner and Dovidio, 1986; Billig, 1988, 1991) . The justificatory nature of many of these devices is perhaps an artefact of these normative changes. However, once again it must be emphasised that most of the devices are used to express anti-racist views also.

7. Appeal to the 'facts' – 'Let's get things straight here...'.
8. Presenting one's position as the reasonable middle ground* – 'I don't feel strongly one way or another'.
9. Claiming special knowledge* – 'Most people don't know this but...'.
10. Credentialising * – 'You wouldn't know because you're not Maori'.
11. Dichotomising – identify two choices as the only options – 'Look either they take the fiscal envelope and stop complaining or be happy with what they've got now.'.
14. Inversion – 'I'm white and male – basically picked on'.
15. Deflections – 'Well, we didn't have it easy either'.
18. Direct criticism of another position or individuals espousing that position – 'They're just rednecks'.
19. Naming tactics – 'It wasn't a gift, they stole it'.
20. Overstatement, repetition, emphasis – 'They should take them out and shoot the lot of them, they bloody well should, they should shoot them'.
21. Rhetorical questions * – 'How can we be expected to celebrate them taking our country?'.
22. Self-repair – 'They can have their little ceremonies, well not 'little', but you know...'.

Devices available primarily for conservative arguments

1. Proverbs; clichés – 'At the end of the day'.
2. Couch one's view as voicing the majority opinion * – 'I don't think we're being unreasonable'.
3. Concede a general principle in order to deny a specific instance – 'Yes, perhaps we should give land back but you can't expect people who have

lived on it for generations to be turned out of their homes'.

4. Discrediting a specific instance to discredit the whole principle – 'My niece learnt Maori and then couldn't speak English properly'.
5. Incomprehension – 'I just don't understand what they want'.

Some examples[8]

(i) Reasonable middle ground

Speakers commonly try to align themselves with the audience. Presenting one's view as the reasonable middle ground involves constructing other views, or those holding those views, as radicals or conservatives. Both Maori and Pakeha, and those using more conservative and more liberal discourses, used this device to position themselves as moderate. This device presents the speaker as reasonable, moderate and tolerant, and others as unreasonably radical or conservative – in this case, 'bleeding heart liberal' or 'racist'. Its persuasive function is to convince the audience that rather than taking one of these extreme positions, you are taking a middle ground position which is more reasonable. The following three examples show how the device can be used to produce the same outcome while arguing from quite different positions.

---

[8] Interviews were transcribed verbatim. Transcription conventions are as follows:
... pause in speech;
[ ] section of transcript deleted;
[word] word included by author for clarity;
where longer sections of transcript are used, italics indicate the device illustrated.

> You've got your radicals in both groups,
> you've got your pacifists in both groups, and
> you get the guys in both groups who really
> don't give a shit either way... (Nelson - Maori).

Nelson here aligns himself neither with the 'radicals', those intent on using any means to promote their interests, be it liberal or conservative; nor with the 'pacifists', those who have a position but who are not willing to use any means to achieve it. Instead he presents himself as belonging to the reasonable middle group of Maori and Pakeha who do not care and who wish the race relations debate would go away. His views were generally conservative.

Awhina, who generally used a much more liberal discourse, uses the device in a similar way. Throughout her interview she was careful to explain that while she felt a great deal more needed to be done to improve the situation of Maori, she did not agree with some of the actions of some Maori. Here she presents herself as being of that group of people in the reasonable middle ground in between both Maori and Pakeha racists.

> I know there are a lot of Maori people out
> there that are racist, just as there are a lot of
> Pakeha people out there that are racist.
> (Awhina - Maori)

A similar argument comes from Hannah who distances herself from Maori activists who take more radical actions.

> [Maori activists] Ken Mair and Mike Smith, I think
> they're really amazing. I mean I don't agree with
> everything they say, everything they think and
> everything they do, but I think people like that are

really good because they make people think...
you know, are the extremes perhaps, and we
need people like that to do what they do.
(Hannah - Maori)

By blaming both sides the speaker appears
evenhanded and reasonable. Nairn and McCreanor
argue that the effect of this positioning strategy is
necessarily to normalize Pakeha hegemony (1990:305).
From these examples it is clear that the device can be
used to present the speaker as balanced and moderate.
They can, and do, then go on to express views which
may be quite radical and counterhegemonic. It does not
necessarily function to legitimate the dominant
hegemony.

(ii) Reveal thought processes

When talking about 'race relations' those expressing
both liberal and conservative views often explained how
the views were arrived at, revealing their thought
processes. This device presents the speaker as a
thinking being, demonstrating how evidence has been
considered and a reasoned conclusion reached. The
self-disclosure format, as well as being a form of
politeness (Holmes, 1990), creates an empathy between
the speaker and audience. It persuades by allowing the
listener to follow the process which, ostensibly, has led
the speaker to his or her conclusion. The resulting
expression, though more tentative, is strategic in that it
may prevent attacks on views stated since the reasoning
process is shown (Mulholland, 1994:325).

Some of the respondents used this device more than
others, generally those using more liberal arguments,
though not exclusively. It is almost as if they felt the need

to lead the listener along the path to their less popular view. The following extract comes from a Pakeha man who used very liberal discourses. Here he explains how he initially thought that having 'total immersion' Maori language schools would cause difficulties, but his opinion changed through his experience of watching Maori friends who could not speak te reo Maori in speeches on a Marae.

> That total immersion, *I used to think*, gee, that would be hard because I wouldn't be able to . understand, *but really it's a good thing*, because ...it's uh, what the language, well *I can relate to* a couple of mates of mine at a 21st that I've just been to. Well I felt, I didn't say anything but I felt sorry for a couple of my mates because he got up and spoke on behalf of his daughter,[] and he says oh you know, 'I'm sorry I can't speak in the Maori language'. And...I thought it was sad he had to be sorry and if...you know if he couldn't speak in the language well, I didn't think he had to apologize. And well, I think well, there are a lot of people out there, well I know a couple, and oh I just met a fellow, one of my mates in here who wanted to learn their language and you know, because they know they're missing something, and I think well if they have this teaching for these young ones, well that's good. (Rob - Pakeha)

Rob's explanation of how his views changed acts as a justification for those views.

(iii) Exemplification

A similar device is exemplification – the use of examples to illustrate one's views. One of the impression management functions of this device is to present the speaker as reasonable, thoughtful and intelligent in that

one can foresee consequences and can apply real situations to theories. By giving examples the speaker helps the listener to follow through their position. It also makes the argument more interesting by applying it to a 'real life' situation. However it also constrains the listeners by forcing them to interpret the theory in the light of that particular example.

It is generally, but not always, used to show the consequences of a theory if put into practice. Speakers will often choose an example which illustrates the best case to support their argument. The theory and example are sometimes presented as an hypothesis. This can be done without penalty and allows abstract discussion. But speakers may also use real examples from their own lives (see also van Dijk, 1987:282). For example, one respondent, when asked to give his view on the idea of parallel health systems, gave an example of a Maori health clinic which was working successfully in order to illustrate how such a system could operate. Others, discussing the same issue, gave hypothetical examples of the impossibility of treating according to 'race' at two different hospitals. There were many similar examples. Respondents did not feel they could just offer an opinion in the abstract but needed to support it using exemplification. This demonstrates the argumentative quality of communication, for these examples were offered as proofs even though proof was not requested.

The following examples were very typical. The first offers a hypothetical example to support a conservative argument regarding returning land to dispossessed people, the second a real example to argue for a more liberal stance on teaching Maori language in schools.

It's too late now, you can't do it, you just can't, it's a deal. *Like say if I sold my car to someone* and I sold it for five grand and later on down the line I found out that it was actually worth 30 odd grand and then wanted to take it back - not correct. You just have to go on, you can't start, *in some cases where they've tried to* kick people out of their houses because of it, or some people say 'Oh I'm a Maori' and they take over these places here and want to start renting it to you, []...You've got to stay with what you've got, otherwise you're going to get a whole lot of people saying 'Oh I had an unfair deal with this'. It's just too late. We all get ripped off in our life at some time, at least twice. (Nelson - Maori)

I don't see how people could have a problem with Pakeha kids learning [Maori language] either at a primary school level, yeah I think everyone should. I, *it's like over in Canada,* everyone speaks French language and no-one has a problem with it, and I think it's because it's seen as a sort of a nice language, European language. Yeah and nobody thinks it's a bad thing or anything, whereas here it's like an ugly duckling isn't it?   No-one seems interested. (Yvonne – Maori)

(iv) Credentialising

Another device which justifies the speaker's right to make a judgement on a particular issue is credentialising[9]. This

---

[9] Hewitt and Stokes include credentialising in their discussion of disclaiming devices used by people to extricate themselves from potentially embarrassing situations. They describe hedging, credentialising, sin licences, cognitive disclaimers and appeals for suspension of judgement (Hewitt and Stokes, 1981). Some of these overlap with the techniques I describe, but while Hewitt

technique involves making a positive identity claim, or denying a negative identity attribution. It was used in a variety of ways by respondents. For example, one Maori respondent used the fact that he had travelled extensively throughout the world and seen the position of other indigenous cultures, to support his view that Maori should be happy with their status in New Zealand. Another Maori respondent used his own experience as a 'self made man' to justify his view that anyone can achieve if only they try hard enough.

The impression this device projects is one of competence as a commentator on the particular issue at hand. This is what provides its persuasive force; an argument is more likely to be taken seriously if one can show one's authorising credentials. It legitimates the speaker's right to have their views heard as unbiased. It also silences opposition because the speaker has declared him/herself an expert through personal experience.

There were three special forms of credentialising.

(a) Some of my best friends are...

One form which is frequently used in talk about race relations is that of 'special association' (Billig, 1988, 1991; van Dijk, 1987, 1988). The common refrain 'some of my best friends are Maori/Pakeha...' is used to claim some form of insider knowledge, as well as to legitimate one's views as not being those of the usual group of critics – the 'racists' who don't mix with members of other races. In the following

and Stokes focus on the face saving aspect, I wish to emphasise their use as authorizations to speak, as legitimators.

excerpt a Pakeha woman provides a list of Maori friends and relatives to show how close she is to Maori[10] but then goes on to criticise what she sees as Maori using their ethnicity to get special treatment.

> I don't see Elaine and Turei as Maori and I don't see Alice and Hanson as Maori – I just see them as my friends. But I do, *I've got a lot*, it's like um Tea and Rau eh, they're just... friends, they're just friends, and they're doing really, really well. I don't consider them Maori, *I consider them my friends, but just I honestly think it's WRONG I really think it's WRONG the way that the Maoris are using what they've* and I do and I don't think it's going to get any better and I don't want my kids to be part of it." (Elizabeth – Pakeha)

(b) Avoid Negative Label

Another form of credentialising, related to the above technique, is the 'I'm not prejudiced, but...' device. This was first discussed by Hewitt and Stokes who described it as 'a verbal device employed to ward off and defeat in advance doubts and negative typifications' (Hewitt and

---

[10] By stating that she doesn't think of these friends and relatives as Maori, the respondent uses what Ruth Frankenberg (1993) has called the 'colour-blind' discourse which invisibilises people of colour. Yet she uses them to legitimate her right to generalise about Maori. It is also interesting that she points out how her friends are doing well, which implies either that they are different from the norm or that they are different from the particular Maori she goes on to criticize. She thus makes an exception for her friends. This bracketting out of her Maori friends allows her to retain rather conservative views while at the same time interacting with Maori.

Stokes, 1981:365; see also Potter and Wetherell, 1987:48). This denial allows one to claim membership of the moral community of the unprejudiced (Billig, 1991:125). It is a form of second guessing, or prolepsis, for by foreseeing a negative impression and dealing with it, one can forestall objections. Again it makes one's argument more credible (Van Dijk, 1987:290-2) because by denying that you belong to the usual group of critics you claim not to hold that opinion by reason of your group membership. It thus attempts to legitimate one's views. At the same time, it both justifies the speaker and criticises others – those who really are racist, or who don't have friends of the other group and so on. It allows 'racist sentiments simultaneously [to be] expressed and denied' (Billig, 1991:124).

In many cases in my interviews, where respondents realized that what they were saying sounded 'racist' they used a denial technique to correct the possible negative impression made. More often than not the speaker who caught him/herself expressing views which could seem objectionable managed to use other devices to escape that conclusion, such as pointing to examples of those who were more prejudiced.

The following example is from an interview with a Pakeha couple. Although the full transcript is too long to reproduce here the respondents go on to agree that they are not racist like Hitler, or White Power, and to talk of their Maori relatives who they love dearly and how they would be the first to support anyone undergoing a racist attack.

> E – I mean...you say you say...*you're not racist,*
> *but yet, listening to us talk tonight, ...it's very*
> *...racist.*
> L – But *nah, I don't see it,* I don't, I don't, um like I
> say, you know
> E – *selective racism*
> L – Yeah, selective, yeah...against the radical
> people   (Elizabeth and Les – Pakeha and
> European)

This example demonstrates how the speakers manage the impression they present to their audience, but also to themselves. Here they try to reconcile conflicting aspects of an attitude – the desire to discriminate along racial lines, with the need to see themselves as liberal and unprejudiced (Billig, 1991:127; Elliott and Fleras, 1996:63). They deny that they are racist by categorising 'real' racists as those involved in violence against minorities.

(c) Identity claims

The above examples show how credentialising is used to legitimate conservative discourses. It was also available in a slightly different form for those wanting to argue from a more liberal perspective. Often the claim to Maoriness was used as a credential which provided a clearer vision of the race debate. Respondents used the identity claim 'Maori' to legitimate arguments, regardless of their knowledge of the language, type of upbringing, involvement in cultural activities and so on.

The following extract shows how this sort of credentialising is sometimes necessary even among Maori. Sometimes Maori have to justify their own right to speak as Maori.

> I might have the features but I've still got a very
> fair skin, and there are times when people might

try and push me to the side on these Maori occasions, because of the way I look. []So as far as they're concerned I would not be Maori, and I think 'Well up your bum and who are you anyway to be telling me I'm not Maori?' . []And in my own personal experiences there is not a doubt in my mind who I am... (Awhina - Maori)

(v) Rhetorical questions

Rhetorical questions were very popular among respondents. A rhetorical question is one to which you don't expect a reply, generally because the answer is self-evident or implied in the question (Van Dijk, 1987:107-8). Similar to the incomprehension device, rhetorical questions allow the speaker to appear as though they are trying to understand the issue, trying to see a way around a problem or requesting an answer to a puzzle. They persuade because the audience must empathise, must agree with the speaker's implicit conclusion. The answer is obvious, self evident, unquestionable. In the following examples it can be seen that the device is available for both conservative and liberal arguments.

No, *why should they [get special treatment?* We never got a helping hand and we turned out alright. (Nelson – Maori, on affirmative action policies)

You look at the Jews and that that are living here and they have their ways and I mean, and that and that's fine you know BUT at the end of the day you go to somebody's country, and...*if you're going there to take your country there then why go? What is the point?* (Elizabeth – Pakeha)

Elizabeth does not appear to pick up the irony in this rhetorical question.

> Um, I think Waitangi Day should be scrapped completely. I don't think there is any cause for celebration at all. *How can we have a national holiday for something that was never um, basically it is the signing of a contract that the white people never came through on? What's to celebrate? Why are we having a national holiday for something that is really is contemptible?*
> (Hannah – Maori)

(vi) Couching one's view as that of the majority

Another technique is to couch one's opinion as merely voicing the majority view. Using this device the speaker does not have to own the opinion, or even to argue its accuracy. An opinion can merely be stated as though the speaker is reporting it. Since it is given as a majority position it holds weight because it appeals to shared democratic principles (Mulholland, 1994). Use of this device presents the speaker as the common person – someone who is in tune with the views of the general population. It also projects a degree of personal detachment, for the speaker presents him/herself as merely reporting a generally accepted truth (Mulholland, 1994:110). The speaker becomes impartial, an objective observer.

The device persuades by convincing the audience that the speaker is voicing a commonly held view, which should therefore be taken as accurate (Van Dijk, 1987:198). The view expressed needs no further justification for it is presented as everyone's view. This also silences opposition.

This device was generally used by respondents articulating more conservative views which maintain the status quo. In both of these examples the speakers align themselves with the majority of the population to argue that their negative feeling about the Maori renaissance is shared by all.

> But I think that *with the people getting more and more racist*, the Maoris are causing it, have caused it themselves, ...cause as you say when, like I was saying before, I, when I went to school and there was the Pakehas and the Maoris and everyone just got along and that was it, you know, but now... they've said, we want this and we want that and we want this and *everybody's just getting frustrated. People are getting more frustrated.* (Les – European)

> ...*people are getting fed up with being told how wrong they are.* (Tracy – Pakeha New Zealander)

(vii) Claiming special knowledge

The above technique can be contrasted with another device used in more liberal arguments, which involves claiming special knowledge. Unlike presenting one's views as those of the majority, this device presents the speaker as having more facts than the audience, who, it is assumed, hold the majority view. The speaker knows more or has access to special knowledge about an issue which the listener, and often the public in general, does not. This device was used almost exclusively in liberal arguments although it was used once to support a very reactionary version of colonial history by one of the most conservative Pakeha.

The speakers manage the impression they make using this technique by presenting themselves as holders of special knowledge that others do not have, even to the extent of claiming to be experts. This device persuades by convincing the audience that the majority of the population, of which they are a part, do not have full knowledge, whereas the speaker does and should therefore be listened to. The two following excerpts were typical of its use for more liberal ends. Each speaker went on to give a reading of events surrounding a land occupation which was quite different from the one presented in the media.

> But, I mean, of course, she [a friend] doesn't know the bigger picture, which I think is the case with *95 percent of the population don't know the real story. They just hear what other people say*, read what they read in the newspapers and that's it, and they don't know any more, and they don't want to know any more. (Hannah – Maori)

> If you sort of took a step backwards and look beyond there, *looked around outside and did some real inquiring, search for the facts*, then you realize...[]but what shocked me the most I suppose was a lot of people going around totally uninformed. They jump up and...say things about the [land] occupation and the occupiers without knowing anything about what's going on here. (Eddy – Maori)

(viii) Disclaimers

A surprisingly common device was that of the 'disclaimer' or what Stubbs has called 'personal point of view prefaces' (Stubbs, 1983:186). Here, instead of claiming that one's opinion is shared by all, or that one is privy to special knowledge about a particular issue, one demurs,

using statements like 'it's only my opinion', 'that's the way I see it', 'I believe', 'I don't know much about it'. The speaker does generally go on, however, to express a view on the topic.

This device projects an impression of humility and modesty. It appears to signal readiness to be corrected and hence reasonableness. It also allows the speaker a way out without losing face if their argument is shown to be wrong, for they have already stated that they aren't claiming to have full knowledge, thus pre-empting criticism. This device is related, in its function, to tentativeness and hedging in the expression of opinions.

The persuasive function of the disclaimer is actually the opposite of the impression management effect it creates. Since the speaker is just stating an opinion, they cannot be argued with. This has the opposite function to Sacks' 'correction-invitation devices' (Silverman, 1993:127) which provide the audience with an opening or invitation to correct. In most cases in the interviews this device was used to close discussion, rather than open it, as can be seen in the following extract which concluded the speaker's interpretation of multiculturalism as being an ideological ploy which excludes Maori from a privileged position as 'tangata whenua' among minority ethnic groups. By saying that this is just her definition or reading of 'multiculturalism' Hannah makes it difficult for her audience to attempt an alternative definition.

> That's what it means to me. I don't know what it is
> defined as, but that's what it means to me.
> (Hannah — Maori)

A slightly more tentative version was used to support the view that alienated land should be returned:

> Now just as an outsider I don't know enough about it, but I think that the tribe should get that land back, you know, and not be diddled by the Crown or whatever. (Emma – New Zealander [Pakeha])

A long and elaborate conservative opinion on why land occupations are wrong was prefaced with the following, which includes six disclaimers in a single sentence.

> Look, as I say I'm not political, I don't read the paper and I don't get involved in many political or religious things, because I don't have the knowledge - I mean you can't argue about things you don't know... (Elizabeth – Pakeha)

Elizabeth then goes on to give an argument of several minutes duration on the topic she has just disclaimed knowledge of.

Conclusion

These examples demonstrate how specific discursive tools may be used in a variety of contexts and for a variety of arguments. They are part of the cultural repertoire available to social actors which can be manipulated for a variety of ends. The devices discussed are particularly useful to social actors constructing accounts of 'race relations', both to convince the audience of the validity of their views and to present a positive image of themselves.

Billig (1991) argues that ideology is expressed in common linguistic interaction in the form of argument, or rhetoric as he calls it. Thus racism is not a coherent ideology imposed mysteriously from above and merely regurgitated by the populace. Instead people engage with the ideology and transmute it accordingly, adding personal experiences to embellish or disprove it, using linguistic devices to elicit the listener's agreement, tacit approval or complicity, or to present their argument as rational (Billig, 1994; Essed, 1991; van Dijk, 1993; Wetherell and Potter, 1992). Ideology then becomes 'ideological practice' (Wetherell and Potter, 1992:59) achieved through various speech acts whereby people make sense of reality by combining the taken-for-granted view of the world with their personal experiences and applying argumentative devices to interpret it to themselves. Social products are re-presented as natural products (Wetherell and Potter, 1992:149) which are then communicated to others, and the whole process continues.

Some researchers have focused only on the manner in which racism is communicated and have ignored the active use of similar discursive devices to develop counter arguments against the majority view, along more liberal themes. It has even been argued that the Maori challenge to Pakeha hegemony requires more rhetorical sophistication. Nairn and McCreanor suggest that in order to resist dominant discourses and develop counterhegemonic ones, minorities will need to use different linguistic tools and put in greater effort than those perpetuating 'the standard story'. For those engaged in producing a counterhegemonic discourse, 'the work required to produce successful communication is vastly increased and the enterprise prone to failure' (Nairn and McCreanor, 1991:257, also 1990:306). I have tried to show

that many linguistic strategies are available for a variety of arguments along the liberal/conservative continuum. For example, exemplification can be used to support an argument for or against the teaching of Maori language in schools or the return of Maori lands. Disclaimers can provide support for both bigotted and anti-racist opinions. Credentialising authenticates a person's right to argue for decreasing affirmative action policies for Maori, but works just as well in arguments supporting such policies. Since the tools available are generally the same, it cannot be said that the work of communicating a counterhegemonic discourse is vastly increased. In fact, I have argued that the shared linguistic formats which the arguments take actually allow successful communication, and hence, resistance, to occur. New Zealanders are able to engage in discussion about race relations, to express their views, and 'hear' alternatives, because of these shared language forms. It is these forms which allow the perpetuation of racist ideologies, but also resistance of these, to proceed.

We have seen above that people use rhetorical devices to convince and to manage impressions. These devices are creatively utilised by Maori and Pakeha to produce 'compelling narratives' (Silverman, 1993:114) for both liberal and conservative ends. The 'taken-for-granted' nature of the world is reproduced and resisted within communicative interactions. Rhetorical devices can be seen as tools in a kitbag, which can be used to build a wide variety of different styles of building. The strategies demonstrated above show that rather than being cultural dupes individuals construct convincing narratives to justify their views and to persuade others of their validity.

References

Austin, J.L., 1962. *How to do things with words*, Oxford, Clarendon Press.

Billig, M., 1987. *Arguing and Thinking: A rhetorical approach to social psychology*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Billig, M., 1991. *Ideology and Opinions*, London, Sage.

Billig, M., Condor, S., Edwards, D., Gane, M., Middleton, D., & Radley, A., 1988. *Ideological Dilemmas: A Social Psychology of Everyday Thinking*, London, Sage.

Cherwitz, R. & Hikins, J., 1986. *Communication and Knowledge: An investigation in Rhetorical Epistemology*, California, University of Southern California Press.

Clark, H., 1996. *Using language*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Coulthard, M., 1977. *An Introduction to Discourse Analysis*, London, Longman.

Elliott, J.L. & Fleras, A., 1996. *Unequal Relations: An Introduction to Race and Ethnic Dynamics in Canada*, Ontario, Prentice Hall.

Essed, P., 1991. *Understanding Everyday Racism: An interdisciplinary theory*, Newbury Park: Sage Series on Race Relations Vol 2.

Frankenberg, R., 1993. *White Women, Race Matters: The Social Construction of Whiteness*, Minneapolis, The University of Minnesota Press.

Garfinkel, H., 1967. *Studies in Ethnomethodology*, Cambridge, Polity Press.

Gaertner, S.L. & Dovidio, J.F., 1986. 'The aversive form of racism', in Dovidio, J.F. & Gaertner, S.L. (eds.), *Prejudice, discrimination and racism*, Orlando, Academic Press.

Goffman, E., 1967. *Interaction Ritual*, New York, Doubleday.

Goffman, E., 1990 [1959]. *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life,* London, Penguin.

Hauser, G., 1986. *Introduction to Rhetorical Theory*, New York, Harper and Row.

Hewitt & Stokes, 1981. 'Disclaimers', in Stone G. & Farberman H. (eds.), *Social Psychology Through Symbolic Interaction*, New York, John Wiley and Sons.

Holmes, J., 1990. 'Politeness Strategies in New Zealand Women's Speech', in Bell A. & Holmes J. (eds.), *New Zealand Ways of Speaking English*, Wellington, Victoria University Press.

Lorde, A., 1984. *Sister Outsider: Essays and speeches by Audre Lorde*, New York, The Crossing Press.

McCreanor, T., 1993a. 'Mimiwhangata: Media reliance on Pakeha commonsense in interpretations of Maori actions', *Sites* 26:79-90.

McCreanor, T., 1993b. 'Settling Grievances to deny sovereignty: Trade goods for the year 2000', *Sites* 27:45-73.

Mead, S., 1982. *Maori-Pakeha Relationships: an obstacle race,* Wellington, Friends of the Turnbull Library.

Mulholland, J., 1994. *Handbook of Persuasive Tactics: A practical language guide,* London, Routledge.

Mumby, D., (ed.), 1993. *Narrative and Social Control,* Newbury Park, Sage.

Myrdal, G., 1944. *An American Dilemma*, New York, Harper.

Nairn, R. & McCreanor, T., 1991. Race Talk and Common Sense: Patterns in Pakeha Discourse on Maori/Pakeha Relations in New Zealand, *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, 10(4):245-262.

Nairn, R. & McCreanor, T., 1990. Insensitivity and Hypersensitivity: An Imbalance in Pakeha Accounts of

Racial Conflict, *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, 9(4):293-308.

Potter, J., & Wetherell, M., 1987. *Discourse and Social Psychology: Beyond Attitudes and Behaviour*, London, Sage.

Scott, M. & Lyman, S., 1981. 'Accounts' in Stone G. & Farberman, H. (eds.), *Social Psychology Through Symbolic Interaction*, New York, John Wiley and Sons.

Seidel, G., 1988. '"British New right's" Enemy Within', in Smitherman-Donaldson G. & van Dijk, T. (eds.), *Discourse and discrimination*, Detroit, Wayne State University Press.

Shotter, J., 1993. *Cultural Politics of Everyday Life*, Buckingham, Open University Press.

Silverman, D., 1993. *Interpreting Qualitative Data: Methods for analysing talk, text and interaction*, London, Sage.

Stone, G., & Farberman, H., 1981 [1970]. *Social Psychology Through Symbolic Interaction*, New York, John Wiley and Sons.

Stubbs, M., 1983. *Discourse Analysis: The Sociolinguistic Analysis of Natural Language*, Oxford, Basil Blackwell.

Thomas, W. I., 1928. *The Child in America, Behaviour Problems and programmes*, New York, Knopf.

Turner, R., 1974. ' Words, Utterances and Activities' in Turner R. (ed.), *Ethnomethodology: Selected Readings*, Middlesex, Penguin.

van Dijk, T., 1987. *Communicating Racism: Ethnic Prejudice in Thought and Talk*, California, Sage.

van Dijk, T., 1988. 'Prejudice and Discourse', in Smitherman-Donaldson G. & van Dijk T. (eds.), *Discourse and Discrimination*, Detroit, Wayne State University Press.

van Dijk, T., 1993. *Elite Discourse and Racism*. Sage: Series on Race and Ethnic Relations, Vol 6, California, Sage.

Verkuyten, M., 1998. Personhood and Accounting for Racism in Conversation, *The Journal for The Theory of Social Behaviour*, 28(2):147-168

Wetherell, M., & Potter, J., 1992. *Mapping the Language of Racism: Discourse and the Legitimation of Exploitation*, Hertfordshire, Harvester-Wheatsheaf.

Acquainted with Grief[1]:
Emotion Management Among Death Workers

Bronwyn Watson and Martin Tolich
School of Sociology and Women's Studies
Massey University

Abstract

In late twentieth century Western society dying and death have been medicalised and institutionalised. Death is seen as a failure of the medical profession or of the deceased. At the same time, because they have been removed from the community, death and grief have become private concerns. Death and grief are hidden. Those who prepare dead human bodies for disposal are stigmatised as scapegoats by their association with dead bodies which are still perceived to be somehow ritually unclean. Death workers are also faced with the spatial contradiction of being simultaneously hidden from society yet exposed to those who are grieving. As an 'occupational community' the death workers at a funeral home use 'emotion management', both as a group and personally, as strategies to cope with their daily acquaintance with death and grief.

> 'A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.' Isaiah, 53:3.

---

[1] Earlier drafts of this paper were presented in various settings: an Advanced Research Methods postgraduate class at Massey University; the 1997 Annual Conference of the Sociology Association of Aotearoa New Zealand; *The Postgraduate Review* (1998), School of Sociology and Women's Studies, Massey University.

The phone rings. Kate[2], the funeral home secretary, pokes her head round the door to tell Eric, the funeral director, that an elderly woman has died at the hospice in the neighbouring city, twenty minutes drive from here. Her body is ready for removal. Eric tells Kate to tell them he is on his way and asks if I would like to go for the ride. I would, so we climb into the small grey station wagon used for transporting bodies on non-ceremonial occasions. Eric says it is less obtrusive. At the hospice Eric backs the car up to the rear entrance. This is not easy as the driveway is narrow and there are other vehicles, galvanised iron rubbish bins and green plastic portabins in the way. We climb out, Eric opens the back of the car and we unload the trolley. I wait by the car with the trolley while Eric knocks at the back door and asks the smiling nurse if it is okay for me to come in. She looks at me, smiles again and says, 'Yes.' When we have manoeuvred the trolley in through the sliding door she asks us to wait by the reception desk while she checks to see that the corridor is empty and the doors all shut. Eric says that they are always very fussy about doing that here. A few minutes later the nurse is back to say it is all clear. Following behind her we manoeuvre the trolley round the sharp, narrow corner and scuttle almost furtively along the empty corridor to the bedroom. When she is certain we are ready and that there is no one else around, she opens the door and we push the trolley back and forth until we can get it into the room. The nurse immediately shuts the door behind us. On the narrow bed in the small room, the old woman looks peaceful,

---

[2] To ensure confidentiality all names are pseudonyms. 'Fanny' chose her own.

but definitely dead. She has been arranged with her hands folded on her chest with a pink camellia between them. Her eyes are shut and her mouth closed. Eric takes the heavy grey vinyl cover off the trolley and pulls a sheet out from underneath. We fold the bedclothes back and while the nurse and I roll the old woman away Eric tucks the sheet under her. We roll her back and Eric pulls the sheet right through. The nurse and I fold the sheet over the old woman while Eric unbuckles two straps on the trolley. He then sends the nurse to the head and me to the feet of the old woman. He stands at the middle, we all grab hold of the sheet and heave the body across to the trolley. Eric ties the straps and pulls the grey cover over the top, saying that nothing can disguise what is there so they don't use the red box-shaped cover that others do. The nurse spots the camellia now lying on the bedside table, picks it up and pokes it under the grey cover. She then asks us to wait while she checks that the corridor is clear and slips out the door, carefully shutting it behind her. Minutes later the nurse slips back through the door, smiling and a bit breathless, saying that it is sometimes difficult to clear the corridor and shut all the doors. We manoeuvre the trolley out the door, tipping it up to get out, turning it around so the body will be pushed out feet first. Eric pushes from the back while I guide from the front, raising the front as we negotiate the sharp turn at the reception desk. Then we are out the back door and down the ramp to the car. Smiling, the nurse waves and calls, 'See you next time!' as she slides the door shut behind us. As we drive back to town Eric readily admits that, other than my presence, this was normal procedure. Even in an innovative hospice, a place supposedly

accommodating both the grief of dying and the dead, the actual dead body, the car transporting the body and the death worker himself are hidden from sight. Why? If the workers at a hospice find it necessary to hide the dead, what is the place of death in our society?

In the modern era, the tendency to shift from a sacred to a secular view of death left people having to face its finality. Rather than accepting death because it was a part of God's plan, leading to a better existence, people had to look for ways to avoid facing non-existence (Bauman, 1992:14; Canine, 1996:5; Kamerman, 1988:26-7). Aries (1974:87) claims that death became forbidden. Along with progress and the triumph of reason over nature, the ultimate challenge for scientists became to eliminate death. They 'deconstructed death into a bagful of unpleasant, but tameable, illnesses, so that in the hubbub of disease fighting which followed, mortality could be forgotten' (Bauman, 1992:164).

Science, however, failed to completely overcome nature. Rather, as Bauman argues, it was deemed that 'Death is omnipotent and invincible; but none of the specific cases of death is' (1992:138). The result has been that death has been seen to be caused by personal carelessness, either by a doctor who failed to intervene sufficiently, or by the dead, who had, for example, not exercised enough or eaten the wrong diet. This led to the living, afraid of being contaminated, avoiding the dying (Bauman, 1992:138; du Boulay, 1984, cited in Fulton and Metress, 1995:323; Fulton, 1965:4).

In today's postmodern era, with the increased life expectancy since the end of World War II, we may not

experience the death of a close friend or family member until we reach middle-age. In order to protect us from its stigma of failure and contamination, death has been removed from the community, medicalised and institutionalised (Walter, 1991:300). This has led to a privatisation of grief. Bereavement has become an isolated, private concern, lacking traditional community rituals to help bring mourners back into society (Canine, 1996; Fulton and Metress, 1995; Kamerman, 1988; Littlewood, 1993; Mellor, 1993; Mulkay, 1993; Walter, 1991; 1994).

Although we may now seldom encounter death, when we do, contemporary Western reflexivity and individualised lifestyles mean that we tend to grieve more deeply than in the past. This is compounded because, embarrassed by not knowing how to respond to death and grief, society now avoids the bereaved as well as the dying (Lofland, 1994:59,61). Bauman (1992:130) argues that the reason is that our whole language, even, is one of survival, aimed to disguise our mortality. While agreeing that our language is, indeed, one of survival, full of plans for the morrow, we would suggest that rather than hiding from their mortality, those who are not facing their own imminent death may feel embarrassed to discuss plans for their future lives with someone who will soon have no life. This might stem from a wish to avoid upsetting the dying or it might be from a sense of guilt over making plans for a future which will not include the dying person. How, then, do we talk to those who are compelled to face death?

A metaphor for this societal problem with death is the subject of this paper: the 'dirty work' (as Hughes, 1958, calls it) performed backstage by death workers as they

both prepare the deceased for burial and shield the grieving, and society for that matter, from the stark reality of death. The belief that death work is dirty work has been common to many cultures (Iserson,1994:173). It stems from a fear of the dead and an ancient social construction of the dead as being culturally or ritually unclean, with work involving the dead considered to be polluting of the living (Fulton and Metress, 1995:468; Iserson, 1994:2, 170). Further, as Iserson points out, a death worker, in lessening the fear and horror the living feel towards their dead, through carrying out 'ritually unclean tasks', can become a 'scapegoat, the ritual uncleanliness of his [sic] task being identified with his role and person' (Iserson, 1994:172).

In what follows, our aim is to discover the strategies used by the death workers at a funeral home to protect themselves, both from the reality of what they must do and from the stigma attached to their work and to themselves. We begin by discussing the research setting and methodology. The rest of the ethnographic account is divided into three sections. The first, *Death Work Emotion*, explicitly reveals the dirty work performed by funeral home workers: how they work with death physically, backstage (Goffman, 1959), using emotion work (Hochschild, 1983) to manage their own personal fear and loathing on a daily basis. The next section, *Spatial Contradictions at Work,* details the funeral home workers' hidden/exposed contradiction. The workers collaborate to conceal death spatially, both from the grieving and from society. At the same time the workers must cope with an absence of boundaries: routinely hidden from the general public, in a crisis such as a death in the family, these workers become exposed, immediate and available, to the grieving. Here funeral

home workers perform emotional labour (Hochschild, 1983). This is done under stressful conditions where simple errors such as a name error in a eulogy or a wrong date in a death notice can take monumental forms with grieving families unfamiliar with death. Third, *An Occupational Community?* introduces Salaman's (1974) concept of occupational community to analyse the effect of the working conditions within the fused relationship between funeral home employees' work and their non-work lives, how the workers identify with their occupation and how they are made to identify with it by outsiders.

Setting, Method and Disclaimer

If death is hidden, and this paper demonstrates it to be so, then writing about 'the hidden' entails confronting and crossing boundaries. With any ethnography the reader should be able to hear and feel the narratives (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983) of those whose accounts are recorded: to stand in their place, as it were. In this paper, readers may learn something of the occupation of funeral home workers but they may also be confronted by their own feelings about death and dying. And that is the point of the paper.

The research process, by which the data for this paper was collected, has lasted six months. I (the first author) spent time in one funeral home and yet was constantly exposed to other sites of death work: the hospice, described above, the city morgue, and funerals. During this time I have been confronted by death within the occupation of funeral home workers: my former dread of being in the presence of a dead body has turned into a distaste of the smelly, leaking objects our bodies turn into after death; I have a new revulsion of the organ donor system, the autopsy and the embalming

327

process which are all so mutilating, invasive and (particularly in the case of the last two) mostly unnecessary; and my coming face to face with death in so many shapes and forms has made me realise that the thought of extinction doesn't actually bother me, but concerns about incomplete projects and responsibilities now frequently weigh on my mind.

It seemed natural to start where I was (Lofland and Lofland, 1995). I had played the organ at funerals for ten years prior to beginning the research process. The last four years have been for Mark's Funeral Home, the site of this research. Mark's Funeral Home is family owned, operates in regional New Zealand and employs eight workers performing a range of tasks. These include three full-time male funeral directors, Mark, the principal, Eric and Stuart, who all also do embalming and officiate at funeral services; a part-time female mortician, Sarah, who does most of the embalming and the gardens (which is interesting given the importance of impression management in funeral homes); a part-time male crematory worker/handyman, Neil, who does most of the cremations at the firm's private crematorium and trims most of the caskets; two part-time female secretaries, Kate and Fanny; and a female cleaner who works a few hours each week. Except for one of the directors, the mortician and one of the secretaries they are all family members. Other casual staff include caterers, florists and organists.

Death Work Emotion

Ambulances do not carry dead bodies so funeral directors are called to fatal accidents, to violent deaths and to suicides, to take the remains to hospital for autopsy. They collect the bodies of those who die at

home, at hospitals, hospices or retirement homes and take them to their funeral home. At times such work is difficult. Eric told of one person who had died in bed on the second floor of a house with a very narrow, twisting staircase. Because the body had not been discovered straight away, *rigor mortis* was complete when the funeral director went to collect it. Unable to manoeuvre the stiff body through the doorway and down the steep stairs, the funeral director had had to call the fire brigade. The body was removed through the window by them with the aid of a crane.

Normally when the body arrives at the funeral home a mortician embalms the body. This is not a pleasant process, especially if the body has been dead for some time before being discovered. One instance that Mark and Eric shuddered to remember was of an elderly person who was not found until she had been dead in bed for about three days with the electric blanket switched on. Others were of people who had shot themselves through the mouth. Embalming involves pumping a mixture of preservative fluids through the carotid artery into the arterial system to replace the blood which is forced out through the jugular vein, cleaning the body and stopping the decaying process (Iserson,1994:185). The goal is to avoid family and friends being upset by unpleasant odours, and to try to make the body look 'better' again (Canine, 1996:180; Iserson, 1994:170).

Caskets, built in a variety of styles at carpentry or joinery factories, are stored at the funeral home until ready for use. There they are lined and decorated by funeral home workers to the family's specifications. This entails stapling a plastic liner in the base, stapling a decorative satin lining over a shredded-paper padding

around the top of the base, screwing handles on the sides, and decorative screws and a name plaque on the lid.

The funeral directors also offer support for the bereaved, call a minister of religion where necessary and organise the funeral service with the family, preferably in accordance with the wishes of the deceased. They spend time with the bereaved, finding out about the life of the dead person, to help in preparing a eulogy for the funeral service. They then conduct the funeral service if requested.

The secretarial staff at the funeral home organise death notices, make sure all the necessary legal documents are completed and sent to the right places, accept the funeral clothes for the body and often take the mourners in to view the body once it has been prepared. They also arrange a burial site with the sexton at the cemetery who is responsible for providing the site, keeping a register of who is buried where, and organising the grave digger to dig the grave and then later fill it in. If the body is to be cremated before burial or any other mode of disposal it is placed in its casket inside the cremator. Once it has burnt and cooled down, the ashes are scraped into a bucket. Using a large magnet, the crematory workers then separate out any screws and nails and discard them. Finally they lift out any large bones which have not disintegrated, grind them and place all the ashes into a labelled container.

Informants talked about this process of preparing the dead for disposal using phrases like 'treating the body with dignity and respect'. As much as it represents how they deal with the dead body this is also part of their own

emotion management. They need to feel that they are performing an important service but at the same time they need to distance themselves in some way from the actuality of what they must do (Fulton and Metress, 1995:470). To do these tasks the death workers tell each other information about the dead person, often in the form of 'accounts' or narratives. This is especially deliberate when the bodies are of young people whose lives are believed to have been cut short, but the elderly also seem to be given an account. An account, according to Goffman, is an explanation or justification offered to 'change the meaning that might otherwise be given to an act, transforming what could be seen as offensive into what can be seen as acceptable' (1971: 109). Goffman's accounts are usually offered by a person, such as a child caught in a misdemeanour or a criminal in court, in defence of their actions. For the death workers, an account is positioned slightly differently. For them it is part of disengaging then re-engaging with the dead as ordinary people. We suggest that, as death is still seen as a failure to live, there is also a sense that the death workers are trying to offer an account for the person who has died.

Emotion work (Hochschild, 1983) is also tied up within the personal accounts. Through what Hochschild terms 'everyday deep acting' (1983:42), the death workers distance themselves from what they have to do. By telling themselves that this human body no longer houses a person they are then able to 'concentrate on the mechanical aspects of their work rather than on the "person" they are preparing' (Fulton and Metress, 1995:470). A typical emotion work account given by informants was, 'I know that's not the person anyway because it's just the remains' or 'it's just an empty shell

... the person is no longer in pain, no longer suffering.' Another example of this kind of response occurred when Sarah had to embalm a baby. Finding it difficult to bring herself to make the incision in the neck so she could begin to pump the embalming fluid into the carotid artery, Sarah lifted the eyelids, saying,

> The eyes are so lifeless, so still and empty. There is nothing there - not like when a person is alive. Seeing that makes it a bit easier.

Notwithstanding emotion work and the use of accounts, a feature of funeral home workers' daily toil is that it is messy. The raw material they use is cold, dead bodies that are sometimes badly damaged, sometimes carrying diseases, often smelling and leaking. It is 'dirty work' always open for error but with little room for success, for they cannot bring loved ones back to life. 'Dirty work', according to Hughes (1958), is work that is a necessary part of any occupation that is not respected or admired. To avoid the stigma of its association, professionals such as lawyers and doctors delegate it to others. An example is the way doctors leave nurses to clean wounds and change dressings of chronic ulcers. Hughes writes, 'To bring back health (which is cleanliness) is the great miracle ... the physician's work touches the world of the morally and ritually, but more especially of the physically, unclean. Where his [sic] work leaves off, that of the undertaker begins' (1958:73, 71).

Nearly thirty years later these feelings are still associated with work involving the dead. Yet it is not only the doctor who leaves death to the undertaker, it is also society. Moreover, our secularised society, where the greatly increased numbers of women in the paid

workforce since the 1960s, has left fewer women free to stay at home to nurse the dying and take care of the after-death processes (Opie, 1992). This society seems comfortable with the arrangement and leaves death, out of sight, with death workers.

Spatial Contradictions at Work

Those working intimately with dead bodies document the social distance between death workers and society. Sarah, the funeral home's mortician, commented that the general public were reluctant to be touched by her. She said,

> I'm the sort of person who reaches out to shake hands with people when I meet them. Some people are so horrified they snatch their hands away and refuse to shake my hand. They don't want me to touch them. Then they'll cross the street to avoid talking to me.

Having said that death work, dealing with decayed deceased bodies and their waste, is dirty work, we now want to suggest that it is death, not just dirty work, that is avoided. Consider the work of Fanny and Kate, the funeral home secretaries. Neither has physical contact with dead bodies but they are stigmatised by outsiders just by being associated with dirty work. Fanny said when friends heard she was working at Mark's Funeral Service, the look that I got was just - 'horror' I think would be a good word to describe it. They were just mortified to think that I could work at a place like that. And people have said, 'How could you work in a place like that? It must be awful.' But when they cross the street when they see you coming it can make you feel like you're a leper.

Although the secretaries do not perform dirty work, Kate, the second secretary, said that she was regularly confronted by dirty work. It was unavoidable. Her first time was memorable. She said,

> I had to ask Mark a question while he was embalming. I thought, 'I don't want to go through there', but the communication was just too hard to try and do it through the door so I didn't really have a choice. So I put my head in the door to say something to Mark without trying to look at the table. It wasn't overly easy ... but he just acted normally to me which was helpful ... I hadn't really taken much notice of what was in there, trying not to.

Accommodating society's fear of death leads to problems for death workers. The perception that work involving the dead is dirty and the public wish not to be reminded of death means that death work is expected to be kept hidden. That funeral home workers are aware of the discreditable stigma, is represented in the use of the 'plainclothes' grey pickup car, described in the opening narrative. The rationale is to avoid drawing attention to the fact that a corpse is inside the car and unnecessarily alarming the public. Ambulance drivers or tow-truck operators, who could also be considered to be doing dirty work, drive well-marked, easily recognisable vehicles. The necessity and importance of their work is acknowledged. The funeral director, however, is expected to remain invisible to avoid upsetting public sensibilities.

Mark, a funeral director of fourteen years' experience, talked about driving for nearly an hour to collect the body of a small boy killed in a traffic accident.

As usual, he drove the small, unmarked, grey station wagon rather than the large silver hearse, arriving an hour after the accident had occurred. On the way he had had to overtake a long line of drivers frustrated at being held up by the accident blocking the road. Some of the drivers, assuming he was queue-jumping, expressed anger towards him. He said,

> I was the one who pulled the dead child out of the car. ... The number of people who say to me, 'Oh, I never thought about how the body gets from the accident.' When I've made them think about it they've realised they thought that maybe the ambulance does it, but unless the person actually dies in the ambulance that never happens. When people realise that, they have a much greater appreciation of our industry.

The hidden nature of their work also causes unforeseen problems with consumers (the deceased's family) as they are seldom aware of many of the tasks and expenses involved in funerary preparations. These include the hours involved in the preparation of the dead (a funeral in which the body has not had an autopsy takes about seventeen hours of work by the funeral home staff; a body which has had an autopsy takes an extra two to three hours to embalm) as well as being available for grieving families 24-hours a day and having to be on police call each alternate month.

Being available to customers 24-hours a day dissolves the hidden nature of the work, blurring the distinctions of space and time for the workers (see Finch, 1983). That it affects their families is apparent in their comments. All three funeral directors and the embalmer

talked about the long hours, broken nights, interrupted weekends and the way their social and family lives are affected by their inability to make definite commitments for such activities as a meal out or watching their children play sport at the weekends. Stuart, for example said,

> It's a demanding job of your time. It involves nights and so many weekends. It's like being on call almost continuously. Like, two weekends out of every three, because even if I'm second on call more often than not I'm involved in work for four or five hours that weekend anyway. And if you're dealing with a family, you like to follow it through, like if they want to come for a viewing. It's a job you can't walk away from. I can't say from one minute to the next if I'll be called away.

Nevertheless they all accept that it is just part of the job. As Sarah commented, 'It's hard never being able to just go out of town for a day's shopping. But when you're needed you just have to drop everything else and come.' While for Eric, an experienced funeral director, the boundaries have become so blurred that he even appears to consider some aspects of the job a form of rest. He talked about being:

> at home *relaxing and reading through the service for today* when the phone rang ... and I had to put my tie and shoes back on and go out again. [Our emphasis.]

To a lesser extent Kate and Fanny the secretaries, and Neil the crematory worker also experience the temporal blurring of boundaries. Although they are never on 24-

hour call they are frequently required to work extra hours during busy periods.

Blurred boundaries also happen spatially, particularly during a sudden influx of funerals. Hughes writes about 'routine and emergency' (1971:346). He believes that those with a crisis tend to feel that the worker, for whom the crisis is all part of a day's work, does not appreciate its importance and finds ways to belittle it. Here, though, the staff take great care to ensure each funeral appears to the bereaved family to be 'the only one'. Any more than two funerals a day makes it difficult for them to maintain this impression. Among other things it becomes a juggling act trying to move bodies in and out of the two viewing rooms as families wish to see them.

An Occupational Community?

More than twenty years ago Graeme Salaman published his *Community and Occupation*, an exploration of work/leisure relationships. Salaman suggests that certain kinds of occupations constitute 'occupational communities'. He argues:

> An occupational community represents a particular relationship between men's [sic] work and the rest of their lives - a type of relationship which in its extreme form is probably increasingly rare in modern societies. Members of occupational communities are affected by their work in such a way that their non-work lives are permeated by their work relationships, interests and values... members of occupational communities build their lives on their work; their work friends are their friends outside of work and their leisure activities are work based (Salaman, 1974:19).

The ways funeral home workers cope with dirty work using personal emotion work and using emotional labour to deal with a stressed and stressful public are only part of the story. How they act in concert, especially their use of contrived humour, is as much part of their coping strategy as fostering team spirit and inculcating desired values in newcomers (Charlesworth et al, 1989:3). Lunch and tea breaks are communal affairs even though Mark's house is behind the funeral home. The tea area is small, giving a feeling of closeness. Only Eric (Mark's father), has a chair, slightly away from the table. Everyone else sits on benches built into the corner behind the small table. They often bring food to share. The time together is spent talking over problems both at work and away, talking about their families, the movies they have seen and books they are reading. They use these sessions to listen to each other, offer help, cheer each other up and reinforce their feelings of being a group - a group which includes not only those normally thought of as being in the occupational community, the funeral directors and the embalmers, but also the support personnel as well. The secretaries, the casket trimmer, the florist and the organist are all part of this community[3].

Fulton and Metress (1995:470) describe how 'backroom' humour is an important strategy used by death workers.[4] They suggest that it is similar to the

---

[3]   We would like to thank the two anonymous *New Zealand Journal of Sociology* reviewers for their valuable comments on an earlier draft, and we particularly acknowledge the advice of one for this suggestion.

[4]   Evidence of this can be seen in the quarterly magazine *The New Zealand Funeral Director* published for their members by the Funeral Directors' Association of New

humour used by medical students when working with the dead. A sense of humour is one of the qualities Mark looks for in his employees and it is reflected in frequent laughter and good-humoured teasing. Even a whiteboard listing the burial details (deceased's name, time of funeral, funeral director, burial or cremation) is a site of humour, for across the bottom of the board is often scribbled a joke. This use of humour is deliberately cultivated to release tension when they have been working under pressure. Kate, the secretary, explained:

> I think, sometimes when it has been extremely busy and everybody's really tired, we seem to pick up on the funny side of the whole job ... Other times, Mark will come out with this big folder of jokes ... at morning tea or lunch time and goes through some of them and that will generally get us all going and relax everybody.

The joking has another serious side in creating a strong reference group manifest as teamwork. In the funeral home the process of preparing both the body and the bereaved for the major performance of the funeral service demands a number of lesser performances that require close co-operation between all the workers. Goffman ([1959] 1973) focuses on the strategies groups of workers use to function as a team to provide a performance for outsiders. He argues that teams that work together for performances are linked in a reciprocal dependence and familiarity that eliminates normal status

---

Zealand (FDANZ). A regular feature entitled 'A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Funeral' gives snippets of humorous or bizarre occurrences surrounding their work.

differences, creating a formal intimacy that automatically includes newcomers to the group ([1959] 1973:82-3). This was shown most forcefully when an out-of-town funeral director visited and fitted right in with the group.

Lunch time sessions at the funeral home where Mark and Eric keep the group amused recounting past events, mishaps and problems also reflect this perfectly. Eric, especially, by telling stories against himself, uses them as a teaching tool for newer members of the group. One day he told about dropping his glasses into a grave during a burial service, jumping in to rescue them and the difficulty he had in climbing out again. When asked if anyone laughed, he replied that they certainly had and that he had had to work very hard to make sure he did not laugh himself. In this way he showed the rest of the group the importance of personal emotion management.

Another feature of Salaman's (1974) occupational community is self-image. This is strong among these funeral home workers: how they see themselves or are made to see themselves. For example, one instance mentioned by both Mark and Fanny was a problem generated when visiting friends in hospital where they were accused of just going to look for business. Mark also discussed the difficulties he faces when making friends through his work. He said the problem is that 'I am a constant reminder to them of how they came to know me - every time they come for tea or whatever, they always first remember that.' This problem with friendships outside their work makes close ties within the group important.

In sum, funeral home workers raise three important sociological issues. First their work is a metaphor for

death and dying in contemporary New Zealand society. Clearly society rejects death in a general sense, pushing it away, comfortable in the shielding funeral workers perform. Even when intimately confronted by death the funeral workers' task is to routinely protect those others intimately involved with death, the grieving. Second, while attending to society these workers also comfort themselves using personal emotion work within accounts and by distancing themselves to manage their own feelings about death. Adding stress to their work are the spatial contradictions of hidden death/exposed work bringing emotional labour to the fore. Third, we end by theorising the concept of occupational communities one step further. If, as stated, funeral home workers' lives are dominated by their work, does this happen with death workers in general? What similarities do funeral home workers share with others acquainted with death: the nurses, doctors, morticians, pathologists, orderlies, ambulance drivers, members of the fire brigade, the police, sextons, coffin makers, monumental masons and clergy? And whereas funeral home workers are obviously the most hidden occupation among death workers, is there a continuum from those hidden to those less hidden?

References

Aries, P., 1974. *Western Attitudes Toward Death from the Middle Ages to the Present,* London, Marion Boyars.

Bauman, Z., 1992. *Mortality, Immortality and Other Life Strategies,* Stanford, Stanford University Press.

Canine, J D., 1996. *The Psychosocial Aspects of Death and Dying,* Stamford, Appleton and Lange.

Charlesworth, M., L. Farrall, T. Stokes and D. Turnbull, 1989. *Life Among the Scientists: An Anthropological Study of an Australian Scientific Community*, Melbourne, Oxford University Press.

Finch, J., 1983. *Married to the Job: Wives' Incorporation in Men's Work,* London, Allen & Unwin.

Fulton, G. B., and E. K. Metress, 1995. *Perspectives on Dying,* Boston, Jones and Bartlett.

Fulton, R., 1965. 'Introduction', in R. Fulton (ed.), *Death and Identity,* New York, John Wiley and Sons.

Goffman, E., 1971. *Relations in Public: Micro Studies of the Public Order,* New York, Basic Books Inc.

Goffman, E., [1959] 1973. *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life,* Woodstock, N.Y, The Overlook Press.

Goffman, E., 1983. 'The Interaction Order', in *American Sociological Association*, 48:1-17.

Hammersley, M. and P. Atkinson, 1983. *Ethnography: Principles in Practice,* New York, Tavistock Publications.

Hochschild, A. R., 1983. *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling,* Berkeley, University of California Press.

Hughes, E., 1958. *Men and Their Work,* Westport, Connecticut, Greenwood Press.

Hughes, E., 1971. *The Sociological Eye,* Chicago & New York, Aldine Atherton.

Iserson, K. V., 1994. *Death to Dust: What Happens to Dead Bodies?* Tucson, Galen Press.

Kamerman, J. B., 1988. *Death in the Midst of Life: Social and Cultural Influences on Death, Grief and Mourning,* Englewood Cliffs, Prentice Hall.

Littlewood, J., 1993. 'The Denial of Death and Rites of Passage in Contemporary Societies', in D. Clark (ed.), *The Sociology of Death*, Oxford, Blackwell, 69-86.

Lofland, J. and L. H., 1995. *Analysing Social Settings: A Guide to Qualitative Observation and Analysis,* Belmont, CA, Wadsworth.

Lofland, L., 1994. 'The Social Shaping of Grief', in S. E. Cahill (ed.), *Inside Social Life: Readings on Sociological Psychology and Microsociology,* Los Angeles, Roxbury.

Mellor, P., 1993. 'Death in High Modernity: The Contemporary Presence and Absence of Death', in D. Clark (ed.), *The Sociology of Death*, Oxford, Blackwell, 11-30.

Mulkay, M., 1993. 'Social Death in Britain', in D. Clark (ed.), *The Sociology of Death*, Oxford, Blackwell, 31-49.

Opie, A., 1992. *There's Nobody There: Community Care of Confused People,* Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press.

Walter, J.A., 1991. 'Modern Death: Taboo or Not Taboo?' in *Sociology,* 25 (2): 293-301.

Walter, J.A., 1993. 'Sociologists Never Die: British Sociology and Death', in D. Clark (ed.), *The Sociology of Death*, Oxford, Blackwell, 264-295.

Walter, J.A., 1994. *The Revival of Death,* London, Routledge.

REVIEWS

Simon Smelt, **Today's Schools. Governance and Quality,** Wellington: Victoria University, Institute of Policy Studies, 1998.

Reviewed by
Roger Openshaw
Educational Studies and Community Support,
Massey University College of Education

There are some commentators who argue that, until *Tomorrow's Schools* came along to ruin our school system, everything in the educational garden was fairly rosy. From this perspective, inequality, powerlessness, and the arrogance of state education policymakers in the pre-Picot era, are conveniently downplayed. To be sure, some marginalised groups had suffered badly in the past, but these issues were gradually being addressed by a fresh, sociologically-informed generation of sensitive, new age bureaucrats. Then, there are the commentators who would have us all believe that *Tomorrow's Schools* has ushered in a glorious era, the envy of the entire world, in fact. According to this view, we now have a surfeit of empowered parents, responsive policymakers, satisfied stakeholders and fulfilled clients, not to mention a veritable welter of inputs and outputs sufficient to satiate the most zealously market-orientated businessperson. Just a little more judicious twinking of the administrative apparatus, and New Zealand schools will be well on their way to the promised land of equity and opportunity.

This short and readable monograph by Simon Smelt, a self-employed economic consultant and policy analyst, shares many of the assumptions of the latter category of

commentators, particularly the close identification of schooling with commercial enterprise, whilst not quite fitting neatly into their mould. Certainly, Smelt is broadly supportive of the direction of change over the last decade. He concludes that the New Zealand system of school governance, '... is a unique and bold attempt to counter the perceived problems of the previous structure by abolishing layers of administration and empowering parents (p.74). ' While Smelt considers the reforms to be 'less dramatic in their impact than might have been expected... ', he still believes that they provide a strong basis for further developments (p.76).

Supportive though Smelt is of the reforms, it would be unfair to claim that he fails to 'critically' examine their shortcomings. Smelt invites us to consider the complex question of who chooses what, and where their accountability lies. He includes a section on the importance of families in the educational equation (pp.27-30). Furthermore, Smelt provides some useful indications of tension between what he terms. 'voice' and 'choice', and that between the various 'stakeholders', as manifested by his concern that the School Trustees Association appears to have become more an agency of the state than of the Boards of Trustees (p.65). He cites the disbanding of the parent advocacy council, ostensibly as a cost-saving measure (p.14). He is critical of the failure to adopt the enrolment schemes suggested by Picot, which has led to popular schools 'choosing' their students, rather than vice-versa (p.14). These are all sound, cogently argued and relevant points to make in a book of this nature. Nevertheless, in reviewing the book, I still opt to employ the term 'critically' in inverted commas, as a descriptor.

The reason I would do this is because, when one puts down this work, it is with the definite feeling that a deeper and more comprehensive analysis would have strengthened its value considerably, even though such an analysis would have added to its length and perhaps, more significantly, modified the author's ideological position. There is, for instance, an emerging body of research findings which indicate a growing gap between rich and poor families, increasing inequalities between schools, and rising stress levels amongst teachers. Some of this literature is cited in the bibliography, but the arguments are not taken up to any extent in the argument presented. Similarly, Smelt is critical of the failure of many schools to opt for direct funding, but he does not examine the possible reasons for this apparent lack of enthusiasm (p.13).

Although this book sticks largely to what one might term the administrative aspects of the reforms and how these have worked out in practice, there are some shortcomings here as well. Perhaps a greater awareness of our educational past would have helped sharpen the critique. On page 5, for instance, Smelt cites the Education Review Office's view of reforms as having involved two major structural changes. These were first, to abolish layers of administration in order to locate decision making closer to the point of implementation and second, to alter the balance of power between providers and clients by providing the latter with a greater say in the running of their schools. Smelt might, however, consider the possibility that there may be a fundamental dichotomy between these two imperatives. When C.C. Bowen introduced the 1877 Education Bill, he provided for a three-tiered system rather than the two-tiered system of Tomorrow's Schools. Bowen's reasons for so doing are worth considering. Conscious of

the need for checks and balances between authorities, he was very critical of the two-tiered system which England had adopted. This, Bowen contended was not only expensive to operate, but could easily result in the over-dominance of the central bureaucracy, because it left literally '... nothing between the office in Downing Street and the school boards which answer to what we call school committees' (NZPD, vol. xxiv, 1877, 33).

Furthermore, anyone who has seriously studied the history of education will assert that major legislative change is stimulated by a variety of factors, some of them contradictory. The system created in 1877, which Tomorrow's Schools so drastically overhauled, was typical in this respect. Both at the time and subsequently, it was justified and vilified alternately: as providing equal opportunity, yet ushering in social control; as setting up a parsimonious basic education with few frills, yet paving the way for nation-building on a grand scale; as a cynical attempt to keep people in their appointed stations, yet also as having laid the foundations for a just and democratic society. The point here is that, in interpreting the motivation for Picot wholly in terms of parent power and the need to give individual schools more opportunities to make their own decisions, Smelt grossly oversimplifies the situation. Single explanations of this type simply fail to allow for the mixed , even contradictory agendas of the Picot decision makers, which were undoubtedly present. In consequence, he passes up an opportunity to provide a really comprehensive analysis of the reasons, not only for this particular educational reform, but for any educational reform.

Let me hasten to add here that, I for one, am by no means convinced by the essentially reductionist

argument that Tomorrow's Schools was simply a cynical attempt by the state to devolve the crisis of the state downwards. Such an explanation reflects an ideologically-blinkered inability to comprehend the long standing and fundamental tension in all English-speaking societies between centralism and localism ; a tension which has lain at the heart of NZ education ever since the mid-nineteenth century. But to fail to allow for the existence of such a motive as a significant strand in the overall picture, is surely to perpetuate an equal fallacy. Those who daily labour on behalf of their clients in centres, schools, and universities could readily attest to this. Recent curriculum documents also illustrate a deliberate attempt to deflect latent problems downwards. In this context, moving from detailed specification and control, to contractual purchase arrangements (p.39), which Smelt supports, can easily lead to just as much specification and control as in the past, whilst in addition threatening to obscure the actual process of curriculum design.

Finally, I come back to the two types of commentary on the recent educational reforms with which I introduced this review. In its strengths and weaknesses, its insights and blindnesses, this book largely but not completely epitomises the contributions of the second group of commentators. Judged as informed commentary within that group, it is well-written and clearly argued. It is also critical, on occasions very perceptively so, of the recent and controversial reforms of New Zealand education. Members of the first group of commentators I mentioned will detect serious weaknesses and will be tempted to dismiss the book as just another neo-liberal panegyric to Picot. This would be a pity as, within the limitations I have attempted to outline, this is a useful publication for researchers,

teachers, parents and others with an interest in education, to own. In the final analysis, however, readers must weigh up its strengths and its shortcomings for themselves.

◫ ◫ ◫ ◫

McHoul, A. and Grace, W., **A Foucault Primer**. Dunedin, University of Otago Press/Melbourne University Press, 1998, 140p, $24.95

Reviewed by Ann Brooks
School of Sociology and Women's Studies
Massey University

This is not a new book, it was initially published by Melbourne University Press in 1993 and is now appearing in New Zealand, seemingly unchanged in 1998. This raises a number of problems, particularly in terms of two of the features on which the book is being marketed, namely its value as a reference title and its bibliography. The wealth of material which has appeared on Foucault's work in the 1990s finds no representation in this book and must be seen as a critical loss to students. As I read this book, expected references and critically evaluative commentaries which a reader, familiar with the territory, might have expected to appear, were simply absent and this leaves the reader with a deep sense of dissatisfaction.

Having said this, *A Foucault Primer* does do a number of things well for those wanting an introduction and overview of Foucault's work:

- the book is a valuable genealogy of Foucault's work and charts continuities within the 'earlier', 'middle' and 'later' works

- it usefully distinguishes analytically between Foucault's early work where he 'maps' his 'archaeological approach to the history of knowledges' (p.14) and his later social and political writing, which focuses on the relationship between discourse, power and knowledge

- it provides detailed and insightful commentary on Foucault's critical method and its application to Foucault's central conceptual terrain of power, discourse and the subject

- it provides an epistemological 'mapping' of Foucault's 'counter-history of ideas'

- it highlights how Foucault's work both 'surfaces' subjugated discourses and also reveals how official discourses lead to a process of 'normalisation'.

The strength of the text, as recognised by Tony Bennett, as its 'intimate familiarity with Foucault's writing' but this is also one of its weaknesses. This is apparent in the author's reluctance to engage with the significant critical interrogation of Foucault's work by feminist scholars, among others, and the extensive intellectual debate such work has engendered in terms of the 'feminist epistemological project'. In fairness, some of this debate developed after this book was first published but surely the centrality of Foucault within these debates required a revised and updated version of the 1993 publication. In addition where feminist critiques of Foucault's work are cited they are frequently

marginalised. Many of the criticisms raised by feminist scholars of Foucault's work are criticised because they fail to operate from a Foucauldian perspective.

A Foucault Primer is being marketed as an undergraduate text, however it seems to me it fails in one of its main objectives for an undergraduate readership which is to provide a broad-based critical commentary on Foucault's work.

  📖 📖 📖 📖

Daniels, K. and Haimes, E. (ed.), **Donor Insemination. International Social Science Perspectives.** Cambridge, UK: University of Cambridge Press, 1998

Reviewed by Victoria Grace
Department of Feminist Studies
University of Canterbury.

It is indeed noteworthy that, as Daniels and Haimes point out, there has not been a book-length social science analysis of donor insemination (DI) until this publication. The editors undoubtedly make a significant contribution to understandings of DI through this edited collection where they present an analysis of a variety of substantive topics related to DI from a range of social science perspectives and disciplines. The editors make the fully justifiable claim in their concluding comments that future work on DI and in related fields will benefit from closer collaboration between those working on the technical aspects of assisted human reproduction and those analysing the social issues. After reading this collection the implications of this claim are clear as numerous chapters, in different ways, draw attention to

the problematic nature of the binary that constitutes aspects of this field of inquiry: the biological and the social.

The fact that this topic has not received sustained social science analysis becomes even more bewildering as one reads on. DI is a focussed and empirically researchable field. Reading the series of contributed chapters it becomes clear that this field plays a role of 'catalyser'. Understood in this way, the social issues surrounding DI 'reveal' fundamental dimensions of social change related to the construction of the 'family', and the construction of subjectivity. Although the editors claim in their introduction that the authors in this collection are 'asking about, documenting and analysing the social relationships that shape and change both the development and deployment of DI as a social as well as a clinical practice' (p.3), in my view the authors of the chapters in this collection exploit this analytic potential to varying degrees. In their introduction Daniels and Haimes refer to Giddens' view that the social science endeavour is multi-disciplinary, involving the combination of the 'sociological imagination' with 'historical sensibility' and 'anthropological insight' (p.3). To this they add the importance of social psychology. I would also want to add, in the context of specifically considering DI, something like 'future sensibility' to refer to the way that the social science analysis of the discursive practices of DI contain the seeds(!) of 'future carriers' to use business jargon words: that is, we can learn about emergent future trends whose configuration may, to a lesser rather than greater extent, be contingent on the 'choices', 'policies', and 'opinions' resulting from conscious deliberation at the level of social administration. This collection tends to revolve more directly around analyses of these (highly salient) contingencies than explicitly set

itself the task of a more far reaching sociological analysis.

Daniels and Haimes have brought together eight experienced, senior academics from Britain, France, the United States and New Zealand, who have all researched and published in this field, internationally, and for whom this topic constitutes one of their primary areas of expertise. The first four chapters examine DI from the perspective of different parties. Judith Lasker's informative chapter discusses a number of issues confronting users of DI who might variously be heterosexual couples, single women or lesbians. Issues examined include reasons for choosing DI; relationship issues; alternatives to DI and how these are perceived; concerns about the 'identity' and characteristics of the donor; concerns about the children (health and genetics) and thorny issues surrounding custody and access, all of which reveal significant gender issues which are ripe for a feminist analysis. Lasker's chapter introduces a key issue which surfaces again and again throughout the book: whether the donor inseminated nature of a pregnancy should be kept 'secret' or should be known and, in particular, whether the child conceived as a result of DI should be told. For heterosexual couples, secrecy has been motivated predominantly by a concern to protect men from the stigma of male infertility, but anonymity of semen provider has also been prompted by a desire to ensure that family relationships formed following DI are not disrupted by the intrusion of a third party at some later time. These issues take a different course for single women and lesbians. Lasker's introduction to this topic sets the scene well for its consideration in later chapters.

Robert and Elizabeth Snowden write about families created through DI, based on their empirical research in the UK. Their discussion of the biological and nurturing facets of family relationships provides useful insights into the material gathered through their interviews, but insights which are limited by what appear to be uncritically endorsed assumptions regarding their subject matter.

In her chapter on the making of 'the DI Child' (changing representations of people conceived through donor insemination), Erica Haimes is less concerned to focus on the practical, clinical and policy issues as such but rather on 'what those issues reveal about the way the person conceived by DI is perceived by others' (p.53). This thorough and critical discussion considers the history of 'the DI child', looking at the construction of meanings of the concept of 'roots' as it has shifted historically through to the current emphasis on the need to know one's genetic origins and the implications of this for 'secrecy' surrounding DI. The question of how people conceived by DI represent themselves is clearly a difficult one because, as Haimes points out, there are so few of them, many of whom don't know the nature of their conception. We learn from this chapter how the contemporary move to encourage greater openness about DI is inseparable from changes in the very social constructs that generated the desire for secrecy.

Ken Daniels turns the focus to a group he claims has not had a voice in the debates and deliberations that have covered just about all facets of DI, and that is the semen provider. In this chapter we see how the gendering of male sexuality and fertility, in this context of DI, constructs the semen provider as a kind of machine that produces the required material – the 'product' – and

where the meanings of that product are negotiated by the numerous parties involved except the producer himself. Daniels' review of the literature shows that a concern to recognise the semen provider as 'a person with feelings, thoughts and actions' was first evident in the 1970s (interestingly, the same time that movements such as the women's movement and the new consumerist discourse were protesting the paternalism of social services). Daniels' comprehensive review of studies of the motivation of semen providers leads him to challenge assumptions regarding the commercialisation of semen provision and to look instead towards theorisations of the role of the gift in societies of symbolic exchange, where the exchange incites a relation of reciprocity that cannot be reduced to an economic transaction. As a chapter in this collection that takes the issues pursued to a more complex level of theoretical analysis, Daniels' proposition regarding the potential significance of the gift well deserves its own empirical work to analyse how men construct meanings of semen provision. Are discourses of semen as 'a gift of life' (p.98) and the semen provider as 'giving himself' (p.96) apparent in their discourses, and if so, can these constructs be analysed through the gift in Mauss' terms? This presents an opening for some fascinating and important research.

Simone Novaes outlines and analyses the numerous issues that emerge in consideration of the medical management of DI. Sperm banks and the freezing of sperm serve to further distance the provision of semen from the insemination. Novaes analyses the new therapeutic relationships and new institutional structures emerging currently and how these are inflected by new ethical issues. Echoing Daniels' work, Novaes examines

critically the construction of the legitimacy of medical mediation in DI, and the ensuing instrumentality associated with it.

A chapter by Robert Blank develops an in-depth review of the international public policy context of DI, providing a framing in which the multiplicity of issues raised in the book as a whole can be situated, issues which in turn can interrogate that policy frame. Blank argues that although the issues raised by DI are of public concern, and that therefore forms of public accountability through mechanisms of regulation are vital, 'excessive public control' (p.131) of DI services has its dangers. This chapter is a mine of information about public policy on DI around the world.

In the final chapter Jeanette Edwards, through an ethnographic study in a small town in the North of England, develops a sustained critique of the construct of 'public opinion' which plays a mythical yet influential role in discourses on DI. Her analysis of people's talk on the implications of DI certainly fulfils her aim to 'indicate the difficulty of identifying such a thing as 'public opinion" (p.154). Systematic analysis of a number of contradictions leads her to claim that from different perspectives and vantage points, contrary views do in fact make sense. This analysis could be usefully developed to understand more about the social processes contributing to making these contradictory views possible at this particular historical juncture.

The chapters in this collection are, in broad terms, couched within a liberal frame where concerns are primarily focussed on issues of choices, decision-making processes, and rights of individuals and families, and how these can be better understood, promoted, and

conflicts negotiated. A number of chapters have an explicit concern to analyse how notions surrounding DI are constructed. The book in its entirety provides a valuable resource for sociologists who would wish to pursue questions of significance for sociological theory.

The book would have benefited from inclusion of a feminist analysis. The editors do mention the absence of feminist inquiry and publications specifically on DI, but given that the field is so thoroughly traversed by issues of gender, a feminist contribution would have engaged some of the other chapters in some fruitful dialogue. For example, what, from a feminist perspective, are the social and gender issues involved in the construction of masculinity as threatened by infertility? And how might we understand women's complicity in this construction to the extent that a female partner will publicly take the problem of infertility on as her own to protect the male from stigma (Lasker, Chapter Two). A feminist critique would draw attention to the patriarchal nature of the assumption that the role of a father in a family context is related in some important way to the relative uncertainty surrounding paternity compared to the 'certainty' of maternity (referred to by the Snowdens in Chapter Three).

Daniels and Haimes must be congratulated on this 'first' social science collection on DI, on the academic substance of this work, and for having successfully opened up this field for further research, possibly encouraging new researchers into this field.

                                         📖 📖 📖 📖

Vowles, J., Aimer, P., Banducci, S. and Karp, J. (eds.), **Voters Victory? New Zealand's first election under proportional representation.** Auckland University Press, 1998

Reviewed by Charles Crothers
University of Natal (Durban).

Political sociology in New Zealand, with a few honourable exceptions, has largely been handed over to political scientists. But it has fallen into excellent hands. The New Zealand Election Survey has now accumulated four post-election surveys, each funded in the main through FRST, with a considerable comparability in methodology and continuity in questions asked, and published three handsome books of the results of these through the University of Auckland Press. The most recent volume focuses on the newly introduced MMP system and elegantly checks out the extent to which the new system has worked, both in the short-term and in relation to its longer-term prospects. As befits a programme of study as opposed to a mere one-off book, further material, including a mid-term survey and errata for this book, can be found on the NZES website: http//:www2.waikato.ac.nz/politics/nzes.

The volume is organised around a 'ideal type' theory of the logic of how a PR electoral system should work, in contrast to the much more electorate-centred operational rules of a FPP system. This theory is based on an extensive international literature, and provides both a base for generating testable propositions (which find considerable empirical support) and a 'normative' framework for assessing the system's performance. This 'logic' involves, for example, a policy flexibility amongst parties so that they can join other parties in a coalition,

and for voters a sufficient understanding of the new system that they can cast their two votes in an effective way, that best meets their interests. This model is only partly specified in the introductory and concluding chapter, although it clearly guides much of the analysis.

As well as this 'political science' theory of the institutional mechanisms of electoral systems, the book is also in part (but much less explicitly) driven by a 'sociological' theory that sees MMP having been voted into place by voters concerned with the Rogernomics and successor neo-liberal regimes, and thereby finding themselves less able to 'fit' within the existing party-system, and with a growing distrust of politics and the conduct of governments. It is further posited that social differentiation within New Zealand may have long since burst the confines that a relatively simplistic, polarised and class-based two-party system imposes. So the main supplementary question arising at many places in the book is whether or not the particular constituencies which supported the move to MMP (in order that it might achieve some of their political agenda) have felt that their objectives were achieved through this institutional engineering.

The study is carefully carried out with an eye to the counter-factual of what might have happened had MMP not been in place: for example, respondents are asked to indicate hypothetically what their vote might have been in 1996 under a FPP system. A massive amount of data is mobilised for this study. Not only is there a properly random survey of the general voting public, with an extra Maori coverage (to compensate for low Maori response-rates, and to secure an adequate sample size for valid analysis) but there is a continuing panel (some

of whom were first asked to fill out questionnaires in 1990) and a proportion of those responding to a during-the-campaign rolling survey were also asked to contribute to the lengthy questionnaire of the main study. Finally, candidates were asked to complete questionnaires. The pooled data-set comes to nearly 6000 cases, with another 4000 being drawn on for tracing changes during the campaign. For each sector of the sample, mail questionnaires were used, with telephone top-ups amongst non-respondents. In addition, other data including polls and other surveys, census data and more general observations are adroitly included. Moreover, the data are analysed in a sophisticated fashion: scales are constructed using factor analyses and multinomial logit regression analyses probe for the size and type of effects on key dependent variables. This results in a text which at times threatens to become turgid. However, given that this is a serious and complex study, the text reads well, and is even quite sprightly in places.

Voter's Victory? reviews the campaign to set up MPP and its implementation. The incipient struggles amongst political entrepreneurs to set up a more appropriate party system is documented and the ebb and flow of the campaign is described: with the relative weights of issues, party platforms, leaders and campaign strategies and mobilisation assessed. A central chapter examines the extent and type of vote-splitting which occurred. The election outcome is assessed: to what extent did the voters choose the outcome which resulted? was representativity in Parliament achieved? are the voters happier as a result? Another key chapter analyses the sea-change in Maori voting which led to the long Labour grip being smashed. Finally, a concluding chapter

endeavours to draw up a balance-sheet of the successes and failures of the MMP system.

Compared to earlier volumes, many of the staples of electoral sociology have been eschewed. There is little attention to turn-out and non-voting, the relative weighting of issues and social background factors on voting and other standard concerns which have been well-rehearsed in earlier volumes. Instead, Voter Victory? is far more focused on the institutional change and its effects.

Where more straightforwardly sociological analysis comes in is through analyses using social background variables (referred to as 'social structure' by authors). Social determinants of voting choice is compared for actual vote and for simulated FPP vote. Similarly, the social determinants of voting choice within the Maori electorates is compared to that pertaining outside these electorates. But most of the analyses focus on the workings of things political, rather than taking things back to any social let alone economic roots. The key concern of the book is less on what shapes party vote, but on the specific effect of the MMP changes on voting outcomes, and then on the further consequences of the voting outcomes which the system had yielded thus far.

Compared to most sociologists, political scientists take institutional machinery (in this case electoral institutions) far more seriously. Sociologists are more inclined to see such mechanisms as swamped by social effects and social changes. Perhaps a more intermediate position is the correct one. Indeed, as several analyses, including social background variables show, social

effects seem rather more diluted than sociologists might hope.

Is the new system working? *Voters' Victory?* is written with this question mark firmly in place (as the editors point out): the earlier Voter's Vengeance was not qualified in this way! Vowles et al are quite ambivalent about the degree to which the new system is working. That public support for MMP has crashed in the wake of NZF antics is clearly an embarrassment. They argue that more time should be given for the reforms to become emplaced and for the new rules to be learned by both parties and voters.

What Vowles et al fail to analyse is the degree to which MMP was supported by a social/political movement in some part driven by political scientists themselves! This has given them a valuable real-life experiment to analyse. Whether MMP has worked for the public or for politicians is one thing: certainly political scientists (and also political cartoonists?) have had much to gain. But the analytical opportunities made available by the NZES study are far from exhausted by this volume. It is up to other social scientists to glean wider findings from the treasure trove of data and commentary political scientists have fashioned to pursue their real-life adventure.

Women's Studies Journal

Published by the Women's Studies Association of New Zealand with the University of Otago Press

- essential reading for academics with an interest in gender issues
- scholarly debate in Aotearoa/New Zealand and the wider Pacific
- articles from a wide range of feminist positions and disciplinary backgrounds
- Maori and indigenous women's issues
- exciting recent research
- contemplative, analytical and provocative articles
- reviews of books, films and performances
- published twice yearly
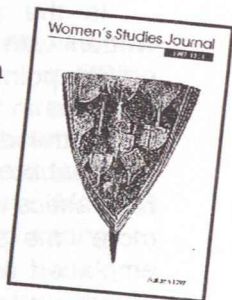
❑ **Yes, I would like a year's subscription to the Women's Studies Journal @ $39.95**

❑ Yes, please send me a list of back issues (free)

Enclosed please find a cheque for $................made payable to University of Otago (price includes GST and p&p within NZ) Or charge my credit card ,

❑Visa ❑Mastercard ❑American Express

Card No

Expiry date   Signature...

Name..

Address..

....

send this order form with your cheque or credit card details to University of Otago Press, PO Box 56, Dunedin, tel (03) 479 8807, fax (03) 479 9094, email university.press@otago .ac.nz
GST No. 11-163-831

NOTES FOR CONTRIBUTORS:

1. Two copies of manuscripts along with a disc should be sent to the editors for consideration. Authors should retain a third copy for their own reference during proof-reading. Copies submitted will not normally be returned. To facilitate 'blind' reviewing, the **title and name(s)** of its authors should be given on a separate sheet, and the **title only** should appear on the **first page** of the article.

2. While articles should not normally exceed 4500-5000 words, longer articles may be accepted in special circumstances.

3. Manuscripts should be accompanied by a short abstract (about 100 words) typed on a separate sheet of paper.

4. Manuscripts should be typed double spaced throughout on one side of A4 paper with reasonable margins all round (2 cms. Approx.). Please supply a disc along with details of the software used.

5. Authors should consult articles in current issues of this Journal for general indications of style conventions on: capitalising titles, headings,   sub-headings; paragraphing; quotations, and so on.

6. Do not underline any words in the text unless they are to be printed in *italics.*

7. Type each table on a separate sheet with as few lines as possible, and indicate the placing of the table in the text. Use wide spacing in tables. Tables should be numbered in Arabic figures with a clear legend to identify the table.

8. Drawings (graphs, figures, etc.) should be on good quality white paper and on separate sheets.

9. References should normally be indicated by citing in parentheses the author's surname and the year of publication (together with page numbers where relevant, as given in the list of references or the bibliography at the end of the article. For example: 'it has been argued (Baker, 1948:26) that...' etc. The full list of references at the end of the article should be arranged alphabetically by author's surname. The following examples should be used as a guide, paying particular attention to the sequence of the items in the reference and to punctuation.

   Able, P. and Collins, S., 1961. 'Structuralism and the concept of class', **Journal of Social Class**, 24(3):138-159.

   Baker, R.S., 1948. **Sociology and Social Change**, London, Charles Publishing Co.

   Note that in the first example the words in the title are not capitalised (as they are for the title of a book, as in the second example).

10. Footnotes are to be reserved for substantive commentary. Number them from 1 upwards. The location of each footnote in the text must be indicated by the appropriate superscript numeral. Footnotes will appear at the foot of the page where they are located.

11. The typescript submitted should be in the form in which the author wishes the paper to appear. Preliminary consultation with the editors about the suitability of an article does not necessarily guarantee its publication. Authors are encouraged to seek comments from colleagues before submitting a paper for publication.

12. The editors reserve the right to make minor editorial alterations or deletions to articles without consulting the author(s), so long as such changes do not affect the substance of the article.

13. Authors will receive a copy of the issue in which their article appears.